

Why You Should Stop Vilifying This Woman

“Hello? Is this Mrs. Kauffman? Can you take this baby?”

My mind was reeling with joy and confusion at the same time. I sat at my office desk listening intently as the child placement officer ran through the police records documenting the dreadful events which had led up to the decision to remove an infant from the home.

Yes! I will take the baby. I was overjoyed at the prospect of welcoming a baby in need into my home. My husband and I had been through extensive foster training. We signed up for days like this. And to tell you the truth, I was excited. It had been a long time since I'd cuddled an infant. All my mommy-senses were coming alive!

“What did you say the birth mother did?” Oh my gosh! Who does that? How awful!

And because there is no category in my past experience for mothers who are not responsible parents like me, I subconsciously vilified her, and stuffed her horrible behavior into a drawer in my mind's filing cabinet labeled “Things I Will Not Tolerate.”

Then I moved on, putting all my attention and energy into loving this little angel as my own.

Occasionally, a twinge of guilt would surface. On those occasions, I would retrieve that dark file and read over all the dreadful events surrounding this helpless child. Thus I would vilify the mother all over again and feel justified in putting that dark file back into its proper place, “Things I Will Not Tolerate”.

But then this little angel starts to grow. And wow, there is a striking family resemblance. I cannot deny what I see. I cannot ignore the fact that her features remind me that she was made to belong to someone else. I have fallen in love with this little needy life. But her purpose is bound up with someone I have vilified. And so I am forced to re-think my filing system.

With tentative confidence, I recall the power of God. I recount Bible stories and stories of parents I know, and parents I have heard of, where the God of miracles brought parents out of darkness into light. I recall His unwavering commitment to love people—all people, against all odds.

Slowly at first, but then steadily, I find myself taking out that dark file and putting it in another drawer. The one labeled, “Things God Wants to Restore.” And now I am free from the awkward burden of having to judge. I can trust God to carry out His purposes that are, quite frankly, confusing to me at the moment.

We all know “island” Christians. Maybe you are one. It goes like this: “I love Jesus. I read the Bible. I just don’t like the church.” They keep their distance with iPod pastors and playlist worship services. If pressured to explain, out comes a dark file of dreadful experiences.

“Would you like to know what my pastor/elder/church member did?” Oh my gosh! Who does that? How awful!

And because you had no category in your past experience for church people who were money-hungry hypocrites, there was a justified decision to vilify all Christians. Subsequently, every church is guilty by association and promptly stuffed into a drawer labeled, “Things I Will Not Tolerate.”

But here’s the rub. The purposes of God are tightly bound up with the people of God (aka the church). God is so passionately committed to His people that He refers to them

with a highly emotional term, calling them His bride. To say you are a serious follower of Jesus but reject the church is like someone saying this to my husband, "I really admire you a lot. I'd like to invite you over to get to know you better. But please leave your wife at home. She is an over-talkative drama queen. As a matter of fact, don't bring any of your seven children either. I'm sure they are all like her."

It would not be possible for someone to have a meaningful friendship with my husband and at the same time have a disdain for me. Even though I admit I can be a drama queen ... and sometimes too talkative.

And so it is with us. We are severely disappointed and disgusted by a long list of dreadful acts done by those who proclaim to be our sisters and brothers in Christ. Yet we must face the fact that we cannot love Jesus and at the same time reject the ones He died for.

So like me you must, with tentative confidence, recall the power of God. Recount Bible stories and stories of people you know, and people you have heard of, where the God of miracles brought people out of terrible lives of darkness into new light-filled ones.

We must constantly recall His unwavering commitment to love people—all people, against all odds. The Holy Spirit compels us to rethink our filing system, to have the courage to take out that dark file and put it in a new drawer. The one labeled, "Things God Wants to Restore." The result is an amazing freedom to love your brothers and sisters without the awkward burden of having to judge.

Quite frankly, to trust God to carry out His purposes that confuse you at the moment leads you into the company of some mighty strong believers. {eo}

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"Snow White," Susan has raised a family of seven children that is always growing with new spouses and grandchildren. Just when she was about to fall asleep for 100 years, her Prince Charming felt the call to foster, and so the adventure continues.