

JOHN 8:1-11
FORGIVEN!

Please turn in your Bibles this morning to John chapter 8 as we continue our in-depth study of the Gospel of John.

As we have seen in our study of John chapter 7, the Feast of Tabernacles is now over. And it was at this feast that Jesus told the crowd of people and the religious leaders, “**... ‘If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink. He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.’**” John 7:37-38.

And this caused a lot of division amongst the Jews. Some said he was the Prophet that Moses spoke about. Others could not believe that the Messiah would come out of Galilee. And thus, we are told, “**So there was division among the people because of Him.**” John 7:43.

And for the Jewish religious leaders, they wanted the officers to arrest Jesus and bring Him to them, but they didn’t. The words that Jesus spoke blew their minds and there was much confusion amongst these religious leaders regarding Jesus!

Listen to all the confusion that went on between these officers and the Jewish religious leaders and amongst themselves. We are told in John 7:45-52, “**Then the officers came to the chief priests and Pharisees, who said to them, ‘Why have you not brought Him?’ The officers answered, ‘No man ever spoke like this Man!’ Then the Pharisees answered them, ‘Are you also deceived? Have any of the rulers or the Pharisees believed in Him? But this crowd that does not know the law is accursed.’ Nicodemus (he who came to Jesus by night, being one of them) said to them, ‘Does our law judge a man before it hears him and knows what he is doing?’ They answered and said to him, ‘Are you also from Galilee? Search and look, for no prophet has arisen out of Galilee.’**”

And you have to understand that this confusion, these debates were not friendly talking. I am sure that they were loud and very demonstrative or expressive with what they were saying.

And in the end, we are told, “**And everyone went to his own house.**” John 7:53.

This debate was not settled but we know that for the Jewish religious leaders, they were certain that Jesus was not a prophet of God, not the Messiah and certainly not the Son of God!

And that is going to lead us into what we will see in our study this morning. You see, they are going to set Jesus up to show everyone He is not the Messiah, not even close.

I believe this with every study that we go through, these lessons we find here in the verses we will be looking at this morning, are for us today.

You see, we are facing battles every day. We will face confrontations. We will face mocking’s. We will face all kinds of things and we need to be prepared to face them. And, as we will see, Jesus shows us what to do and then how we are to respond to situations because we have our direction from the Lord.

I have called this study – ***FORGIVEN!***

And this too is so important for us to understand, as we will see. I don’t care what you have done, I don’t care who you are, Jesus is there with His arms opened up to you ready to forgive you if you would only come to Him!

So we have some interesting and important things to learn this morning.

I have broken these verses down into the following points. They are,

PREPARATION FOR THE DAY – JOHN 8:1

MINISTRY – JOHN 8:2

THE SET-UP – JOHN 8:3-6a

JESUS EXPOSES THEIR SIN – JOHN 8:6b-8

HARD HEARTS – JOHN 8:9a

FORGIVING SAVIOR – JOHN 8:9b-11

With that as our introduction, let's begin reading in John chapter 8, beginning in verse 1, and let's see what the Lord has for us as we look at this topic – ***FORGIVEN!***

JOHN 8

VERSE 1

Remember what we read in John 7:53, "**And everyone went to his own house.**" And in the next verse we see "**But Jesus went to the Mount of Olives.**"

I have called this verse – ***PREPARATION!***

What do you think Jesus was doing during the night on the Mount of Olives?

I believe He was praying, seeking direction for the day that was coming.

Now some may wonder why I think that Jesus spent the night praying.

First of all, in John 8:2 we see that it was "**. . . early in the morning He came again into the temple . . .**"

So He must have spent the night on the Mount of Olives and the reason I believe He was praying is that we see Him on the Mount of Olives praying often.

Listen to what we are told in Luke 22:39 and you will see what I mean. We are told, "**Coming out, He went to the Mount of Olives, as He was accustomed, and His disciples also followed Him.**"

It is here that we see Him pray in the Garden of Gethsemane prior to His arrest and then His crucifixion. And the reason He went there was to pray and notice that it says, “**... as He was accustomed ...**”

I think that for us as Christians, this is how we should start our day, with prayer, seeking direction from the God.

Why is that important?

Because we need direction for the day. We need God’s input, so we do what is right and not what is wrong!

