

EXPOSITION OF JOHN

Message #37

John 8:1-11

In the course of years, I have witnessed to many people about Jesus Christ. Some of those people have given different reasons for not accepting Christ as Savior. I had one man tell me he couldn't be saved because he liked to drink beer. I had a woman tell me she couldn't be saved because she had been immoral. I had another woman tell me she couldn't be saved because she had had an abortion. I had a man tell me he could not be saved because of a crime he had committed. Make no mistake about this - **no one will be exempt from heaven because he has committed a certain sin; one will only be kept out of heaven because he has not believed in Jesus Christ.**

Jesus Christ came into this world to save sinners. He will give life to any who will believe on Him. Never is that more evident than in the passage that lies before us. The main point is this:

NO MATTER WHAT A PERSON'S PAST SIN THAT PERSON MAY BE SAVED IF HE WILL PRESENTLY BELIEVE ON JESUS CHRIST.

Here is a very famous story in the New Testament. Most Bible scholars believe this story is very authentic. As John Calvin said this story is found in "many old Greek manuscripts" (John Calvin, *Commentary on the Holy Gospel of Jesus Christ According to John*, Vol. 1. p. 319). Some have disregarded the story because some of the older manuscripts do not contain it. However, Papias, who was the Pastor of the church of Hierapolis in Phrygia, who was known for collecting data set forth by the apostles around A.D. 110, reproduces this story about this woman who was "accused before the Lord of many sins." Papias said that he actually heard John speak with "his own ears" (Eusebius, *The History of the Church*, p. 151 and 153). It is generally believed that some of the early legalistic Church leaders thought that this story presented a lenient attitude toward immorality and so they left it out. However what really happens here is that you end up seeing the truth about the pure Grace of God. **In fact, in this one text we get to clearly see the difference between O.T. Law and N.T. Grace.**

In this story, a woman is taken in adultery and dragged before Jesus Christ at the temple to be judged. Something apparently happens to this woman, she believes on Jesus Christ, and leaves with a clean slate. She leaves in a right relationship with God. She learns, and so does everyone else that it wasn't her sin that would condemn her; it was her rejection of Jesus Christ that would condemn her.

Every person is a sinner. Every person will stand before a Holy God. The thing that will ultimately cause a person to be sentenced to hell will not be his sin, but his rejection of Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ has made every provision possible for forgiveness of sins. He permitted His body to be broken and His blood to be shed so sins could be forgiven. Any who will believe on Him will have life. But those who reject Him will be condemned.

Now there are eight narrative parts to this famous story:

NARRATIVE PART #1 – Jesus goes into the mountain to spend the night. 8:1

In the Greek text, verse 53 of chapter 7 is connected to verse 1 of chapter 8. The conjunction “but” which begins verse 1 is a sharp contrasting conjunction. What this means is verse 1 of chapter 8 sits in sharp contrast to verse 53 of chapter 7.

What that means is that everyone else had a home to go to but not Jesus Christ. Christ had no home to go to and no one had invited Him to their home. In other words, Christ has to spend the night in the mountains because He had no place to go.

Jesus Christ can relate to the most destitute of people. Think of the thousands of homeless men and women that are in existence and also think, Jesus was one of them. There were no homeless shelters or mission agencies to go to, so Christ went into the mountains. Just think of this. Jesus Christ is God and He is Israel’s King of Kings. He is in His temple and not one of the religious leaders cares if He has a place to even sleep.

You purpose to follow Jesus Christ and you will discover the same will be true of you at times. Everyone else may seem to prosper and have everything and you may have little or next to nothing. Just remember, you are in good company with the Lord Jesus Christ.

NARRATIVE PART #2 – Jesus goes into the temple to teach in the morning. 8:2

Now among scholars there is a debate as to when this event actually occurred. We believe it occurred right here where John puts it. Christ came down from the mountain and went to the temple to teach. John is in perfect position to put the story here, because he was there.

