

His Forgiveness

September 14, 2022

Scripture: John 8:1-11

Summary: Lesson that deal with Six unique characteristics of Jesus.

“Six Unique Characteristics of Jesus”

“His Forgiveness”

John 8:1-11

A woman comes home one afternoon and tells her husband that the car won't start. She says it is water in the carburetor. Her husband not wanting to be rude said "Dear are you sure? I'm not trying to be mean, but you don't know a carburetor from a spark plug." But the wife being ever so persistent said "I'm sure there is water in the carburetor." The husband finally says, " Okay dear I'll take a look at it, where's it at." She said in the lake. (ha ha ha) Have you ever had something you wish you could take back? Something you could do over again. I'd bet that wife does.

One day there was a woman who was brought to Jesus by the ruling authorities. This woman was a debtor. The debt that she owed was so high that there was no way that she could ever repay it. But the debt that she owed was not a result of unpaid taxes. But rather it was a result of unforgiven sin. The authorities wanted her to pay the ultimate price. They wanted to condemn her to death by stoning. But before they carried out their plans, they brought the woman to Jesus to see what He might have to say about the whole thing. What Jesus did on that day changed her life forever. It gave her a brand-new start.

This evening, as we see the forgiveness that Jesus gave that woman on that day, I want each of us to examine ourselves today.

Because I believe that each of us are present somewhere in this story today. You may be like the woman – condemned by everyone and needing forgiveness.

You may be like the Pharisees – self-righteous judges of others but unable to see your own fault and your own need.

But hopefully, by the time we finished this evening, you will recognize your need to be like Jesus – the one who gave forgiveness when punishment was justified.

Let's see how Jesus forgives, John 8:1-11.

1. HIS FORGIVENESS IS BASED ON OUR GUILT NOT OUR INNOCENCE.

The forgiveness that Jesus offers to us is not because of our innocence. It's because of our guilt. The Bible states that when it comes to us being guilty or not guilty, that we are all guilty.

(Romans 3:23)

23. For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;

From the time of Adam and Eve until today, every person that is born will be born a sinner. "All" doesn't mean me and not you. And "all" doesn't mean you and not me. "All" means everyone.

In fact, according to the Bible, admitting our guilt is a requirement to receiving God's forgiveness.

(I John 1:8-10)

8. If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.

9. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us *our* sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

10. If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.

Here in our story this lady was caught in the act.

Have you ever been caught in the act of doing something wrong?

Whenever you are caught in the act of doing something wrong, there is no point in arguing. The evidence is there.

The witnesses can testify to the fact of your guilt. There is no use trying to blame someone else.

The guilt is yours, and you must deal with the consequences.

This woman was caught in the act. She was guilty of the crime.

She didn't put up any defense. The only thing that was left to be decided was what they were going to do about her guilt. What was her penalty going to be?

2. NO MATTER HOW SEVERE THE SIN IS GOD WILL FORGIVE YOU.

This woman, who stood before Jesus and the crowd, had just committed the act of adultery. The sin that she committed was a serious crime. It is not considered a serious crime in our day, but it was then.

It was one of many crimes that carried the death penalty. It was ranked right up there with murder, kidnapping, witchcraft, offering human sacrifice.

Can you picture the scene there? Jesus is at the temple, and He was right in the middle of teaching a group of people who were gathered around Him.

All of the sudden, Jesus is interrupted by the shouts of many men and the wailing of one woman. All that she wants to do is to crawl into a corner and hide. She's half-clothed, and the clothes that she does have on are about to fall off. Her accusers didn't even give her time to get fully dressed when they caught her.

The last place that she wants to be is near the temple. She feels so ashamed and so guilty. They won't even allow her to curl up on the floor and hide her face.

She is forced to stand in front of the crowd so that everyone can stare at her. There she is standing there for all to see her.

She knew what she had done. And she knew that it was a sin deserving of death. But what she did not yet know was that no matter how severe her sin was Jesus could still forgive her.

(Isa 1:18 NIV) "Come now, let us reason together," says the LORD. "Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red as crimson, they shall be like wool.

No matter how severe her sin was, and no matter how severe your sin might be, God's grace and God's forgiveness is always greater.

Some people will not come to Jesus because they think that they have gone beyond the scope of God's forgiveness.

If God can forgive that woman, if He can forgive those who put Jesus on the cross, and if He can forgive me, then He can forgive anyone.

If you are alive, you are not outside the reach of God's forgiveness.

Most people don't have a problem with wondering whether or not God can forgive them. Their question is whether or not what they have done needs forgiving.

In their own eyes and maybe in the eyes of others, they are good people.

But the reason that they see themselves as good people is because they are comparing themselves with other people.

“Compared to my neighbor or my brother or the guy I saw on the news, I’m doing pretty good. I’m here in church today, aren’t I?”

Do you want to know what other sins were worthy of the death penalty? – Striking or cursing parents, working on the Sabbath, using God’s name as a cuss word, rebellion, & pre-marital sex among others.