Now I am not saying that God is going to tell you what color socks to put on or plan your day out for you and you just follow the game plan.

But as you spend time with Him your heart and mind will be focused on Him so He can direct you in the things that He wants you to do.

And I realize that our lives can be busy, and we don’t think prayer is that important. But if Jesus took the time to pray, don’t you think we should do the same?

Of course we should. I don’t believe you will be able to minister to people unless you are in tune with God and what He has for you. And that means you need to pray, you need to talk to Him each and every day and really, throughout the day you need to be sensitive to His leading.

Look again how this is played out in the life of Jesus. In Luke 21:37-38 we are told, “**And in the daytime He was teaching in the temple, but at night He went out and stayed on the mountain called Olivet. Then early in the morning all the people came to Him in the temple to hear Him.**”

At night He went to the Mount of Olives and then, in the morning He was ready to meet the people and teach the people. What a great lesson for us.

And think about this. The cross is just a few days away for Jesus here in Luke, and yet, He is still ministering. He took the time to teach the people and spent the night on the Mount of Olives, no doubt praying for the strength to complete the work that was before Him. What a great example for us to follow!

And as we continue on here in John, we will see that after the **PREPARATION**, then there is **MINISTRY!**

VERSE 2

After the Feast of Tabernacles, Jesus stayed in Jerusalem for some time and what we see here is that early in the morning Jesus gets up, passing through the Kidron Valley and up to the Temple so He may teach the people.

Remember that at the end of the Feast of Tabernacles the Jewish religious leaders wanted Jesus arrested and ultimately, they wanted to put Him to death.

So why did He not flee from Jerusalem?

I believe the reason is simple. He sought direction from the Father and as He was directed, He stayed and here He is, in the Temple and He is teaching!

We also see that Jesus sat down to teach, which was the position a rabbi would take as he taught, and the people stood. When he wanted to proclaim something, he would stand.

Now you may be thinking, ***“How does that apply to me? I am not a pastor or teacher! I work in business . . . I am a construction worker . . . I work at a grocery store . . . I work for the Post Office . . . I am a stay-at-home mom”*** and the list can go on!

Now let’s think about that for a minute. In those jobs does that mean you don’t need direction from God!

Hey, if you are a stay-at-home mom, you know you need all the help you can get. But again, all of us need the direction from God and it is interesting. As you spend time with God, that preparation as I have said, then it prepares you for the day ahead.

And it is amazing the things, the people that God brings across your path. And I know, some think they are too busy to spend time in prayer in the morning, they need to get going, they are very busy.

I am sure you are, but the reality is, you can't afford not taking time to pray and seek God before you start your day.

I will give you this example from what I just went through prior to this mission's trip, teaching trip to Russia.

My wife had a total knee replacement on November 23rd and knowing that I was going to be going to Russia in January, there was concern that she would not have recovered enough for me to go.

But the Lord impressed upon my heart that He wanted me to go to Russia and thus, Julie and I rested in that fact, knowing that He was in control, and He would see us through.

Julie did very well, she recovered faster than she did with her other knee replacement. The Lord was right. And I am back on schedule for Russia!

I had all my flights from Green Bay to Detroit and then on to Russia and then back again. All set. Things are moving right along. Praise the Lord!

Then the e-mail from Travelocity that my flight back from Russia was cancelled. I think they rescheduled to Siberia! No, but now things were a mess again.

And once again I felt the Lord encouraging me to hang in there, it will get taken care of.

Then the e-mail from Aeroflot Russian Airlines that they rebooked me on a later flight!

Praise the Lord, it is all set. Not really. Now my return flight would get me into JFK in New York at about 5:30 pm and my flight to Detroit was leaving at 5:40 pm. I know that I am fast, but I would not even be able to get off the plane let alone make it to the Delta flight to Detroit.

But again, I really felt the Lord wanted me to go to Russia and so I booked the Russian flight to New York. Praise the Lord!

But there was a problem. In New York, if you want to go to a hotel, go to a restaurant, you have to be vaccinated for COVID.

And here is the amazing thing about God, He knows what we need before we need it.

Back in September the Lord laid it upon my heart to get the COVID vaccine, something I was putting off. My wife got it, but I didn't, not until September!

