

The Gospel of John - #31 - 05/09/2021 - "ALL My Sins Forgiven!" John 8: 1-11

Introduction: IL- Sunday School teacher asked her class, "What do we need to do before we ask for forgiveness?" A young boy in the back responded- "Sin!" Today's text and the message God has laid on my heart both have to do with forgiveness of sin- something all of us need!

Textual Issues- 7: 53 and 8: 1 Text criticism- issue of the number of copies with this text in them versus the oldest manuscripts that have the text or not. There is also the matter of placement of this text- some think it should go at the end of John- 21:25- turn there with me! "Now there are also many other things that Jesus did. Were every one of them to be written, I suppose that the world itself could not contain the books that would be written." It doesn't fit there, in my opinion. Only 4% of textual critics move the text to another place in the Gospels. More texts are better, in my opinion, to reconstruct the original text written by John- within 40 years of his writing and in subsequent years we have 5,795 Greek texts with this passage in them and also more than 19,000 in the Syrian and Latin languages! Here the story rings true as Jesus goes to the Mount of Olives (25-minute walk to the city, passing the Garden of Gethsemane and the burial places of Old Testament prophets like Zechariah), then the next morning is back in the Temple six months before the Passover and His work on the Cross. Here is what I know for certain- 2 Timothy 3: 16 says, "ALL Scripture is given by inspiration of God..." and that means that if I revere John 3: 16 and revel in God's love I can also hold dear this amazing passage about God's forgiveness!

Testing the Messiah- 8: 2 - 6(a) John mentions once again the scribes and Pharisees and their hateful pursuit of Jesus. In this context it is to be noted that the scribes are mentioned first because they were the experts in Mosaic Law and in both copying the Old Testament as well as teaching it. A great, positive example of such a scribe is Ezra! In Ezra 7: 10 we read- "Ezra set his heart to study the law of the Lord and to do it and to teach His statutes and rules in Israel." These scribes fell far behind Ezra in terms of their reputation. "In the morning" as the sun was breaking Jesus came to the Temple, sat down and began to teach the crowds that recognized Him and thronged Him. Sitting down was a common way to handle teaching for a long period of time. Luke 4 records Jesus reading from Isaiah 61, a prophecy about Himself, then turning the scroll over to the attendant, being seated and teaching those who came to hear, whose eyes had been fixed on Him. While he is teaching here in our text, the religious leaders bring to Him a woman caught in the very act of adultery. These scribes and Pharisees weren't there to listen or learn or even to lay all HER cards on the table- they were on hand to test or trap Jesus in some wrong response and thereby ruin His reputation. BUT- some key questions stand out: did they look through someone's window late at night to see this adultery occur? Did they break down the door to grab her for this very encounter with Jesus? Had they heard malicious things about her and set a trap for her? But the most glaring question in my opinion is: where is the MAN involved? They knew the law about adultery and told the truth, to a point. But again- where is the man who sinned? Leviticus 20: 10- "If a MAN commits adultery with the wife of his neighbor, both the adulterer and the adulteress shall be put to death." And Deuteronomy 22: 22 says- "If a man is found lying with the wife of another man, both of them shall die- the man who lay with the woman and the woman." Our text is clear that, besides the truth or falsehood about her sin, their purpose was to catch Jesus in an awkward situation. If He said not to stone her, He would be violating the law of Moses and harm his claim as Messiah. If He said to stone her right then and there He would show lack of compassion and also would violate the Roman law that made it clear that only the Roman officials could execute someone. I personally think that the matter of compassion, characteristic of Jesus in His dealings with sinners of all kinds, was the most important thing to protect regarding His character as Messiah. He had shown wonderful compassion like in His dealings

with the lame man at the pool of Bethesda in John 5. Adultery is, of course, a serious sin. It is defined as a married person engaging in sexual contact with someone other than their spouse. The word literally means "breaking the wedlock"- yes, God designed marriage and has the right to set HIS parameters over that wonderful institution! Proverbs 7: 7 makes it abundantly clear that the adulterer is senseless. Side by side with the act of adultery comes loss of honor, a ruined reputation and self-destruction unless and until things are made right before God and others we have harmed, including children in the marriage. Read Proverbs 6 sometime and take note of how much Solomon writes about sexual sin and its consequences! Hebrews 13: 4 sets the right tone for all of us to consider- "Let marriage be held in honor among all, and let the marriage bed be undefiled, for God will judge the sexually immoral and adulterous." Too many today talk of their extra-marital pursuits as "affairs" instead of adultery!