Jesus took it even further when He said that if you are angry with someone, then you are guilty of the sin of murder, and if you lust after a woman, then it is the same in God’s eyes as if you had already had sex with her.

We might as well just line everyone up against the wall and call in the firing squad right now because we are all guilty.

If I match myself up against you, I might come out looking pretty good. But then again, I might come out looking pretty bad. It just depends on who I want to compare myself with.

(2 Cor 10:12 NIV) “We do not dare to classify or compare ourselves with some who commend themselves. When they measure themselves by themselves and compare themselves with themselves, they are not wise.” God doesn’t compare me with other people. He compares me with Himself. Do you know the last part of Romans 3:23 – “and fallen short of the glory of God.” That means that in comparison to God’s perfect holiness, I am a wicked sinner. The woman that Jesus was facing that day – she didn’t need to be convinced of her sinfulness. She already recognized that. What she needed was to understand that God’s forgiveness was stronger than her sin.

3. HIS FORGIVENESS IS WHAT STANDS BETWEEN US AND DEATH.

What we see in this passage of scripture in verses 5-6 is that the Pharisees thought that they had Jesus in a position where there was no way that he could get out of this mess. What we see is these leaders were pretending to be such law abiding citizens. The reality though was that they didn’t care about the law. If they cared so much about the law, where was the man that this woman had been caught sleeping with? According to the law, both of them were supposed to die, not just the woman. They certainly didn’t care about her. Their purpose was to destroy Jesus, and the only way they could do that was by destroying that woman. They thought they had Jesus between a rock and hard place because if He disagreed with the law, then they

could arrest Jesus for blasphemy and turn the people against Him. However, if He went along with their plan and stoned the woman, then they could get Him in trouble with the Romans. At that time, the Romans were the only ones who had the right to carry out the death penalty. Jesus was between a rock and a hard place. From all appearances, Jesus had no choice but to do as the accusers suggested. But what we see is that Jesus totally turned it around on them and what we see is that Jesus didn't condone the sin, but He also didn't condemn her. He said He who has never sinned can cast the first stone. Then He finished it by saying if they don't condemn you then neither do I. He forgave her of her sin. And when I thought about that I realized for the first time that there is only one thing that stands between us and eternal death and that's His forgiveness.

That woman had no one standing with her that day. The law was against her and the crowd was against her. She was getting ready to face death by stoning. In verse 7, Jesus talks about casting the first stone. There was a particular way that stoning happened in biblical days. The persons who were the witnesses that sealed the fate of the accused would be the ones who would use the first stone against the condemned. They would take a large stone and use it to crush some vital portion of the person's body – the chest cavity or the head. If the victim survived, then the rest of the crowd would join in with smaller stones until the person was dead. It was a very painful and messy way to die. There was only one thing that stood between this woman and death and that was Jesus.

Do you understand that this is true for you and I as well? Your parents don't stand between you and death. Your spouse doesn't stand between you and death. Your money doesn't stand between you and death. Your church attendance doesn't stand between you and death. Your self-righteousness doesn't stand between you and death. The only thing that stands between you and eternal death in hell is Jesus Christ and the forgiveness that He provides through His death on the cross. He is the only way that we can find deliverance from eternal death. (John 14:6)

4. JESUS IS THE ONLY ONE THAT CAN JUDGE US FOR OUR SINS.

In response to the accusations made against this woman, Jesus did something kind of strange. We see in verse 6 that they were using this question as a trap. But, instead of debating with them, instead of just walking away, He wrote something on the ground. The Bible doesn't say what He wrote. At first, He may have just doodled with his finger on the ground, almost as if He was saying to them, "Make all the accusations that you want to. I'm not listening." Some have suggested that He wrote the Ten Commandments on the ground as if to say "Yes, she has broken the 7th commandment, but how are you doing in keeping the other 9?" Maybe he wrote each of their names in the sand with a date beside those names as if to say, "Oh, you thought that the sin you committed was a secret, did you. I know about it. Do you

want me to make it public before this crowd just as you are making this woman's sin public?" In the middle of Jesus' writing on the ground, He stood back up and made a statement. He said that the requirement for judging another person for their sin is that the accuser be sinless. I can't say with any certainty what Jesus wrote on the ground that day. But whatever it was it had an effect on the outcome. All of her accusers left because for one reason or another, each of them, from the oldest to the youngest was reminded of their own sin, and that because of their sin, they were worthy of death too. They were not qualified to condemn her.

If being without sin is the requirement for someone to condemn or judge you, then who is the only one who is qualified to condemn? Jesus. We are quick to see another person's slackness. We are quick to say who does not tithe or give, who does not come to Sunday School, who does not come to church, who does not come to Bible study, and who is not qualified to teach or lead. Before you criticize or say something about someone else's slackness you better make sure that yours is consistently tight.

