

John 8

This manuscript is a Summary, for a full expression of this sermon, please download the audio file.

This passage of John is not in earlier manuscripts!- If God is powerful enough to create the world in six days, he can also produce a book that says what he wants in the manner he wants.

SHAME SHAME- "What a shame they were trying to shame Jesus."

In today's society we use the word shame in so many ways,

Shame: put someone in their place, take down a peg or two, cut down to size, show up

Shame: a regrettable or unfortunate situation or action.

Shame: a feeling of guilt, regret, or sadness that you have because you know you have done something wrong.

Shame: used to express sentimental pleasure, especially at something small and endearing- e.g. "look at the foals—shame, aren't they sweet?"

Only when we have an understanding of “shame” (a feeling of guilt, regret, or sadness that you have because you know you have done something wrong.) of our actions are we willing to repent, without this, we continue in a life separated from the goodness of God and His desire to walk with us.

“No one seems to have noticed, that a loss of a sense of shame means a loss of privacy; a loss of privacy means a loss of intimacy; and a loss of intimacy means a loss of depth. There is, in fact, no better way to produce shallow and superficial people than to let them live their lives entirely in the open, without concealment of anything.” - Theodore Dalrymple: Our Culture, What’s Left of it

The Passage

Jesus has declared who he is in the Temple, unable to arrest him without good measure the Authorities resort to setting a trap. They are trying to discredit Jesus and what he stands for.

Their reasoning is as follows,

"the authorities were not interested in the intrinsic merits of this case, still less in assuring that justice be done and be seen to be done, but were using this question as a trap, in order to have a basis for accusing him. There are several Synoptic parallels (Mk. 3:2; 10:2 par.; Lk. 6:7). If Jesus disavowed the law of Moses, his credibility would be instantly undermined: he could be dismissed as a lawless person and perhaps be charged in the courts with serious offences. If he upheld the law of Moses, he would not only be supporting a position that was largely unpopular but one that was probably not carried out in public life, and,

worse, which would have been hard to square with his well-known compassion for the broken and disreputable, his quickness to forgive and restore, and his announcement of the life-transforming power bound up with the new birth.”- D. A. Carson

We must acknowledge and consider the world in which the Jews lived, the licentiousness of the Roman/Greek way, and what they stood against. Prostitution disguised as “Temple Worship”, relationships including multiple sexual partners were rife and actions which are present in modern day recognised as sexually deviant were accepted as cultural norms. Roman/Greek life was licentious, and the Jews tried to maintain moral purity within its midst. Within the borders of Israel, the pressures were less but still existed.

The Jews had sexual problems of their own but had codified it, by enabling serial polygamy by their insistence for divorce to be recognised. Jesus highlights this “Jesus replied, “Moses permitted divorce only as a concession to your hard hearts, but it was not what God had originally intended.”- Matt 19:8

In effect, one could divorce and remarry several times. The reasons for divorce was hotly debated within Jewish society ranging from "sexual immorality", to failing to "cook food properly."

Do we set the church attendees tests of wisdom? What would you do!

To get a better idea of the wisdom of Christ, we could test out own by asking yourselves, how would you answer these questions

"If something at a yard sale is far more valuable than the posted price, do I have to let the seller know?"

"Is it considered stealing to take pens from a bank? What about extra napkins from a fast-food restaurant?"

"Is it unfair to move into better (open) seats at a sporting event or a concert?"- From CNN

"Benefit fraud, of course, is against the law. Are the fraudsters not however mostly ordinary disadvantaged people - and easy targets - trying to make ends meet in an unfair society, which at the same time enables corporations and individuals to avoid paying billions in taxes 'legitimately', simply because the rich and powerful know how to cheat within the law. Discuss."- from <http://www.businessballs.com/ethicsanswer.htm>

Only we when put ourselves in a position can we start to appreciate the close and perfect relationship Jesus has with the Father through the Spirit. This opportunity for wisdom is available to all; we must, however, be willing to place a priority on our life to developing it!

They bring a woman caught in adultery.

"Adultery is not a sin one commits in splendid isolation: one wonders why the man was not brought with her. Either he was fleet of foot than she, and escaped, leaving her to face hostile accusers on her own; or the accusers themselves were sufficiently chauvinistic to focus exclusively on the woman. The inequity of the situation arouses our feelings of compassion, however guilty she herself was. In any case, the next verses suggest that the authorities in this case are less interested in ensuring that evenhanded justice be meted out than in hoisting Jesus onto the horns of a dilemma" -D. A. Carson

"Was the woman married, or single and betrothed? Stoning is the biblically prescribed punishment for a betrothed virgin who is sexually unfaithful to her fiancé, a punishment to be meted out to both sexual partners (Dt. 22:23-24). Elsewhere (Lv. 20:10; Dt. 22:22) death is prescribed for all unfaithful wives and their lovers, but no mode (such as stoning) is laid down." - D. A. Carson

At this point let us reflect. Mary, the mother of Jesus, was also accused of unfaithfulness, the reaction by her accuser (her betrothed Joseph) was far more sympathetic

"This is how Jesus the Messiah was born. His mother, Mary, was engaged to be married to Joseph. But before the marriage took place, while she was still a virgin, she became pregnant through the power of the Holy Spirit. Joseph, to whom she was engaged, was a righteous man and did not want to disgrace her publicly, so he decided to break the engagement quietly."-Matt 1:18-19

Jesus earthly example of humanity came from these two people. We often underestimate the righteousness of the two people entrusted with the care of Jesus.

