

The Savior & the Adulteress

Jn 8:1-11

INTRODUCTION

- A. An unmarked tombstone outside of Sydney, New York has but one word on it: “Forgiven.”
 - 1. There is no more beautiful word than “forgiven.”
 - 2. Scripture speaks of the blessings of forgiveness.
 - a. Ps 32:1.
 - b. Eph 1:7.
- B. The episode of the woman caught in adultery highlights God’s forgiveness; this morning, we want to examine that story to see what lessons we can learn.

THE CONNIVERS, vv 1-4

- A. Early in the morning, Jesus was teaching the people in the temple, v 2.
 - 1. The outer court served as a place where scribes could gather their students & teach them.
 - 2. Jesus is following that practice of teaching his students.
- B. The accusers, v 3a—A group of Jewish leaders approached Jesus.
 - 1. The scribes & Pharisees came before Jesus.
 - 2. Scribes were those who studied the law & taught it; many of them were Pharisees.
 - 3. The Pharisees were a group known for their legalism.
 - a. The highest qualification for membership was strict adherence to the law—oral or written.
 - b. Josephus, the Jewish historian, describes them as “a certain sect of Jews that appear more religious than others, and seem to interpret the laws more accurately.”
 - c. This was the group that pledged the highest allegiance to the Law.
 - d. Because the Pharisees were so strict, they often unevenly applied their laws (Mt 23:23).
- C. The accused, vv 8:3b-4—They put before him a woman caught in the act of adultery.
 - 1. There is much wrong with adultery.
 - a. It is a sin against the body (1 Cor 6:18).
 - b. It is a sin against the home.
 - 1) It undermines the sanctity of the home.
 - 2) It is the only sin which permits divorce & remarriage (Mt 19:9).
 - c. It is a sin against the soul (Prov 6:32). Adultery sends the soul to hell (1 Cor 6:9-10).
 - d. Illustration about the “Wicked Bible,” *Encyclopedia of 15,000 Illustrations*, #36.
 - 2. This woman & her partner likely thought what we all think—“No one will ever know what I did.” Yet, that’s not always the case (Num 32:23).

THE CONNIVING, vv 5-6a

- A. What they said, v 5—“The Law of Moses says to stone her. What do you say?”
 - 1. The Law of Moses did teach that she should be stoned.
 - a. Lev 20:10.
 - b. Deut 22:22.
 - c. However, the Law of Moses also taught that **both** she & the man with whom she was committing adultery were to be stoned. The scribes & Pharisees disobeyed the Law of Moses by only bringing this woman.
 - 2. The scribes & Pharisees wanted to know what Jesus thought on the subject.

- B. Why they said it, v 8:6—They wanted him to say something that they could use against him.
 - 1. There is little evidence that stoning for adultery was very often carried out in first-century Palestine, especially in urban areas.
 - 2. the scribes & Pharisees purposefully put Jesus between a rock & a hard place.
 - a. If Jesus disavowed the Law of Moses, his credibility would have been severely undermined & his teaching would have been rejected.
 - b. If he upheld the Law of Moses, he would get in trouble with the Roman authorities; only the Roman governor had authority to impose capital punishment.
 - 3. These Jewish authorities weren't interested in carrying out the Law of Moses.
 - a. Had they been interested in fulfilling the Law, they would have brought the woman's partner with her.
 - b. They just wanted Jesus to make a fool of himself.
- C. The scribes & Pharisees were terribly harsh with this woman.
 - 1. They did not care about her as a person; they simply used her for their own purposes.
 - 2. They exploited her sinfulness, and made a public example of her.
 - a. We dare not exploit a person's sinfulness.
 - b. When Joseph thought Mary had been sexually unfaithful to him, he did not want to make her a public example (Mt 1:19).
- D. The scribes & Pharisees were judgmental with this woman.
 - 1. They outright condemned this woman without a second thought.
 - 2. We can do the very same thing.
 - a. A teenager becomes pregnant & we ostracize her instead of attempting to help her.
 - b. A couple in the church is getting a divorce & instead of caring for them we just cut them off.
 - 3. We dare not be judgmental.
 - a. Mt 7:1.
 - b. Rom 14:4.
 - c. Js 4:12.
 - 4. Just because we aren't to be judgmental doesn't mean that we are to condone sin.
 - a. God does not condone sin.
 - 1) Rom 1:18.
 - 2) In this episode, Jesus doesn't condone the woman's sin; he tells her to go & sin no more (v 11).
 - b. We dare not condone sin.
 - 1) Gal 6:1—If we are to restore someone caught in sin, we can't condone his sin; we must recognize his sin.
 - 2) 1 Tm 5:20.
 - c. When someone is in sin, we are to help, not condemn.
 - 1) Sometimes this will mean tough love—such as in cases of disfellowship.
 - 2) Yet, we should always have the person's best interest at heart.

THE CHALLENGE, vv 6b–8

- A. What Jesus does, vv 6b, 8—Twice he bends down & writes in the dust.
 - 1. There are several traditions about what Jesus wrote in the dust, but we have no way of knowing.
 - 2. This was probably a delaying tactic on Jesus' part; he was giving the Jews time to think about what they had done.
- B. What Jesus says, v 7—“He who is without sin among you, let him throw a stone at her first.”
 - 1. The Law of Moses stated that the witnesses should throw the first stones (Deut 17:7).
 - 2. This does not mean as some allege that these individuals had to be sinless to stone this woman.

- a. It rather means that they could not be guilty of this particular sin.
- b. Sometimes we condemn individuals for doing the same thing we've done.
 - 1) Perhaps we're in a store & see a mother screaming at her children.
 - a) We think to ourselves, "I can't believe she's being so cruel."
 - b) Then we go home & yell at our own children.
 - 2) Perhaps we hear of someone taking money from his workplace.
 - a) We say, "I'd never do that."
 - b) Yet, we make personal long-distance calls from work.
- c. We can't condemn those who commit the same sins we commit.
 - 1) Rom 2:1.
 - 2) Mt 7:3-5.

THE CONVICTED, v 9

- A. The Jews all walk away in shame.
- B. They, too, had sin in their lives, and they could not rightfully pass judgment upon this woman.
 - 1. We have sin in our lives as well.
 - a. Rom 3:12.
 - b. 1 Jn 1:8.
 - 2. Are we convicted of our sins? Do we realize that we are all sinners?

THE CLEANSED, vv 10-11

- A. This woman experiences no earthly condemnation, v 10.
 - 1. Her accusers have disappeared.
 - 2. There is no one who can condemn us, either. Some people will try, but they have no right to do so.
- B. This woman experiences no heavenly condemnation, v 11.
 - 1. Jesus does not condemn this woman, either.
 - 2. Jesus did not come to this earth to condemn, but to save.
 - a. Jn 3:17.
 - b. Jn 12:47.
 - 3. If we come to Jesus, he will not condemn us.
 - a. Jn 5:24.
 - b. Rom 8:1.
 - 1) If we are abiding in Jesus, all our sins are forgiven.
 - 2) There is only one way to get into Jesus—we must be baptized.
 - a) Rom 6:3.
 - b) Gal 3:27.
 - 3) Have you been baptized into Jesus where there is no condemnation? Are you abiding in Jesus?