Now I have the ability to stay the night in New York, because I could not get a flight out that night, and I will be flying out the next day. Praise the Lord!

No, there is more. Back in October, maybe earlier, I have been dealing with pain in my left leg. This pain goes from my hip down to my toes and it varies in intensity.

It gets so bad it has brought me to tears. I have had to study, watch TV standing up because it was too painful to sit down. When I got into the car, the pain was so severe I just wanted to get out, but I had church stuff to do, and I could not ignore it. So I pressed on.

Once again I felt that the Lord really wanted me to go to Russia and He would take care of this.

I went to a pain specialist who gave me cortisone injections in the back and the iliac bursa. No help. Still pain that would get so bad that I was in tears at times.

When I got up from the chair, I could hardly walk. Once I walked for a bit it got better.

I went to a chiropractor, and nothing helped.

I asked the pain doctor for Prednisone or steroids to see if that helped and it did. Praise the Lord.

The problem was that it was only for five days, and he would not give me any more for the 10-hour flight to Russia!

Once again I felt the Lord just encouraging me to keep focused on the trip and He would take care of it. And it was still painful, but I knew what the Lord had told me, and I was going to go forward, and I did.

Then, on Monday night, before the trip on Friday, my insulin pump went off and I got up to get some juice. I was not happy; I was complaining about it and when I reached the kitchen, I smelled something burning and it was really bad. I thought the house was on fire!

I could not see any smoke, but the smell was like burning wires. So I checked the walls and they were not hot.

Then I noticed the dishwasher was off and it should have been still running. In fact, I tried to turn it back on and it was dead.

So now what do I do? The house smells like burning wires and I had to do something. So I called 911 and here comes the fire department.

They are in all their garb, like they should be. Three firemen, two police officers and they are pulling my dishwasher out. Nothing was on fire, but the motor burned out and everything was okay. Praise the Lord!

Again, I felt that the Devil was just trying to get me to look at all this stuff that was going on instead of trusting in the Lord and what He has told me to do.

It reminded me of what the Lord said to Joshua as was preparing to go into the Promise Land with the children of Israel. The Lord said to Joshua in Joshua 1:6-9, **“Only be strong and very courageous, that you may observe to do according to all the law which Moses My servant commanded you; do not turn from it to the right hand or to the left, that you may prosper wherever you go. This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate in it day and night, that you may observe to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success. Have I not commanded you? Be strong and of good courage; do not be afraid, nor be dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go.”**

Perspective is everything and here is my point of all this turmoil. The Lord has been preparing my heart for months for this trip. He has given me the studies to teach in Russia. And what the Lord has been telling me in all of this is not to be afraid, not to fear, don't become dismayed over all of this!

And you may be thinking, *“Are you kidding! You should be afraid. You should be dismayed. Look at all that has happened to you!”*

Here is why I don't need to fear, why I don't need to be dismayed. **“... for the Lord [my] God is with [me] wherever [I] go.”**

So with all that preparation, ministry is before me. What God has done in me, prepared me for I can now share with the people in Russia!

I will be honest with you. If I did not know that God really wanted me to go to Russian, if He had not spoken to my heart about this over and over and over again, through all that mess, I would not be going. But here I am, I have been there, God blessed the time and now I am back!

Praise the Lord!

Again, Jesus just was in trouble with the Jewish religious leaders, and it did not stop Him from going back to the Temple and teach the Jewish people and you have to understand that the Jewish religious leaders were there as well. Lots of turmoil but it did not stop Jesus because He was directed by the Father and that should spur us on that no matter what, we need to forge ahead!

And here's the thing. Just because you are doing the will of God does not mean you will not face opposition.

And that brings us to our next point – ***THE SET-UP!***

VERSES 3-6a

As you can see, these verses are very appropriately called – ***THE SETUP!***

Look at what is taking place here.

Jesus is teaching the people in the Temple. And people were coming to hear what He had to say. Crowds were growing.

And as Jesus is teaching here come these Scribes and Pharisees and they are bringing with them this woman who was caught in the very act of adultery! This was not gossip, this was not information passed down to them, they were watching, and they caught her in the very act of adultery!

Now I don't know about you, but that is very creepy to me. They were watching her through a window, and no one sees a problem with that!

