

The Forgiving King

In 1498, Louis XII of France rose to the throne under tense circumstances. Many of the nobles had opposed him while he was the Duke of Orléans. Some had even tried to have him killed. And now, those very people were under his authority.

Everyone expected revenge. In fact, some of his advisors urged him to execute or imprison his former enemies. And Louis did something interesting: he made a long list of the names of those who had betrayed or conspired against him.

That list began to circulate throughout the court. His enemies were terrified. They knew their names were there. The message was clear: the king knew who had wronged him.

But then everything changed. Louis XII took the list and, one by one, he drew a red cross next to each name. His advisors were confused. “Sire, what does this mean? These are your enemies!”

And Louis said something unforgettable: “Yes, I know. But the cross means they are forgiven. Do you think I keep a record of injuries after I have pardoned them?” *

The King of kings, Jesus Christ, knows all who have sinned against Him, and that list includes ALL of us: “for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God” (Romans 3:23).

But the King of kings loves us and desires to save us. In order to save us, God’s justice must be satisfied, sin must be punished.

So, the King died on the cross for our sins (1 Corinthians 15:3-4). Through the blood that He shed on the cross, we can be cleansed of our sins when we accept His offer of salvation on His terms.

“In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace” (Ephesians 1:7).

God will forgive and give eternal life to those who place their faith and trust in Jesus (Acts 16:30-31), turn from their sins in repentance (Acts 17:30-31), confess Jesus before men (Romans 10:9-10), and are baptized (immersed) into Christ for the forgiveness of sins (Acts 2:38). He will continue to cleanse from sin those who continue to walk in the light of His Word (1 John 1:7-9).

“But King,” the skeptic might say, “they have sinned against You.” And the King will answer: “Yes, I know. But the cross means they are forgiven. Do you think I keep a record of injuries after I have pardoned them?”

-- David A. Sargent

* Information gleaned and only slightly adapted from “34 Sermon Illustrations on Forgiveness” by Darrell Stetler II in www.newstartdiscipleship.com