

More of God's Amazing Grace

Texts: John 8:1-12; James 4:6

As we consider this famous story, we see the lineup of the bad guys (Scribes and Pharisees) jeopardizing the life of an unnamed woman. They are trying to trick Jesus into doing something either out of character with the love and mercy He taught or to do something that will uphold their interpretation of the law of Moses. In our story today we see the true illustration of John 1:17: "For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ." This has to be one of the greatest displays of the new covenant of grace in the Word of God. As a matter of fact, this story so announces what the grace of God is all about, that it became a questionable point among moderates and modernists as to the veracity of the story itself. In some of the impure manuscripts that were rejected by the early church, this glorious story has been left out. Why would such a beautiful story be questioned? I submit to you that it holds such valuable truth to the church and the unconverted world that the Devil would love nothing better than to take this true story from us. Let's see why this story holds such devastation to Satan and such hope for the believers.

I want to begin with the ending of the story. In John 8:12b, Jesus said, "...I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life." In some study Bibles this verse is separated from the rest of the story, but it should not have been, because this statement by our Lord tells us what has just happened and why. Let's talk about it:

1. THE POTENTIAL OF PRAYER IN AN ORDINARY DAY.

We read in John 8:1 and 2a, "Jesus went unto the mount of Olives. And early in the morning...." An ordinary day for Jesus seems to always be one that starts with the communion with the Heavenly Father. Mark 1:35 tells us, "And in the morning, rising up a great while before day, he went out, and departed into a solitary place, and there prayed." Although Bethany was where Jesus often stayed and was on the other side of the Mount of Olives on the southeastern slope, it appears that Jesus' destination was the mountain itself. On special occasions Jesus would spend the entire night in prayer as Luke 6:12 points out: "And it came to pass in those days, that he went out into a mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God." Our Lord seemed to appreciate the high places to pray, above the world that He so loved, yet was so enmeshed in sin.

It would do all of us well to begin our day with God in prayer.

2. THE POTENTIAL POWER IN THE WORD OF GOD.

"And early in the morning he came again into the temple, and all the people came unto him; and he sat down, and taught them" (John 8:2). One reason superstition was so prevalent and interpretations of the laws were being misconstrued for truth is because the truth of the Scriptures was not being properly taught. Amos 8:11 seems as relevant for today as it was 2,800 years ago when God said, "Behold, the days come, saith the Lord GOD, that I will send

a famine in the land, not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the LORD.” Our Lord gives people the Word of God. They were starving for it, but the Scribes and Pharisees were giving tradition in exchange for the truth and opining rather than defining and presenting the unadulterated truth of the Bible. Jesus quoted Deuteronomy 8:3 when He said, “But he answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God” (Matthew 4:4).

3. THE POTENTIAL PROBLEMS DUE TO THE SIN NATURE.

John 8:3-5 tells us of the woman caught in adultery, in the very act. I think of the embarrassment, not to mention the impending fear as her life hangs in balance. The Bible doesn't tell us how this came about. Was she framed? Who was the man involved? We see our Lord is in the temple vicinity when she is brought before Him. As we see her being manhandled and cast down before our Lord, I see also myself and every person who has lived as victims of the fall. Romans 7:14c tells us that we are "...sold under sin." "But we know that the law is good..." (I Timothy 1:8). The wise Solomon said, "For there is not a just man upon earth, that doeth good, and sinneth not" (Ecclesiastes 7:20). The problem is that we cannot clean ourselves. Job said it correctly when he said, "If I wash myself with snow water, and make my hands never so clean; Yet shalt thou plunge me in the ditch, and mine own clothes shall abhor me" (Job 9:30, 31). Satan laughs with glee when he sees a human unable to rise above the circumstances of their own cravings. Leviticus 20:10 and Deuteronomy 22:22 under the enforcement of Moses' law mandates death for the perpetrators. The trap was set and the adulteress is now helplessly brought before our Lord. These wicked men were as yet unaware that the great Saul, Gamaliel's star pupil would convert to Jesus and as a re-named Paul would be led of the Lord to write, "Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith" (Galatians 3:24). The commandments of God were written to show us the way to God, because we in our power could not keep them either literally or in spirit.

4. THE POTENTIAL PARDON FOR THE REPENTANT SINNER.

In John 8:6-9 we are told the Scribes and Pharisees are trying to tempt or test Jesus. They are foiled in their lame attempt to trick Christ. Our Lord knelt down and wrote on the ground. The age-old question is--what did He write? We don't know for certain, but I have a sneaking suspicion that He wrote, "If a man be found lying with a woman married to an husband, then they shall both of them die, both the man that lay with the woman, and the woman: so shalt thou put away evil from Israel" (Deuteronomy 22:22). There was no mention of the man and for this requirement, there must be the second party involved and they were both stoned. There also needed to be witnesses and there were supposed to be witnesses, but no one steps forward to identify the man. I believe Jesus was asking, "Where is the man?" Perhaps some of the ones with rocks in their hands were perpetrators themselves because the Bible records, that our Lord said, "He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her." Then the Bible

says, "And they which heard it, being convicted by their own conscience, went out one by one, beginning at the eldest, even unto the last..." (John 8:9).

Our Lord accomplished a *coup de grâce*. This phrase means "any finishing or decisive stroke" but in its most ancient form, it means "blow of mercy." And I believe this is indeed a blow of great mercy. I have given you my opinion of what the Lord wrote on the ground the first time, but the Bible says He wrote on the ground the second time. This is what I believe He wrote, this verse or one similar to it: "Who is a God like unto thee, that pardoneth iniquity, and passeth by the transgression of the remnant of his heritage? He retaineth not his anger for ever, because he delighteth in mercy" (Micah 7:18).

5. THE POTENTIAL PLEASANTRY IN A WORLD FULL OF DARKNESS!

After the accusers left the Lord, Jesus asked her where the accusers were. She happily confessed there were none. As Jesus observed her repentance, He declares her justified by saying, "Neither do I condemn thee..." (John 8:11b). Then He gave her the command that would give her power to "...go and sin no more..." (John 8:11c).

I like to connect John 8:10-11 to verse 12. Jesus then turns to the crowd still observing the event and says, "...I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life" (John 8:12b). Just as powerful as when God said, "Let there be light..." (Genesis 1:3a), Jesus spoke the light into this woman's dark world. And just as surely as "...there was light" (Genesis 1:3b) in the first morning of creation, Jesus, the Light of the world gave morning to a new day, the first day of the rest of this woman's life!

Ecclesiastes 11: "Truly the light is sweet, and a pleasant thing it is for the eyes to behold the sun." Isaiah 60:1 speaks of the glorious Light of the Lord: "Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the LORD is risen upon thee." Proverbs 4:18 tells us, "But the path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day." For every believer Jesus the Light of the world turns on our light.

-Pastor Pope-