

## Set Free from Condemnation

Many people practise sin and then live under guilt and condemnation for the rest of their lives. Many come to faith in Christ and yet still live with guilt and condemnation not really believing that Jesus has fully forgiven them. In some situations the guilt and condemnation is aggravated by the fact that others are involved or know about a particular sin and they won't let it go and thus won't let you go. They constantly remind you of what you did so keeping you feeling utterly condemned. But is this the way Jesus treats us?

John 8: 1 – 11

### 1) The humiliation of sin (vs. 1 – 5)

- Jesus was in the temple where all the people gathered around him.
  - If this was at that time of the Feast of Tabernacles then there would have been many people present when Jesus taught them in the temple.
- The woman was then brought before Jesus and everyone else present and her sin of adultery was announced to all.
  - She was publicly shamed and condemned by the religious leaders.
- Sin in itself has the effect of humiliating and bringing a sense of shame.
  - Adam and Eve were both naked and they felt no shame (Genesis 2: 25) Shame came through sin and they had no sin at that stage.
  - Jeremiah 31:19 **After I strayed**, I repented; after I came to understand, I beat my breast. I was **ashamed** and **humiliated** because I bore the **disgrace** of my youth.
  - Romans 6: 20 – 21 When you were **slaves to sin**, you were free from the control of righteousness. <sup>21</sup> What benefit did you reap at that time from the things you are now **ashamed** of? Those things result in death!
- Many people have a secret sin in their lives. The reason that it is secret is because they are ashamed of it.
  - Some enjoy that sin but are still ashamed of it
  - Some enjoy that sin but know that it is wrong and fear being exposed in public if they confess it.
  - Some do not enjoy that sin but cannot get free from it but won't confess it for fear of being exposed.
- Besides sin in itself being humiliating and shameful we are condemned all the more by others who accuse us for what we have done wrong.
- We are told not to judge others and not to condemn others.
  - When we do so we work contrary to the Spirit of grace that wants to set people free from their condemnation and not to keep them bound to it.
- Some accusations aren't always true or accurate and bring false condemnation on us.
  - The religious leaders twisted the law by saying that "the Law of Moses commanded us to stone such a woman".
  - Deut 22:23 If a man happens to meet in a town a virgin **pledged to be married** and he sleeps with her, <sup>24</sup> you shall **take both of them to the gate of that town and stone them to death**--the girl because she was in a town and did not scream for help, and the man because **he violated another man's wife**. You must purge the evil from among you
  - Deut 22:22 If a man is found sleeping with another man's wife, **both the man who slept with her and the woman must die**. You must purge the evil from Israel.
  - Lev 20:10 " `If a man commits adultery with another man's wife--with the wife of his neighbor-- **both the adulterer and the adulteress must be put to death**."
- The obvious question that we need to ask here is: "Where is the man? Why isn't he brought before Jesus to be condemned?"
  - Thus the religious leaders were not entirely correct in their interpretation of the Law of Moses.
  - We would have accusers that would condemn us according to their own interpretation of the events of our lives and not according to truth.

## 2) Jesus confronts our accusers (vs. 6 – 8)

- We need to keep in mind that Satan is the accuser of the brethren
  - For the accuser of our brothers, who accuses them before our God day and night, has been hurled down. (Revelation 12: 10)
  - He will use people to accuse us and condemn us. Our battle is not against flesh and blood
- In this situation the religious leaders weren't just accusing the woman they were trying to trick Jesus into saying something that they could accuse him of wrong.
- We don't know what Jesus wrote on the ground so we won't guess.
- Jesus' answer to them was, "If any one of you is without sin, let him be the first to throw a stone at her."
- The Greek for "without sin" can also read "If any of you is sinless".
  - As with Satan all accusers are hypocrites as they themselves are sinful yet are quick to point out the sinfulness of others
  - Jesus confronts the hypocrisy of our accusers by turning their eyes to their own sinfulness.
  - Donald Guthrie in his commentary on John says "[Jesus] transforms a legal quibble into a moral issue.
  - Accusers are often concerned about what is right according to the law rather than what is morally right – according to conscience.
- We should not concern ourselves about what others say about us, but rather about what Jesus says about us
  - What the religious leaders and what Jesus said about the woman caught in adultery were very different
- Jesus has already taken care of our main accuser – Satan – when he died on the cross and took our sin, guilt, shame and condemnation on himself.
  - He is now at the right hand of the Father interceding for us.

## 3) Freedom from condemnation (vs. 9 – 11)

- After being confronted by Jesus the woman's accusers all left and no one condemned her
- Jesus was the only one there who had every right to condemn her.
  - He was the only one who was sinless
  - Jesus did not deal with her legalistically but mercifully
  - *James 2:12* Speak and act as those who are going to be judged by the law that gives freedom, <sup>13</sup> because judgment without mercy will be shown to anyone who has not been merciful. Mercy triumphs over judgment!
- Jesus dealt with her gently as one who is frail and needs care.
  - When he said "Woman, where are they?" He wasn't being harsh but he was speaking the way he spoke to his mother when he was on the cross: "Dear woman, here is your son..."
  - It was a sign of caring that while he was suffering he showed that kind of love and care to his mother.
- Jesus speaks the words "Then neither do I condemn you."
  - These are words that this woman needed to hear
  - Her sin was real and she was under true condemnation but Jesus extended grace and removed her from being condemned.
- However He gave her a condition – Go now and leave your life of sin
  - Jesus never overlooked her sin but knew that he was going to die for that sin.
  - If we continue in sin we condemn ourselves because Jesus has instructed us to go and sin no more
- *Romans 8:1* Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, <sup>2</sup> because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit of life set me free from the law of sin and death.