Jesus Christ was the greatest teacher these people would ever hear. They turned out in droves to hear Him. Something caught John’s eye about this scene, he noticed that Christ sat down to teach. Probably He was tired and exhausted, perhaps cold and hungry, from spending the night in the mountains. He was weary so He sat down. There is nothing wrong with having to sit down to teach, even when it is in God’s Temple.

Several years ago, George Gardiner, the famed preacher of Calvary Church in Grand Rapids, was dying of cancer and was too weak and tired to stand, so they put up a stool so he could sit and teach as long as he wanted.

I want you to notice this critical point - **Jesus Christ had power to do anything He wanted to do and the thing we find Him doing in His Temple is TEACHING the Word of God.**

I believe there are going to be some men who pastored churches who will be greatly ashamed for their lack of teaching. They wasted their time doing everything but teaching. Jesus Christ took teaching God’s Word very seriously and those who are Christ-like will do the same.

NARRATIVE PART #3 – The religious leaders bring Christ a woman caught in adultery. 8:3

Now notice the scribes and Pharisees brought a woman to Jesus Christ who was caught in adultery. The ground or reason or motive for this woman being taken before Christ was adultery. Now let us remember that it is “early in the morning” (8:1). So this woman had been involved in this activity during the night. In fact, the words of verse 4 indicate that she had been taken in the very act of adultery.

Now when the scribes and Pharisees brought this woman to Christ, we know that they were not interested in really enforcing the Law of Moses. Their motive was political and not spiritual. They are out to try and get something against Jesus Christ. We know this because if true righteous spirituality had been their intent, they would have also brought the man involved. If there is adultery - you have a man and a woman. But only the woman was brought to Christ, so we know their motives were not pure and Christ knew that as well, because He knew what was in every person (John 2:25).

Back in the olden days, women were primarily to blame for adultery but in modern times it is more the men who are to blame. In God’s time, both are to blame and as one develops in a true relationship with God, one will accept his or her own blame. Blaming others attempts to cover up one’s real problem and it promotes one’s own political agenda.

There are times when one in sin needs to be reported. But we must always be willing to ask ourselves this - why do I need to report this? Is it because I truly want to do God’s will and protect His church, or do I have a hidden agenda?

NARRATIVE PART #4 – The religious leaders test Christ with this case of the adulterous woman. 8:4-6a

Carefully notice the title that the scribes and Pharisees give to Christ – “Teacher.” They do not acknowledge Him as Messiah and they certainly do not acknowledge Him as their God/Savior.

This woman had been taken in the very act of adultery, which means there was a man present. When they appeal to the Law of Moses in verse 5, they are not motivated by pure motivation. In fact, in Leviticus 20:10, both the man and the woman are to be put to death (Deuteronomy 22:22). These leaders are not interested in what is really right, they are trying to trick Christ so they might have some basis to accuse Him for making a wrong judgment.

Their thinking was this:

- 1) If Christ acquits this woman - we can accuse Him of violating the Law of Moses.
- 2) If Christ executes this woman - we can show He is much harsher than we are and He will lose popularity. Plus people can report Him to the Romans who do not permit any Jew to carry out their own executions (John 18:21).

These men really thought they had trapped Jesus Christ.

There are times when people will question us and quiz us, not because they are really interested in knowing truth or knowing what is right, but simply because they want to trap us. In those moments, we need the wisdom of God.

NARRATIVE PART #5 – Jesus writes in the ground with his finger. 8:6b

Here is the only record we have of Jesus Christ Personally writing anything. More has been written about Jesus Christ than any other Person in the world; however, this is the only time we have a record of Him writing something. Augustine believed there was a real contrast here between O.T. law and N.T. grace. Under O.T. law the finger of God writes laws on stone, but under N.T. grace, the finger of God writes acquittal upon men made of dust (Calvin, p. 319).