And it is even worse than that. You see, many commentators believe that this woman was dragged from her home naked. They dragged her through the streets of Jerusalem for all to see and now she is standing in front of Jesus and this huge crowd of people in the Temple, naked!

Can you imagine how she felt at this point! The humiliation she was going through. And yes, she was having a sexual relationship out of marriage, but to do this to her was a little extreme.

These are the religious leaders in Israel, and they not only are going to try to catch Jesus in how He deals with this, but it would seem that they had something against this woman as well.

Morris picks up on this and tells us, ***“All the indications are that her accusers had some special vindictiveness against her. This is shown also in the fact that they brought the woman along publicly . . . There was no need for this. She might have been kept in custody while the case was referred to Jesus.”***

And please understand that you had to have two witnesses to make a charge like this. And they had to agree perfectly to what took place, what they witnessed. Like I have said, they had to observe the very act of this sexual act. It could not be that they just saw them in the same room or even in bed together!

Again, Morris tells us, ***“The actual physical movements of the couple must have been capable of no other explanation. . . . conditions were so stringent that they could have been met only on rare occasions.”***

How could they have caught her in the very act of adultery?

This is really simple and sad, it was a – ***SET-UP!***

Boice put it like this, ***“Under these conditions the obtaining of evidence in adultery would be almost impossible were the situation not a setup.”***

Do you think they were interested in helping this woman out?

Absolutely not. They were using her for their purposes, and they were destroying her life!

Now let me say this because legalism looks at the sins of others and sees them as evil and yet, their own sins they ignore!

The scribes were the ones that not only copied the Law, but they interpreted the Law and taught the Law. No problem there, not yet.

Now, for the Pharisees, they were the extreme legalists of their day! They were so self-righteous that they thought that they alone kept the Law of Moses. Of course they didn't but they acted as if they did.

And here they are accusing this woman of adultery, which she was involved in. And many read that and see no problem, they are doing what is right, these holy men of God who not only knew the Law but kept it!

Now this would be funny if it wasn't so sad. At this time in Israel, adultery was so rampant that the Sanhedrin or the Jewish Religious Supreme Court you might say, didn't even deal with it.

And yet, here we see them involved in exposing this sin in this woman's life.

And here is the irony of all of this. Historical records show that many of the Jewish religious leaders were involved in continual adulterous relationships, and no one dared to make an issue out of it. Not until this point where they can get this woman who was involved in this relationship and Jesus by how He would deal with this situation. That is their thinking.

Here they come to Jesus with a loaded question designed to trap Him, and they thought to use the very Law, written with the finger of God to do it!

And yes, in Leviticus 20:10 God had commanded that a man and woman involved in adultery should be put to death by stoning.

Why was this a capital crime?

Because God looked upon adultery as a serious sin because it destroyed the basic unit of society – ***THE FAMILY!***

And, like I have said, these men did have a case, from a legal standpoint, to condemn this woman to death

But what is the big problem here?

It is hard to have an adulterous relationship with just yourself! Where was the man? If she was caught in the very act of adultery, then the man had to be right there as well. And they never brought him naked before Jesus seeking how He would handle this situation.

That is why I think they also had something against this woman, and they set her up so they could carry out this dastardly deed!

So here stands this woman, naked before Jesus, with not only her nakedness exposed but also her sin, and this is what they say to Jesus, “**. . . ‘Teacher, this woman was caught in adultery, in the very act. Now Moses, in the law, commanded us that such should be stoned. But what do You say?’**” John 8:4-5.

Why would they ask Jesus such a question?

Because they knew Jesus had a heart of compassion towards people and if He let this woman go, He would break the Law of Moses and the people would see He was a false prophet.

If He said that she should be stoned to death, Rome would be upset for they took away the Jews right for capital punishment.

And, like I have said, these Jewish religious leaders were not doing what was right, they were trying to catch Jesus and put away this woman who, for some reason bothered them.

In fact, the Jewish historian Josephus tells us adultery would be punished on the average of only once every seven years. So not a common practice and yet, here was an opportunity to catch Jesus and discredit Him amongst His followers!

Again, it is important to think of what is transpiring here because as many read this story, they don't think about all that is taking place.

You see, I have a couple of questions for these supposedly holy men of God.

First, if they caught her in the very act of adultery that means they must have been watching! Why?