But just because you are doing all of the right things still don't give you the right or privilege to put someone else down. Jesus taught us to take people where they are and with love and compassion bring them to where they need to be. You may even say in your own self-righteousness that, "I don't say those things to a person's face." You may not say them in a person's face, but you say them in meetings without that person there, you say them at home without that person in front of your impressionable children, you say them around other believers or you even think it in your mind. How many of you know that God can read your mind? So even though you don't verbally say it, God still holds your mind accountable for what you are thinking. So before we can worry about getting someone else right, we better be trying to get ourselves right. How many of you know that some people either know what you are doing and sometimes who you are doing it to. So, when you come to them to straighten them up. They might just remind you of what you're doing wrong and then all of a sudden you'll want to get mad. Remember, Jesus is the only one that has the right to judge. But the wonderful thing is this: even though He has every right to judge us, that is not His desire.

5. HE DESIRES TO FORGIVE US NOT JUDGE US.

There they stood – the accused woman and Jesus. Nothing was left of the shouts and the angry words and those who had spoken them. The only evidence that they had ever been there was the rocks that were scattered on the ground all around them. Jesus had every right to pick up those stones and kill her Himself. But he did not do that. Look at what happened [read vs. 10-11a]. Jesus is holy and sinless. Here He is standing next to a woman who was drenched in sin. Why didn't He condemn her? (John 3:16-17 For God so loved the world that He gave His only-begotten Son that

whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him.”) If God’s purpose was to judge sinners, then why did Jesus come to earth and die? God’s purpose is not to judge sinners. His purpose is to forgive sinners. (2 Pet 3:9 NIV) The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.”

Though we are sinners, deserving of eternal death in hell, that is not God’s desire for us. His desire is that we realize our sin, confess it to Him, receive Jesus as our Savior, and be healed to live a brand new life. Church we need to realize how valuable we are to Jesus? We need to realize how much He loves us? (John 10:10-15 NIV) The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full. "I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. The hired hand is not the shepherd who owns the sheep. So when he sees the wolf coming, he abandons the sheep and runs away. Then the wolf attacks the flock and scatters it. The man runs away because he is a hired hand and cares nothing for the sheep. "I am the good shepherd; I know my sheep and my sheep know me-- just as the Father knows me and I know the Father-- and I lay down my life for the sheep." He loves you – just a sheep – so much that He was and still is willing to sacrifice everything for you. Church He doesn’t want to judge us He wants to forgive us.

6. HIS FORGIVENESS DOESN’T GIVE US PERMISSION TO CONTINUE TO SIN.

Before Jesus and the woman parted ways on that day, He gave her only one piece of instruction. [read vs. 11b] Jesus didn’t condemn the woman accused of adultery, but neither did he just ignore or condone her sin. He told her to leave her life of sin. Jesus stands ready to forgive any sin in your life, but confession and repentance means a change of heart. He was telling her to leave this life of sin behind. And church what I want you to understand is that just because God forgave her of this sin that deserved the death penalty doesn’t mean that sin is not big deal, this doesn’t mean that we can come to Jesus to get forgiveness after we’ve had our fun. “We’re forgiven! Now, let’s go party!” (Rom 6:1-2,15 NIV) What shall we say, then? Shall we go on sinning so that grace may increase? By no means! We died to sin; how can we live in it any longer? (15) What then? Shall we sin because we are not under law but under grace?” By no means! Sin is a very big deal. It is such a big deal that Jesus had to give His life to pay the penalty for it. We aren’t required to be sinless before we can be forgiven. But once we have been forgiven, our goal and passion is to live holy lives out of love for the one who gave so much for us.

The teachers of the law and the Pharisees were right about two things on that day. The payment for sin only comes through a death. Either you can pay for your sins with your own eternal death in hell, or you can accept the death of Jesus as payment for your sins. The second thing that they were right about is when you find a person trapped in sin, the only good thing that you can do is to take them to Jesus.

If you are here this evening, and you have already accepted Jesus as your savior and received his forgiveness, you may be having some trouble understanding how you should respond to this passage.

Can I make a couple of suggestions?

First, let it be a reminder of what you have been forgiven of. When we forget that we have been forgiven, we either fall back into it, or we lose our love for the one who forgave us.

Second, let it be a challenge to examine ourselves. Are you living a life of sin right now? Is there something for which you need forgiveness? Is there something that you need to leave behind?

Third, let it be an example for the kind of forgiveness that we are supposed to give to one another and to those that are a part of our everyday life.

No sin is too great to be forgiven, and no sin is too small to need forgiving.

“Six Unique Characteristics of Jesus”

“His Forgiveness”

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2. NO MATTER HOW _____ THE SIN IS GOD WILL FORGIVE YOU.
3. HIS FORGIVENESS IS WHAT _____ BETWEEN US AND DEATH.
4. JESUS IS THE ONLY ONE THAT CAN _____ US FOR OUR SINS.
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