Far from showing sympathy, it would appear collusion has taken place by the supposed spiritual leaders in an attempt to discredit Jesus

"The Law required that both guilty parties be stoned (Lev. 20:10; Deut. 22:22) and not just the woman. It does seem suspicious that the man went free. The scribes and Pharisees handled the matter in a brutal fashion, even in the way they interrupted the Lord's teaching and pushed the woman into the midst of the crowd."-Warren W. Wiersbe

To re-state about the dilemma Jesus has

"If He said, "Yes, the woman must be stoned!" then what would happen to His reputation as the "friend of publicans and sinners"? The common people would no doubt have abandoned Him and would never have accepted His gracious message of forgiveness.

But, if He said, "No, the woman should not be stoned!" then He was openly breaking the Law and subject to arrest. On more than one occasion, the religious leaders had tried to pit Jesus against Moses, and now they seemed to have the perfect challenge (see John 5:39-47; 6:32ff; 7:40ff)." -Warren W. Wiersbe

Ill- A "Matrix Moment"- In the film the Matrix, the lead character Neo, comes to realise that all said about him is true and that he has the power to control all around him. The film represents this moment by Neo slowing then freezing time! Something significant is happening, something beyond sequential time (Chronos), is breaking in, this moment is an opportune moment (Kairos)

The same is true in our lives. We live in "sequential" time (Chronos), but during this process, God can break into our circumstances. If recognised and treated correctly, these moments of significance, the moments of Kairos, these moments of the "in-breaking of the Kingdom", these "Matrix moments" can radically alter the direction and shape of our future life.

In John *, we have a Kairos moment, Jesus has declared who is is "water of life", later in the chapter he declares he shares the name of God "I AM", in between these declarations the test is put, how will this Kingdom operate?

We have in the "sentencing" of the woman caught in adultery a Kairos Moment, the challenge is, are those involved going to demonstrate a willingness to "grow through change."

The charge is made, what will Jesus do? If this were a movie, time would slow and stop; he would be frozen on the TV screen, the audience know when it all boils down to it, what happens next?

Jesus reflects he take this time, I believe he prays for wisdom and as he does he writes in the sand, the only account of Jesus writing anything.

What did he write, options?

"We do not know what He wrote on the dirt floor of the temple. Was He simply reminding them that the Ten Commandments had been originally written "by the finger of God" (Ex. 31:18), and that He is God? Or was He perhaps reminding them of the warning in Jeremiah 17:13?" - Warren W. Wiersbe

"O Lord, the hope of Israel, all who turn away from you will be disgraced. They will be buried in the dust of the earth, for they have abandoned the Lord, the fountain of living water." - Jer 17:13

or possibly

"Do not help a wicked man by being a malicious witness' (Ex. 23:1b), and the second time, 'Have nothing to do with a false charge and do not put an innocent or honest person to death, for I will not acquit the guilty' (Ex. 23:7)." - D. A. Carson

"Many manuscripts specifically say that the accusers were 'convicted by their own conscience' (av), but their stunned departure testifies as much. Those who had come to shame Jesus now leave in shame. Jesus' saying does not mean that the authorities must be paragons of sinless perfection before the death sentence can properly be meted out, nor does it mean that one must be free even from lust before one can legitimately condemn adultery (even though lust and adultery belong to the same genus, Mt. 5:28). It means, rather, that they must not be guilty of this particular sin. As in many societies around the world, so here: when it comes to sexual sins, the woman was much more likely to be in legal and social jeopardy than her paramour. The man could lead a 'respectable' life while masking the same sexual sins with a knowing wink. Jesus' simple condition, without calling into question the Mosaic code, cuts through the double standard and drives hard to reach the conscience." - D.A. Carson

"It was required by Jewish Law that the accusers cast the first stones (Deut. 17:7). Jesus was not asking that sinless men judge the woman, for He was the only sinless Person present. If our judges today had to be perfect, judicial benches would be empty. He was referring to the particular sin of the woman, a sin that can be committed in the heart as well as with the body (Matt. 5:27-30). Convicted by their own consciences, the accusers quietly left the scene, and Jesus was left alone with the woman. He forgave her and warned her to sin no more (John 5:14)." - Warren W. Wiersbe

"If any one of you is without sin, let him be the first to throw a stone at her. This is a direct reference to Deuteronomy 13:9; 17:7 (cf. Lv. 24:14)—" - D. A. Carson

As the accusers leave Jesus finally turns his attention to the woman who has endured this time

Guilty as Sin

It is to be understood that this woman is guilty. Regardless of the fact her co-accused does not stand with her, does not make her innocent. She has committed a sin, of sexual relations outside the bounds of marriage. God reveals that marriage is an illustration of his relationship with his bride, one man for one woman. This was always Jesus desired and best way. So now Jesus deals with the person, not just the action "Alone with the woman, Jesus addresses her for the first time. His form of address, Woman (gynai), is entirely respectful" - D. A. Carson