In the book of Jeremiah (17:13), there is a picture of those who have rejected God on earth being written down. They have forsaken the living water. There has been many guesses as to what Jesus Christ was writing but the most logical is that He was writing the names of those who had rejected Him and perhaps even listing some of their sins. He writes on the ground because this is where they are headed, to the ground for every one of these Christ-rejecters would die in their sin. Make no mistake about this - every person is known by Jesus Christ.

NARRATIVE PART #6 – The leaders persist and demand that Christ judge this situation.
8:7-8

Christ stood up and said - I turn the case back over to you - You who have not sinned cast the first stone. Now Christ was in a position to stone everyone at this meeting. Under law He could have executed everybody, but He came to offer Grace. Christ is not teaching that no judgment should ever be made by sinners nor is He teaching against capital punishment. What He is teaching is that judgments must be made with righteous motives and people must see themselves as sinners. So instead of Him judging the woman taken in adultery, He judged the ones doing the judging.

Notice immediately after He said this - He stooped back down and wrote on the ground. Probably writing names of the people and the sins they had committed. Had any dared pick up a stone, Christ could have pointed out their name and their sin.

When we find ourselves enraged by the sin of others, we need to first ask ourselves honestly “why”? Perhaps the motive is pure, or perhaps the motive is to cover our own hypocrisy, but whatever the motive, God knows what it is.

NARRATIVE PART #7 – All the people leave the temple. 8:9

When the people heard Christ say this - they all left. Why? Why did they all leave? Every single person there had to admit and face their own sin. There was no one there who was without sin. The older people were the first to acknowledge this truth and the younger followed.

Christ’s righteous hammer hit every one of them. Every person should have fallen down before Jesus Christ and asked Him for His saving grace and mercy. They have all admitted they are sinners who cannot cast the first stone, but they refuse to go to the only One who can forgive their sin and rather than go to Him, they go home. Many people admit they aren’t perfect. Many admit they have sinned. But very few, comparatively speaking, look to the only One who can forgive it.

Frankly, when the Word of God is carefully and accurately taught it exposes sin. That is why most people do not like a church that preaches truth and makes them confront their own sin. Most like a church as long as they feel good and as long as they think they are righteous and okay with God, but the moment truth confronts them - they leave, they quit, they go home, they go somewhere else.

NARRATIVE PART #8 – Christ forgives the woman her adultery sin. 8:9b-11

One commentator said, “no one is ever saved by Grace until they are indicted by the Law.” Now when the people had left it was just Jesus and this woman who had committed adultery. Christ said, “Where are the people who condemn you?”

Now when Christ asked this question - she responded by saying “no one” is here to condemn me. But notice the next word “Lord.” Do you see that? She recognizes who Jesus Christ is. This woman knows that this is “The” Lord. This is the only Person who is in a position to acquit her and He does.

He wipes her slate clean. When He says “go and sin no more,” what He means is do not get into adultery ever again. He uses a present tense for the verb “sin.” He is commanding her not to ever get into this sin from now on. That is what Grace does. It shows a person how vile and sinful he really is and then shows how all the evil is forgiven in Jesus Christ and when a person believes on Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit enters the person and they do not want to get involved in the same things again.

If a person is to be right with God, that person must face his or her own sin. We don’t get any follow-up to what happened to this woman, but I’ll bet she never did get involved in adultery again.

No one will go to hell because he committed a particular sin; one goes to hell because one has not been acquitted by Jesus Christ. Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and no matter what your sin, you shall be saved.

In verse 11, Jesus, having acquitted this woman says “neither do I condemn you.” When Jesus Christ makes this statement it certainly means, no one shall be able to lay any condemnatory charge against God’s elect; certainly Christ won’t (Romans 8:33-34) and if God is for us, who can be against us (Romans 8:31).

Any person can leave this church right now and be completely acquitted of all condemnatory sin, by personally meeting with Jesus Christ by faith.