

COMMUNION SERIES ON THE GOSPEL OF JOHN **THE WOMAN CAUGHT IN ADULTERY** John 7:53-8:11

Our passage is not found in the earliest manuscripts of the Bible, and may not have been a part of John's original Gospel. However, many reputable Bible scholars believe it reports an authentic event true to the character of Jesus, so this story should be treated as inspired Scripture. Throughout the history of the church it has been held that, whoever wrote it, this story is authentic. It rings true. It speaks to our condition. Therefore it is worthwhile to study. John MacArthur gives two questions by which to evaluate this passage:

- 1) Do these verses teach truth that violates other Scripture? Absolutely not.
- 2) Do they corroborate other Scripture and substantiate it? Definitely.

The lessons we learn here are supported by other undisputed texts, on how God deals with sinners who have been caught in the very act of sin. God deals with guilty sinners on the basis of the grace and truth of the Lord Jesus Christ. The scribes and Pharisees judged this woman according to the Law, which clearly condemned her. Jesus showed her both grace and truth. Don't be offended, but apart from Christ we are not very different from this woman:

1. THE STATE OF OUR SINFULNESS (vv. 7:53-8:6)

- If Jesus rejected the Law of Moses (Lev. 20:10; Deut. 22:22), His credibility would be gone. If He held to Mosaic Law, His reputation for compassion and forgiveness would have been questioned.
- Like this woman, all of us have been caught in the act of sin and stand condemned by God's standard. We are truly guilty in the eyes of a holy God. All have sinned, all are caught by God's justice, we all deserve death. We are helpless and unable to change our condition. We are doomed unless someone steps in to help us. We can't buy our way out of trouble and we can't deny our own condition. We are condemned by our conscience, condemned by our true moral guilt, and often condemned by others. If people knew us better than they do, they would condemn us even more than they do.

2. THE SIN OF SELF-RIGHTEOUSNESS (vv. 7-9)

- “If any one of you is without sin. . .” This directly refers to Deut. 13:9; 17:7, where the witnesses of a crime are to start the execution. Only those who were not guilty of the same sin could participate.
- Why do some people judge sins like drunkenness, immorality, homosexuality, etc. but overlook the sins of hypocrisy, legalism, gossip, and pride?

“It is a terrible thing for a sinner to fall into the hands of his fellow sinners.” F. B. Meyer

3. THE SOVEREIGNTY OF FORGIVENESS (vv. 10-11)

- Only now does Jesus come close to answering the question that was first set him. The confidence and absoluteness of Jesus’ words not only call to mind that Jesus came not to condemn but to save (John 3:17; 12:47) but make us remember that Jesus, being God Himself, has the right to forgive sin (Mat. 9:1–8).
- The proper response to mercy received on account of past sins is purity in the future: “leave your life of sin” (John 3:17; 12:47; Matt. 9:1–8; Mark 2:13–17). A true understanding of God’s grace never ever leads to licentious living.

Final Thoughts:

This story beautifully illustrates John 1:17 “For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ”. Praise God that He deals with guilty sinners like us on the basis of the grace and truth of the Lord Jesus Christ!

As forgiven people let us be quick to forgive. As people who were spared from God’s judgement, let us quickly release others from ours. How many people out there are kept from seeking God’s forgiveness, because they think they’ll never have ours?