"He does not here ask if she is guilty, but if there are others who condemn her. That she is guilty is presupposed by the final words of v. 11: Go now and leave

your life of sin. But she answers his question with a direct No-one, sir (Gk. kyrie, which means 'sir' as readily as 'lord' or 'Lord'). Only now does Jesus come close to answering the question that was first set him. Regardless of the exigencies of the law of Moses, in this instance Jesus says neither do I condemn you. The confidence and personal absoluteness of Jesus' words not only call to mind that Jesus came not to condemn but to save (3:17; 12:47), but prompt us to remember the Synoptic accounts that assign Jesus, like God himself, the right to forgive sin (Mt. 9:1–8 par.). The proper response to mercy received on account of past sins is purity in the future." - D. A. Carson

"The Pharisees brought the woman caught in the act of adultery. But where was the man? Their morality excused some while accusing others (see Rom. 2:11). Jesus, however, raised the issue of universal guilt. "If any one of you is without sin, let him be the first to throw a stone at her," He announced. Every man there was forced to admit that he stood beside the woman, before the bar of justice. The divine morality begins with the affirmation that all have sinned. But the Judge withholds condemnation in order to give life, and to encourage the sinner to "leave your life of sin."

* Punishment oriented. The Law was a good and holy expression of righteousness. Adultery is wrong, and we are to care about doing right. But the Pharisees were not concerned with encouraging right action in Israel or with the reform of the woman. Their motives were not righteous, but vengeful. On the other hand, everything Jesus did was righteous, and was designed to produce righteousness! Jesus affirmed the Law's penalty for sin, but demanded sinlessness from anyone who would execute it! Christ Himself judged the sin wrong, but rather than condemn the sinner, Jesus withheld the penalty so that she might go and sin no more!"-Larry Richards

Ill- Even in today's society we understand the idea of a public pardon. For certain crimes, the president of USA will publicly pardon a convicted criminal.

Jesus goes further than this. Jesus applied the law and its result to himself, justice demand this price be paid, and so Jesus pays the price. We who watch on can see this woman's freedom, and our own bought in the action of death on the cross.

"We must not misinterpret this event to mean that Jesus was "easy on sin" or that He contradicted the Law. For Jesus to forgive this woman meant that He had to one day die for her sins. Forgiveness is free but it is not cheap. Furthermore, Jesus perfectly fulfilled the Law so that no one could justly accuse Him of opposing its teachings or weakening its power. By applying the Law to the woman and not to themselves, the Jewish leaders were violating both the letter and the spirit of the Law—and they thought they were defending Moses!"- Warren W. Wiersbe

"The Law was given to reveal sin (Rom. 3:20), and we must be condemned by the Law before we can be cleansed by God's grace. Law and grace do not compete with each other; they complement each other. Nobody was ever saved by

keeping the Law, but nobody was ever saved by grace who was not first indicted by the Law. There must be conviction before there can be conversion."-Warren W. Wiersbe

If we are now to take something away from all this it must be, "Of All God's qualities, mercy shines brightest."

Micah 6:8

No, O people, the Lord has told you what is good,
and this is what he requires of you:
to do what is right, to love mercy,
and to walk humbly with your God.

Do we love Mercy?

We often give thanks that mercy has been shown to us, do we do the same regarding others?

Of all God's qualities- "Mercy shines Brightest!"

Mercy- "Not getting what we do deserve", allows us to understand Grace, "getting what we don't deserve", which then allows us Freedom - "choosing the person we are going to be"

Mis-guided Choice

Sin- We listened to the snake, not to the Spirit of God

Shame- We hid from God in the garden, the garden we were meant to care for.

Justice- God placed a consequence upon us as a result of our action

Mercy- God provided a way to establish a "working relationship with Him"
(sacrifices)

Grace- God solved the issue through his actions on the cross (Jesus sacrifice)

Freedom (Changing the default position, we now no longer have to sin)

And what we can do to aid this position.

We see through the actions of Jesus a world steeped in it's a sin,

Gen 4:23-24

One day Lamech said to his wives,

"Adah and Zillah, hear my voice;

listen to me, you wives of Lamech.

I have killed a man who attacked me,

a young man who wounded me.

If someone who kills Cain is punished seven times,

then the one who kills me will be punished seventy-seven times!"

can now humbly find no condemnation, but hope and forgiveness demonstrated to this woman, and offered to us, Amen.

Romans 8:1-4

So now there is no condemnation for those who belong to Christ Jesus. And because you belong to him, the power of the life-giving Spirit has freed you from the power of sin that leads to death. The law of Moses was unable to save us because of the weakness of our sinful nature. So God did what the law could not do. He sent his own Son in a body like the bodies we sinners have. And in that body, God declared an end to sin's control over us by giving his Son as a sacrifice for our sins. He did this so that the just requirement of the law would be fully satisfied for us, who no longer follow our sinful nature but instead follow the Spirit.