Why didn't they try to stop her?

Secondly, like I have said, she didn't commit this act alone, so where's the man?

You see, this is all a set-up, the guilty man was probably involved in this set-up!

How easy it is to point out the sin of others and be totally blind to our own sin and God is not going to let them get away with it. He is going to shine some light upon their own lives just as He does with us!

So, we are told the reason that these religious leaders brought this woman before Jesus was so they could test Him, so that they could catch Him breaking the Law and discredit Him!

May we not become so self-righteous that our life is filled with exposing the sins of others instead of coming alongside of them and helping them to get back on the right track. To get back on the path that God wants them and us on.

How easy it is to look at the failure, the struggles of others but let me say this. What if God acted like we do!

What if God got a giant screen out, the best audio equipment around, and exposed all your sin! Would you like it? Obviously you would not like it.

In fact, you might say, ***“God that is not fair. I thought you were a God full of compassion and mercy! Why are you doing this to me? Why are you not helping me?”***

You see, it is a wakeup call to us, and God is calling for us to do a heart examine and see if we need to repent and let go of that self-righteous attitude and extend the love, the grace, the mercy to those around us! Is there someone you are at odds with? Someone you are putting down?

If so, you need to repent and restore that relationship. If you won't, not that you can't, then are you acting any better than these Jewish religious leaders and what they are doing?

You can try to justify that all you want but bring it before God and let Him speak to you about this!

Let me share this with you about self-righteousness and you will see what I mean. We are told,

Have you ever had a conversation with someone who acted holier-than-thou?

Did the individual act as though he or she was right and everyone else was wrong?

I'm guessing the answer is yes. We've all encountered these people.

How did these encounters make you feel?

Did they make you want to change your ways, or did they make you want to do just the opposite?

Seldom do conversations with self-righteous people make us want to be like them.

But, here's the burn. You may be self-righteous without even realizing it because self-righteousness is something no one sees in the mirror.

Many people act self-righteous, but they don't see it that way. Why? Because they see it as being right.

For example, if you catch yourself putting down others' behaviors and justifying your own, you might be self-righteous. . . .

In short, a self-righteous person is someone who believes he or she is better than, and morally superior to someone else. . . .

Self-righteous attitudes are rampant as people become intent on proving their moral superiority.

In the Los Angeles Times article *Has Millennials' Self-Esteem Become Self-Righteousness?* the author argues, "The indignation and dripping sanctimony we see from so many young activists isn't narcissism, or even the storied self-esteem this generation has been ostensibly mainlining since birth. Maybe it has undergone some sort of chemical conversion into something even more dangerous: self-righteousness."

Whether you are or aren't a Christian, you can easily fall into the trap of self-righteousness and the sin of justifying yourself. . . .

- bit.ly/3r6X9bb

Here is the wonderful thing about our Savior. He is not going to leave them in this self-righteous condition, and He won't leave us because – ***JESUS EXPOSES THEIR SIN!***

VERSES 6b-8

Notice what is taking place here. These Jewish religious leaders are accusing this woman of Adultery and what is Jesus doing?

He ignored their accusations against this woman and instead of saying anything, He just stooped down and began to write on the ground.

We don't know what Jesus wrote on the ground at this point, but I don't think the religious leaders were even paying attention to what He was writing.

Now all we can do is speculate what Jesus wrote on the ground, we don't have the words He wrote.

But I will give my two cents on this, many have lots of ideas, but I like to keep it simple.

I think Jesus stooped down and wrote in the sand various sins. I think that is all He wrote the first time.

What is the point of that?

I think Jesus wanted them to do a heart check before they judged this woman. And thus, He wrote various sins down and He wanted these men to see that they are just as guilty as this woman.

Remember what I have called these verses – ***JESUS EXPOSES THEIR SIN!***

And how did they respond to what Jesus wrote in the sand, these various sins?

We are told that “**... they continued asking Him ...**”

In other words, they ignored what Jesus wrote in the sand and they continued asking Jesus what He was going to do with this woman who was caught in the act of adultery.

And here is the reason I believe that it was various sins that Jesus wrote in the sand. After they ignored what Jesus wrote, Jesus said to them, “**... ‘He who is without sin among you, let him throw a stone at her first.’**”

So here is a list of sins written on the sand for them to see, and they ignored what Jesus wrote. Now Jesus is telling them that all those who have no sin, they need to step forward and throw the first stone at this woman, condemning her to death!

