

"Covered"

I've been brought to me knees many times throughout my life, mostly because the stain of my sinful nature has risen once again to display it's ugly mark. However, this time is was because of a stain of a different sort. The congregation had replaced the carpet in the parsonage living room and a couple of weeks following I enter the living room to discover candle wax dipping off of the coffee table on to the new carpet.

On my knees I desperately tried to clean the wax out of the new carpet as quickly as possible. I tried freezing the wax first to break it apart and removed what came loose. However, it was intertwined in the strands and nap of the carpet. Using an iron and a roll of paper towels I placed the towels over the wax stain to draw the melted wax into the paper towels with the heated iron. After going through almost a whole roll of paper towels the stain looks much better, that is, if a stain can ever look better. (Just wish it would have been a white instead of a red candle.)

The next step was boiling hot water, grabbing the Dawn dishwashing soap and a scrub brush. Pouring the hot water on the stain with some soap, scrubbing it with the brush and rubbing it with a

dry rag seemed to help. After wet vacuuming the spot I could no longer see the stain. Woo! Hoo! There was only one slight problem . . . the nap and strands of the carpet were frayed from all the heat and scrubbing. While the stain was gone the spot remained because its texture looked much different than the rest of the new carpet. Now what?

“Cover it up somehow!” I thought to myself. “If I just move the coffee table a little closer to the couch it won’t be as noticeable.” So, that was the best solution I could realistically conjure up to deal with the blemish in our living room floor. I tried to comfort myself with the thought that at least it was the same color as the rest of the carpet. Just guess what I thought of every time I walked through the living room? Where do you think my eyes went with every step? That blemish on the new carpet. Try as I may I couldn’t take it completely away and even my ditch efforts at covering it up failed miserably.

Along with the cleansing facet of our diamond of forgiveness, there is another facet of forgiveness: **being covered**. Psalm 32:1-2 says: *Blessed is the one whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is **covered**. Blessed is the man against whom the LORD counts no iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no deceit.* Your relationship with the Lord Jesus comes “under cover,” if you will . . . that is, under the cover of God’s grace and love for you and for me, upon whom the

blemish of sin rests. It is only when Yahweh *counts no iniquity . . . against you with your sin . . . covered in **His** forgiveness that you are blessed.*

The concepts of covered and sin do make sense in your daily life. We talk about criminals who fail to “cover their tracks,” leaving evidence of their crime which is exposed to convict them. Whenever the temptation to sin comes knocking at your door and you consider falling into its lure, you can easily rationalize that your sin done in secret doesn’t hurt anyone. How many times have you tried to cover your sin in the midst of guilt with self-justification, excuses and blame? One of the most common ways to cover sin is to do it under the guise of darkness so no one can recognize or see you. Isn’t this fact the reason for lights in neighborhoods and streets as well as locking your doors especially at night? Striving to “cover” your sin in such ways does not make you blessed. Rather, it leaves you condemned to eternal damnation in hell.

This is one reason why the Scriptures describe the life lost in sin, without a trust in God and His atoning work for your sin in Christ, as a life of darkness. Christians are warned in Ephesians 5:11-12 → *Take no part in the unfruitful works of darkness, but instead expose them. For it is shameful even to speak of the things that they do in secret.* The guilt and contrition which the Holy Spirit produces when *the*

unfruitful works of darkness are exposed is intended to drive you to repentance of your sins. At that point the Holy Spirit brings you to the cross of Christ to see your forgiveness in the light of His perfect life and sacrificial death for you. As Ephesians 5:13-14 goes on to say, *when anything is exposed by the light, it becomes visible, for anything that becomes visible is light. Therefore it says, "Awake, O sleeper, and arise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you."* Absolution in repentance takes you from the cover of darkness in sin and covers you with the light of Jesus at the cross.

But wait . . . won't you experience the cover of darkness at the cross of Jesus too? After all, Scripture does testify to the fact that *from noon to three darkness covered all the land* (cf. Matthew 27:45; Mark 15:33; Luke 23:44-45) during the crucifixion. It was an object lesson of sorts, depicting the reality of Jesus having to deal with our sin by taking it all upon Himself as the perfect sacrifice. In other words, He was covered with all of our sin. The judgment of God against sin was shown with the blackness of those hours. Under that utter darkness, our sins were covered.

But the darkness did not just end there. It continued, following Him into a cold tomb to lay in the darkness of death. Remember? Even if Joseph of Arimathea *rolled a stone against the entrance of the tomb* (Mark 15:46) to keep wild animals and vultures out, the darkness it

created really depicts the sting of death because of our sin (cf. 1 Corinthians 15:56). Into that darkness, they carried the priceless body of the Son of God. And into that tomb with Jesus, God put all of us with our sins. You were buried with Him in that darkness. Your sins were hidden in that deepest cavern. God guides people to faith in Christ by the Holy Spirit so that all of their sins are locked in the darkness of His tomb. This was the entombment for eternity of all our sins.

*Blessed is the one whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is **covered**.* (cf. Psalm 32:1) God wants all sinners to be blessed in His presence, to stand *holy and blameless and above reproach before Him* (cf. Colossians 1:22). It can only happen by **being covered**. Not covered by some kind of temporary “fix” of your own making which will continually reveal the stain and blemish of your sin. The only true fix for that parsonage carpet would be to replace it with a brand new covering. To exchange out the blemished, stained carpet with new carpet.

The great exchange has taken place for you. Christ took on your darkness in sin and death and covered it with the light of His forgiveness of sins! This great exchange also happened in the cleansing waters of baptism. At his conversion, when Jesus threw the apostle Paul into utter darkness and helplessness by blinding him, Jesus sent Ananias to Paul to share the light of the Gospel of Jesus

Christ with him. Ananias told Paul: *And now why do you wait? Rise and be baptized and wash away your sins, calling on His name.* (cf. Acts 22:16) Every time you come to the Lord Jesus, *calling on His name* in repentance of sins, it takes you back to your baptism where His death is your death and His rising to life is your resurrection as well (cf. Romans 6:3-5).

Something else happened there too: you were covered with Christ Jesus. Galatians 3:27 says: *As many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ.* You are now covered with Christ and His righteousness. Your identity changed at that font, so much so that you can exclaim: *I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ Who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, Who loved me and gave Himself for me.* (cf. Galatians 2:20) Your destiny changed at that font, so much so that you can exclaim: *For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.* (cf. Philippians 1:21) Your perspective while dealing with the presence of sin changed at that font, so much so that you can exclaim: "I am truly blessed for my *transgression is forgiven* and my *sin is **covered*** in Jesus." Amen.

Based upon the book, “Flowing from the Cross: Six Facets of God’s Forgiveness” by Daniel Paavola. © 2020 Published by Concordia Publishing, St. Louis, MO.

Unless otherwise indicated, all scripture quotations are from The Holy Bible, English Standard Version, copyright © 2001 by Crossway Bibles, a division of Good News Publishers. Used by permission. All rights reserved.