Turning Away- 8: 6(b) - 9 Jesus bent down and wrote with His finger on the ground. I've always wondered what He wrote! **IL-** Dr. Harry Ironside believed that Jesus wrote the text of Jeremiah 17: 13 on the ground in the view of all these accusers- "O Lord, the hope of Israel- all who forsake You shall be put to shame, those who turn away from You shall be written in the earth, for they have forsaken the Lord, the fountain of living water." Just the day before, on the last day of the Feast of Booths, Jesus had said, "Whoever believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water!" (Verse 38) Other students of Scripture believe Jesus was writing down the names of all the men who brought this adulterous woman to Jesus to test Him. And it may be that next to their names, written in the dirt, were their "dirty sins" on public display! Some others believe He was writing down the Ten Commandments from Exodus 20. At first, they must not have noticed because the text says that they "persisted" or continued to ask Him what He would do to this sinful woman. He stood up to answer them, looking at them at eye level and challenging them about their own sin. You know, I'm sure, that it is easier to accuse someone else of a sin than to admit my own sin! These men were, I believe, convicted by their own consciences by the God-Man who knows everything about everyone! They walked away defeated and disgusted, the oldest with the longest list of sin left first and the younger men followed. How much better, infinitely better, it would have been for them to stay and ask Jesus for forgiveness for their own sins and ask her for her forgiveness after being dragged out in public and accused of gross sin. Jesus is well aware of our sins and longs for us to openly confess them to Him. In John 4 He told the Samaritan woman that He knew of her five previous marriages and the fact that she was living with a man who was not her husband. But she found forgiveness and witnessed powerfully to her whole community. This woman in our final section of the text will also be forgiven!

Trusting the Savior- 8: 10 and 11 Compassion, on display in these two verses, gives us reason to shout "Amen!" and give praise to our loving, merciful, forgiving God because of what Christ did for us at Calvary! This woman was not condemned by the Savior. She must have been embarrassed, have pleaded with God for forgiveness, fearful of being stoned to death- in short, she desperately needed forgiveness! So do we! And our Savior is both the God of truth (about our sin) and of grace to cover our sin! John 1: 14- "And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us. And we have seen His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth." I am convinced that she didn't repeat THAT sin again! She called Him, "Lord" and I believe she meant it! In Roman 10: 9 and 10 we are told- "If you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved!" Jesus didn't ignore her or dismiss her sin- rather He intended to die for her sin! He didn't condemn her but instead He would be condemned to die on the cross for her and you and me! Romans 8: 1- "There is therefore now NO condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus!" The leaders left that day with guilt- she left forgiven! Jesus told her to make a new start without those sinful desires!

What does all of this have to do with you and me? 1 John 1: 9- "If we confess our sin, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sin and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness!" That same, powerful message is recorded in the Old Testament too- Psalm 103: 10-13- "He does not deal with us according to our sins, nor repay us according to our iniquities. For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is His steadfast love toward those who fear Him. As far as the east is from the west so far does He remove our transgressions from us. As a father shows compassion to his children, so the Lord shows compassion to those who fear Him!" **IL**- George Whitefield- witnessing a man headed to the gallows- "There but for the grace of God go I!" Jesus knows what and where we have been, but He cares about what we will be and where we will go! Don't ever forget that there is One we can trust to unburden our heart. James 5: 16- "Confess your faults one to another and pray for one another, that you may be healed." **IL** Warren Wiersbe- "Forgiveness is not an excuse for sin; rather, it is an encouragement to obedience!" I don't know about you, but I am SO glad Jesus didn't respond to this woman- "I forgive you, but I want nothing to do with you from here on out." Whatever happened to this woman we cannot know but I came across a possibility during my study- Luke 23: 55- "The women who had come with Him from Galilee, followed and saw the tomb and how the body was laid." And then in Luke 24: 10 we note- "Now it was Mary Magdalene and Joanna and the mother of James and the other women with them who told these things to the apostles!"

He WANTS to have a relationship with us- with YOU, and has done all that is necessary before the holy Father to make that possible!"

Conclusion: IL- The poet writes- "As far as the east is removed from the west- forever my soul is at perfect rest! Forgiven, forgotten, all cleared by the blood- atoned for by Jesus in Calvary's flood!"

Closing Song: "How Deep the Father's Love for Us"