Now this is interesting to me. You see, in the Jewish Law those who witnessed a capital offense would be the ones who began the stoning.

And here is the interesting part. One writer gives to us this insight.

J. Allen Blair translates this verse like this: ***“Let he who is without the same sin cast the first stone.”***

In other words, these religious leaders who were coming against this woman for adultery committed the same sin and thus, they were also guilty and thus deserved death. That makes sense when you look at what Jesus said.

Now were all of them involved in the sin of adultery?

I don't believe so, but some were. I again believe that there were various sins, including adultery that Jesus wrote on the ground exposing these religious leaders, but they just did not get it. Not yet!

In fact, this is very specific what Jesus said. It can be translated, ***“to be without the desire to sin.”***

They all should have felt guilty and the conviction of God upon their lives, but not yet!

One writer summed this up for us like this. He wrote,

The Lord's reply was simple, yet profound. It upheld the Law, since He did not deny the woman's guilt, and broadened the Law's power by exposing the sins of the accusers.

It also avoided the charge of instigating an execution in violation of Roman authority, since the Lord put the responsibility back on the accusers.

And it mercifully spared the woman from being stoned for her sin.

Jesus knew that according to the Law, the witnesses to a capital offense were to be the first to throw stones at the guilty person (Deut 13:9; 17:7).

Obviously, they could not have been participants in the crime, or they too would have been executed.

Jesus was not making sinless perfection a requirement for carrying out the Law (or else no one could have done so).

It may be, then, that the woman's accusers were themselves guilty of adultery (if not the physical act, certainly the lust of the heart [Matt 5:28]).

Jesus' masterful answer neither minimized the woman's guilt, nor denied the Law's sanctity. But it cut the ground out from under the scribes and Pharisees by revealing that they were unfit to be her judges and executioners.

They were guilty of the hypocrisy that the apostle Paul condemned in Rom 2:1: "Therefore you have no excuse, everyone of you who passes judgment, for in that which you judge another, you condemn yourself; for you who judge practice the same things" (cf. Matt 7:1-5).

- John MacArthur, John 7:53-8:11

So these Jewish religious leaders were not listening. They were not paying attention to what Jesus was saying because they had their own agenda!

So we once again see Jesus stoop down and He began to write on the ground again.

Many feel that Jesus was acting out what Jeremiah wrote in Jeremiah 17:13, which says, **"O LORD, the hope of Israel, All who forsake You shall be ashamed. 'Those who depart from Me Shall be written in the earth, Because they have forsaken the LORD, The fountain of living waters.'"**

That is possible.

Now this again is interesting to me.

You see, the Greek word for “**wrote**” is CATAGRAPHANE which can be broken down into CATA which means “*against*” and GRAPHO which means “*to write.*”

Thus, whatever Jesus wrote on the ground was against these men and the things they did.

Here is what I believe Jesus wrote. Again, we don’t know for sure, but as you look at the context of what is going on and then what happens, it does seem to fit.

The first time Jesus stooped down and wrote in the sand I believe He wrote various sins down, including adultery.

Here, the second time He stooped down and wrote in the sand I believe He wrote the names of these Jewish religious leaders next to the sins that they committed, including adultery!

How can I be so sure?

Because, as we will see as we read on, they all began to leave one by one as Jesus wrote their names next to their sins!

What did we read in Jeremiah 17:13, that those who turn against the Lord, “**... All who forsake You shall be ashamed. . . .**”

That is what we will see as we read on.

So one by one they were leaving because they were guilty and Jesus exposed their sin!

And how true are these words of Darby as he wrote, “*It comforts and quiets the depraved heart of man if he can only find a person worse than himself: he thinks the greater sin of another excuses himself; and while accusing and vehemently blaming another, he forgets his own evil. He thus rejoices in iniquity.*”

May we learn the lesson and examine our own heart before we start to look down upon people.

And I think we can see that we are not to look down upon others, but to mourn and weep over their sinful condition and pray for them to be raised up out of the sin that they are in and come to the Savior, come to Jesus.

