

SUNDAY MORNING 18 July 2021

Sin and forgiveness

Jesus had many conversations with ordinary people like you and me. Sometimes He spoke to Jewish believers. Other times He visited sinners and talked to people who are sick, blind, deaf, or possessed by the devil.

Jesus talked to Nicodemus and He told Him that every person needs to be born again. He spoke to a Samaritan woman. He thereby gave value to women and non-Jewish people. He said that we must worship God through the Spirit and the Truth. Fully dedicated to God and His transformation process.

The story of sinners like you and me is similar to the story of a woman caught in adultery. This is the story of Jesus and sinful people.

The story of: **Sin and forgiveness**

Scripture Reading - John 7: 53-8: 1-11

Jesus is back in Jerusalem and He is teaching the people in the temple.

John 7: 53-8: 1-2

The evening when Jesus finished teaching them, everyone went to their houses, surely to rest and eat and wash and sleep. The Son of God was so humbled by His coming to earth that He Himself did not even have a house to go to. Here stands everyone went to his house, but Jesus went to the Mount of Olives.

- Did He sleep there in the open field, among the olive trees?
- Did He go to pray?
- Perhaps He slept with the Lazarus family who lived on the other side of the mountain?

When the Son of God came, He does not claim, like celebrities, the best treatment, He literally had nothing, gave everything for you and me and the people of this world.

Jesus must have preached in the women's court of the temple, because women were not allowed anywhere in the temple court. There they brought a woman to Him.

John 8: 3-6a

Three things for which people can be sentenced to death in Jesus' time, and these were for murder, idolatry / blasphemy, and adultery. The penalty has not been applied for many years. And under Roman control, only the Roman government could impose the death penalty.

Who's nowhere in the story? The man. The Old Testament says that both parties should be stoned, but for the sake of convenience they forget to bring the man. Their purpose was to trap Jesus and to accuse Him of His answer.

They thought if they told Jesus this woman was caught red-handed he had one of two choices.

- If He agreed that the woman should be stoned, He would lose his good standing among the people. And when He says that she should be killed, He violates the Roman laws who alone can give the death penalty. Then they could hand Him over to the Roman government.
- If He told them not to stone the woman, then He could not be from God, because then He would break the law of God and then He would lose His claim to be from God.

It may seem to them that Jesus was driven into a corner, or that it was checkmate for Jesus, but the King still has one move. Please remember that too. It may seem to you that your situation is dire, and that there is no way out, and that God himself will not get you out of the situation, but please remember: The King always has one move left.

The King has one more move **John 8: 6b-8**

It's the only place in the Bible we read that Jesus wrote something physical. You want to know for sure what He wrote? Well, John does not say, therefore we can not speculate.

The King has one move left

Let any one of you who is without sin be the first to throw a stone at her.

I learn a big lesson this morning. So many times I have pointed fingers at other people who are doing something wrong. So many times you may have even "thrown stones" at other people while wrestling with some secret sin, or just allowing it.

Jesus asked them each to examine themselves before God. Then He wrote something again, and when He got up the following happened:

John 8: 9

The oldest turned around first and the rest followed. Maybe Jesus was sad because none of them stayed behind to ask Him to forgive their sins. I am learning a lesson from this again. Those who are so quick to condemn others for what others do, even though they themselves have sin, have no desire to be saved themselves. It is more pleasing to them to accuse and slander and hurt others, than to stand before God and say to Him, "Lord, I am a poor sinner, please forgive me."

I wondered why she kept standing? When her prosecutors left, she could have turned around to leave. She was free now.

Why did she kept standing? I think because she knew, today is the day that my past will be wiped clean and that I will be freed from my sins of the past. Maybe she saw the compassion in Jesus' eyes? But for a reason she stands. And then this short life-changing conversation takes place.

John 8: 10-11

Does Jesus approve of her sin? No, He knows what adultery does in families, how it tears families, men/women/children apart. He never approves of it. He says at one point that if you even just look at a woman and lust after her, you are committing adultery. But He knows that when He dies on the cross, He will not only die for her sins, but for the sins of the world. He knows that those who seek forgiveness and repentance for their sins will find that God is merciful.

The fact that she did not turn around with the scribes and Pharisees means one thing, she seeks forgiveness for her sins. That is why Jesus can say to her, "I do not condemn you." It is as if He says I save you and give you eternal life. He knows her heart and therefore He also tells her, "go sin no more." He knows after her encounter with Him, no other worldly pleasure would be good enough to surpass the feeling of salvation.

No matter what you have done in the past, if you stand before Jesus, the message is simple.

I do not condemn you!

We can therefore only be in one of 3 categories this morning, which actually only ends in two categories.

- We may be in the category that likes to condemn other "sinners".
- We can be in the category that is with Jesus, those that regularly come into His presence, hear His Word, and still that does'nt allow it to change them.
- We may be in the category of this woman, who knew her sin was too much, but she stands before Someone who can set her free. She stands in front of Someone who looks at her with compassion and says in a soft voice: "I do not condemn you." Turn your life around, lay down your sins. Believe in me becoming my child.

Where are you?

Easy to judge and then turn away from Jesus, once again today.

- Or before Jesus, seeking eternal forgiveness.

You never have to be pushed into a corner about your sin, because the King always has one move left. Jesus!

We do not know what became of the woman.

There are only 6 documents signed by William Shakespeare and they are each worth more than \$ 5 million. The most valuable thing written by a person is what this woman saw. Here she stands and with her eyes she sees Jesus writing something on the ground and then forgave her, her sins. Jesus wrote something again. And this time we know what He wrote.

Revelation 20:15

The most precious thing Jesus can write is your name in the book of life. And when is your name written in the book of life? When you stand with Jesus, and receive His forgiveness. Perhaps her name was also written in the book of life. I do not believe she went back to her old life again.

Jesus will never tell you that what you have done is the unforgivable sin. If you sincerely come to Him with your sin, He will say; "I do not condemn you, for I have come to seek and to save sinners." If you accept that salvation, you become a child of God and He gives you and me who believe the Holy Spirit who guides and teaches us and helps to get rid of the last tentacles of sin.

John Newton was born in 1725 in London. His father was a captain of several merchant ships. Later, John also became captain of his own ship, a ship that took slaves from Africa to other parts of the world. John knew something about God but lived a sinful life like the woman in our story. Once on their way back from America, a great storm overtook them, and John wrote in his personal diary that everything was lost. Although he did not really know God, he cried out, "Lord, have mercy on us." He promised his life to God and they were miraculously saved.

His life changed so much that he did not return to captain slave ships, and he later became a minister and played a large role in the abolition of slavery. And one of the 280 songs he wrote told of his past life. When, like this woman, he stood before Jesus and did not run away because of his sin, he was forgiven and therefore he tells in the song, of the "Amazing Grace," of God.

If you think your sin is too great or God cannot forgive you, stand by Jesus and He will forgive you and set you free. The woman does not need to do anything before Jesus forgives her. It's just indescribable grace, "amazing grace."