

Lessons in Judgment & Grace

John 7:53 - 8:11

53 And everyone went to his own house. 1 But Jesus went to the Mount of Olives. 2 Now early in the morning He came again into the temple, and all the people came to Him; and He sat down and taught them. 3 Then the scribes and Pharisees brought to Him a woman caught in adultery. And when they had set her in the midst, 4 they said to Him, "Teacher, this woman was caught in adultery, in the very act. 5 "Now Moses, in the law, commanded us that such should be stoned. But what do You say?" 6 This they said, testing Him, that they might have something of which to accuse Him. But Jesus stooped down and wrote on the ground with His finger, as though He did not hear. 7 So when they continued asking Him, He raised Himself up and said to them, "He who is without sin among you, let him throw a stone at her first." 8 And again He stooped down and wrote on the ground. 9 Then those who heard it, being convicted by their conscience, went out one by one, beginning with the oldest even to the last. And Jesus was left alone, and the woman standing in the midst. 10 When Jesus had raised Himself up and saw no one but the woman, He said to her, "Woman, where are those accusers of yours? Has no one condemned you?" 11 She said, "No one, Lord." And Jesus said to her, "Neither do I condemn you; go and sin no more." NKJV

We will leave the textual controversy concerning this passage for another time and place.

I think this passage is very much a part of the gospel of John and is very typical of exactly how we might expect Jesus to handle just such a situation. Therefore we will just deal with the passage.

Once again we find Jesus in the temple teaching the people. He was able to draw large crowds and provoked the jealousy of the Pharisees and scribes who fancied themselves as authorities concerning the law of Moses and things concerning God.

So we find that they have devised a trap to discredit Jesus. This is not the only time but one of many, but each one ends with them being embarrassed. If they had only known who Jesus was, that He was the wellspring of all wisdom and knowledge.

I. The Condemned

A. A woman caught in the very act of adultery.

1. What has always intrigued me about this story is the whereabouts of the man. Don't you always catch two people in adultery.
2. This may have even been a setup so as to have the case to bring before Jesus.
3. Throughout this account the woman never objects or denies that she is guilty.
4. She is very probably ashamed and very down to be brought into the presence of the sinless Son of God.

II. The Judgment

- A. Moses, in the Law condemned those who would commit adultery.
 - 1. Lev 20:10 'The man who commits adultery with another man's wife, he who commits adultery with his neighbor's wife, the adulterer and the adulteress, shall surely be put to death. NKJV
 - 2. Deut 22:22 "If a man is found lying with a woman married to a husband, then both of them shall die — the man that lay with the woman, and the woman; so you shall put away the evil from Israel. NKJV
- B. Long ago in Israel they had forgone stoning adulteress.
 - 1. But the law of Moses was more than the reflections of Moses, it was the law of a holy God.
 - 2. There were any number of things in the OT that the judgment for was stoning to death, the common practice of capital punishment.
 - 3. Although we might be horrified at the idea of stoning for sins like taking God's name in vain or not keeping the Sabbath day holy, they would equally be appalled that today capital punishment is out of the question even for the most horrific crimes.
- C. God has not changed the way He views sin or His judgment for it.
 - 1. 1 Cor 6:9-11 Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor sodomites, 10 nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit the kingdom of God. NKJV
 - 2. Rev 21:8 But the cowardly, unbelieving, abominable, murderers, sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death." NKJV
 - 3. Rev 22:14-15 Blessed are those who do His commandments, that they may have the right to the tree of life, and may enter through the gates into the city. 15 But outside are dogs and sorcerers and sexually immoral and murderers and idolaters, and whoever loves and practices a lie. NKJV

III. The Question

- A. But what do you say.
 - 1. They insinuated that Jesus did not agree with the Law of Moses and therefore stood opposed to the standards of God.
 - a. This was hardly true since Jesus condemned divorce and said that those who divorce for the wrong reasons cause their mates to

commit adultery.

- b. Also Jesus had said that anyone looking on a woman lustfully had committed adultery with her already in God's eyes.
 - c. The idea that somehow Jesus does not care how we live our lives is a lie from the pits of hell.
 - d. In Matt 5:48 Jesus said, "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect." KJV
2. But even if He said to stone her, they would be able to condemn Him to the government for Rome had removed from the Jews the option of death in judgements.
- B. But Jesus does not answer them at all.
1. Instead He stoops down and writes on the ground.
 2. They now think they have Him and just keep pressing Him for answer.
 3. That is the idea that "they kept on asking Him"
- C. Finally He stands and says to go ahead and stone her but the first one to throw a stone must himself be without sin.
1. This of course excluded everyone but Jesus.
 2. The crowd begins to disperse beginning with the eldest to the youngest.
- D. While they are thinking of their own sins, Jesus once again stoops down and writes on the ground.
1. It is the older ones who first drift away being convinced of their own sin.
 2. Finally the youngest decide they cannot stand their alone.
 3. Finally Jesus stands up but those who accused the woman are gone and the woman stands before Jesus.
 4. Jesus asks her about her accusers, is there any of them left.
 5. To which she replies that they are all gone.

IV. Grace

- A. Jesus who was the only one who could have thrown the first stone responds, "Neither do I condemn you."
- B. And then He releases her by saying "Go"
- C. She is free to go, the ordeal is over.
- D. But even grace says "Go and sin no more"

1. Many people think that grace just leaves sinners in the misery of sin, to continue to suffer under its cruel mastery.
 2. But no, sin no more Jesus says to her.
- E. Grace that does not seek the rescue of the sinner from sin is not grace.
- F. Also we must understand that it is because Jesus will die for her sin that Jesus allows her to go free.
1. Because God is holy God cannot allow sin to go unpunished.
 2. He chose to punish His own Son for our sins.
 3. We can have apart in that by surrendering our lives to Him.
- V. Lessons from this passage
- A. God still thinks of sin as He always has, God does not change.
- B. God can forgive any sin, because the death of Jesus paid the price.
1. 1Jn 1:6 If we say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth. 7 But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin.
- C. God is eager to forgive us if we will repent.
- D. There is no sin hidden from God, not even the thoughts of our hearts.

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