It is very sad when Christians hope for other Christians that they are in a disagreement with or a fight with or whatever and are looking for their demise or something bad to happen to them to show that they were right, and this person was wrong!

Again, God does not do that with us. God will chasten us because He loves us, but He wants what is best for us and we should pray, seeking to bless those who we may not agree with or deal with the disagreement, which is far better, and resolve it! God does not hold grudges with us, so we should not hold grudges with our brothers and sisters in the Lord!

And for those that don't know the Lord. We should again try to lift them up, bless them, help them so that they may come to know the Lord. Praying for their demise would give them an eternity in Hell. And for me, I don't want my worst enemy to go to Hell!

The problem for us is this. We see sin as being outward, in other people's lives and the reality is, Jesus is showing us that sin is inward, in our own lives and we need to deal with what He has shown us. In knowing that, in knowing that Jesus exposes the sin in our own heart, may we not ignore it but deal with it.

Someone has well said, *"If the inner thoughts of a man were written on his forehead, he would never take his hat off!"* How true that is!

So here we see – **JESUS EXPOSES THEIR SIN!**

And as we read on, we will see how they respond, and it is not good – **HARD HEARTS!**

VERSES 9a

Look at what happens here. These Jewish religious leaders came to catch Jesus by bringing this woman who was caught in the act of adultery and in the end, Jesus catches them!

These Jewish religious leaders were convicted by what Jesus wrote in the sand, and like I have said, I believe it was various sins that they had committed and then He put their names next to these sins.

And what did this conviction of sin do for these Jewish religious leaders?

They went away, probably in the order that Jesus revealed their sin and then their names, from the oldest to the youngest!

Morris gives to us this picture, *“The continuous tense in this last verb gives the thought of something like a procession. They kept on going out.”*

One by one the procession kept on going and going until the last one was gone and then, it was just Jesus and this woman who was caught in the act of adultery.

Before I deal with that, let me talk about conviction because conviction is not bad, it is good.

The consequence of conviction depends upon us and that can be good or bad!

And biblically speaking, conviction will do one of two things in a person’s life. It will either drive them to Christ, which is good! Or it will drive them away from Christ, which is obviously bad!

First, let me show you a good example of conviction and what it does in a person’s life.

In Acts chapter 2, as Peter, empowered by the Holy Spirit, gives this powerful message of Christ and in Acts 2:36-41 we are told these words from Peter, **“Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ.’ Now when they heard this, they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, ‘Men and brethren, what shall we do?’ Then Peter said to them, ‘Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is to you and to your children, and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God will call.’ And with many other words he testified and exhorted them, ‘Be saved from this perverse generation.’ Then those who gladly received his word were baptized; and that day about three thousand souls were added to them.”**

Here we see that conviction of sin lead them to the Savior, brought them to Jesus. In fact, they wanted to know what they could do to be saved and Peter tells them that they must repent and receive Jesus as Lord and Savior of their lives.

Out of this we see some three thousand people who came to the Lord.

Now you may wonder if this was truly saving faith or just an emotional response.

We don't have to guess because we are told in Acts 2:42-47, "**And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers. Then fear came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were done through the apostles. Now all who believed were together, and had all things in common, and sold their possessions and goods, and divided them among all, as anyone had need. So continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they ate their food with gladness and simplicity of heart, praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved.**"

So the evidence for their salvation is seen in their transformed lives. We see the fruit of the Spirit manifested in them. They loved Bible studies, they loved fellowship, they loved communion, they loved to pray. And it is out of that we see God working not only in them but through them as others saw their transformed lives!

That was an example where the conviction of God leads to their repentance, to saving faith, it was good, it was very good!

But there is the other end of the spectrum where the conviction of God will push people away from God, not because of what God has done, but what they have done, and this is bad.

In Acts chapter 7 we see Stephen brought before the Jewish leaders, the Sanhedrin, and he is giving his testimony regarding his faith in Christ. That was the reason he was before them.

And in Acts 7:51-60 we see how this all played out as we are told as Stephen finishes up speaking to them by saying, **“You stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears! You always resist the Holy Spirit; as your fathers did, so do you. Which of the prophets did your fathers not persecute? And they killed those who foretold the coming of the Just One, of whom you now have become the betrayers and murderers, who have received the law by the direction of angels and have not kept it.’ When they heard these things they were cut to the heart, and they gnashed at him with their teeth. But he, being full of the Holy Spirit, gazed into heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God, and said, ‘Look! I see the heavens opened and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God!’ Then they cried out with a loud voice, stopped their ears, and ran at him with one accord; and they cast him out of the city and stoned him. And the witnesses laid down their clothes at the feet of a young man named Saul. And they stoned Stephen as he was calling on God and saying, ‘Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.’ Then he knelt down and cried out with a loud voice, ‘Lord, do not charge them with this sin.’ And when he had said this, he fell asleep.”**

As Stephen spoke about Jesus they were cut to the heart or they were convicted by God of their sin and their need for a Savior, their need for Jesus!

But instead of repenting of their sins and coming to Jesus, we are told that **“... they gnashed at him with their teeth. . . . Then they cried out with a loud voice, stopped their ears, and ran at him with one accord; and they cast him out of the city and stoned him.”**

Many do that in the church today. Not stone the pastor but they hear the Word of God, and they squirm and they fidget and they can’t wait to get out of the church and once they do, they will never come back.

I remember doing a funeral service several years ago and I give the salvation message. I shared that man is dead in sin, and all have sinned, and they need Jesus. And at a funeral people will listen but this one older gentleman, as I was talking, he put his head down and was shaking it back and forth, he did not want to hear it.

And he finally got up and he started walking back and forth at the back of the funeral home, in hearing range of me. I think there was heavy conviction upon him, and I don't know what he did what that conviction. I pray that He turned to the Savior, to Jesus, but if he didn't, he was no different than these Jewish religious leaders when they were convicted!

Others hear the Word of God and God convicts them, they are broken, and they come forward and give their lives to Jesus, praise God for that response!

The same conviction will have different effects depending on what type of heart it's subjected to. Think of it like this. *The same sun will melt wax, but it will also harden clay!*

So look at the picture we now have. All these religious leaders departed, there is Jesus and this woman who was caught in the act of adultery. Look at what happens next –

FORGIVING SAVIOR!

VERSES 9b-11

All the religious leaders who were accusing this woman are gone. And what is interesting is that in Deuteronomy 19:15 it says that you needed two witnesses to condemn a person.

Guess what? Now there is none!

Therefore, Jesus sets her free. This woman who probably came in being dragged, kicking and screaming for her life, probably naked before Jesus, is now at peace, no more condemnation because she has been touched by Jesus.

Paul put it this way in Romans 8:1, **“There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit.”**

You see, the Law condemns us, but as John tells us, **“For the law was given through Moses, but grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.”** John 1:17.

Thank God for His unmerited favor towards us, we don't deserve it, but He extends it to us through Jesus!

And please understand that Jesus does not want her to continue in sin. Therefore, He tells her, **“Neither do I condemn you; go and sin no more.”**

A changed life.

In fact, Morris picks up on this and tells us, *“The form of the command implies a ceasing to commit an action already started: ‘Stop your sinful habit’. And the ‘no more’ points to the thought of no return.”*

God desires us to walk in the Spirit and not fulfill the lusts of the flesh. Not for salvation, but identification with Him. And a result of that is the blessings of God for sin has its own consequences in our lives!

Forgiveness, the forgiveness of God is powerful, and God wants us to have that heart of forgiveness towards others.

Imagine how God has forgiven us of all our sins and we can't forgive others! No, that is not true. It is not that we can't, but that we won't! And that is the issue, it is a matter of the heart, and we need to change our heart attitude and allow Jesus to work in us and through us!

And here is the thing we need to understand. The only way that a righteous God can make peace with sinful man so that we can have fellowship with Him is through the cross!

That is what we are told in Psalm 85:10, “**Mercy and truth have met together; Righteousness and peace have kissed.**”

Now look at the application here. The next time you pick up stones to throw at someone to condemn them remember what group you are part of. Perspective is everything!

You see, God treats sinners with mercy, with grace, with forgiveness and He wants us, as believers, to do no less!

The Law looks down, is judgmental and does not help people, it only condemns them!

I will close with this for you to think about.

The only one who had the right to throw a stone that day – DIDN'T!

The only one who has a right to condemn us is Jesus – BUT HE DOESN'T!

May we never forget that – ***THE FORGIVENESS OF GOD!***