



DATE: November 1, 2009

TEXT: John 8: 1-11

TITLE: "John XXII: Forgiveness and Repentance"

We continue this morning through our study of the Gospel of John. I go through books of the bible for one reason.... I believe the bible is the Word of God ... and I want to teach all of God's Word.... not just my favorite texts and topics.

This philosophy led me to a problem this week. The simple question is this... is what I just read in the Gospel of John truly Biblical? "What do you mean? You ask... it's in the bible."

Please notice, in you bible there is a notation right before Chapter 8. It states "The earliest and most reliable manuscripts do not have John 7:53 - 8:11" allow me to briefly share some facts

Fact # 1 The first time this text appeared was in a bible that is dated to about 400 A.D.

Fact # 2 None of the early Church Fathers commented on this text

Fact # 3 It almost certainly does not belong where it is in the Gospel of John. It actually interrupts the story. You can see that John 8: 12 picks up from chapter 7. As a matter of fact a number of early Bible place this story in the Gospel of Luke.

Fact # 4 The story of Christ pictured here is "in character" with Christ pictured in other text in the Bible. It is close to the story of the Prodigal Son. Other stories picture Christ forgiving sinners.

Fact # 5 A man by the name of Papias, who was a disciple of John, seems refers to this story in his writings. In other words even though it was not in the Bible unto

the 5th century, it was seen as a true story of Jesus every early.

Fact # 6 The early church was involved in great persecution and stressed the distinctiveness of the church. Forgiveness was not stressed. Also the early church was very strict about morals... they did not want anything that might justify adultery. That may be why it was kept out.

Finally Fact #7 both the major Commentaries that I use, both of which are from the Evangelical perspective believe this text is Canonical (part of scripture.) I conclude this introduction with the words of *The New Testament Commentary by William Hendrickson...*

“Our final conclusion then is this: though it cannot now be proved that this story formed an integral part of the Fourth Gospel.... we believe that what is here recorded really took place, and contains nothing that is in conflict with the apostolic spirit. Hence, instead of removing this section from the Bible it should be retained and used for our benefit. Ministers should not be afraid to base sermons upon it! On the other hand, all the facts concerning textual evidence should be made know.”

I have now done what Hendrickson suggests... I have made known the facts.... I have concluded it is the Word of God and I will preach on it.

I begin by reminding you of the context of the story. The Pharisees were trying to arrest Jesus. They were trying to entrap him. Our text tells us this... it states..... **“They were using this question as a trap, in order to have a basis for accusing him.”**

It is possible that this entire encounter was a set up. Notice that the woman was brought to Jesus but not the man. In adultery it “takes two to tango.” The man was allowed to escape.

Here was the trap the Pharisees set. If Jesus obeyed the Hebrew law and condemned this woman

to death, he would be breaking the Roman Law that stated only the Roman Governor could condemn someone to death. If he did not condemn this woman to death he would be accused of breaking the Hebrew Law and condemned as a false teacher. It was a trap. The woman, who obviously was not a pillar of society, was a pawn in this plot of the Pharisees

Here is another question....what did Jesus write when he was drawing in the dirt. Some say nothing... possibly he was simple trying to take the focus off the woman, who may have been naked or close to naked. Others speculate he began listing sins in the dust. We don't know... it's something to ask when we get in the presence of Jesus. Let us now apply the story to our lives. I will share 3 lessons

Lesson # 1 Notice the reality of sin. *John 8: 7-9*

But Jesus bent down and started to write on the ground with his finger. 7When they kept on questioning him, he straightened up and said to them, "If any one of you is without sin, let him be the first to throw a stone at her." 8Again he stooped down and wrote on the ground. 9At this, those who heard began to go away one at a time, the older ones first, until only Jesus was left, with the woman still standing there

Here is a reality that each and every one of us knows.... every single person sins. Every single person commits acts and thinks thought that are not pleasing to God. There is absolutely

no room for self-righteousness.... because there is no such thing as righteousness by ourselves.

The saying “**there but by the grace of God goes me.**” Is certainly true.

Allow me to give the definition of sin. Sin that is Capital S... i.....n. Is a state of being.

People are in the state of Sin. That is in the state of separated from God. This is a fundamental

truth of scripture. *Romans 3 states....*

"There is no one righteous, not even one; 11there is no one who understands, no one who seeks God.

All have turned away, they have together become worthless; there is no one who does good, not even one."

Ephesians 2 states....

1As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins, 2in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient.

No one is righteous. All person are dead in our transgressions. The ruler of the air.. That is Satan is at work in the lives of all people. Sin is the state of being of every person without Christ. sins... that is little s...i...n...s are the symptoms of the state of being. People who are in the state of Sin commit sins in their actions and thoughts.

Jesus isn our text is pointing out this truth to the crowd. The Pharisees had forgotten that

fact. They were self-righteous. They held themselves above the crowd. Jesus pointed out the truth.

We must be careful that we are not modern day Pharisees. We must never think that we deserve the love and forgiveness of God. We must never think we are better than other people.

We live in a day and age that minimizes sin. You hear these expressions....

- “Everybody is doing it”
- “It’s no big deal.”
- “something that feels this good and makes me happy can’t be wrong.”
- “God accepts me just the way I am.”
- “I’m no different than anybody else.”

You watch T.V. for one evening and you see the total acceptance of sin in our society.

Couples living together..... gay couples more and more common.... children totally disrespecting parents.... acceptance of lying and cheating.... and I could go on and on and on. We have become a society with very little morality. Sin is gone. We once again need a reminder that each and every person is separated from God as evidenced in sins that displease God.

Lesson # 2 Notice the wonderful forgiveness of Jesus. *John 8: 10-11a*

10Jesus straightened up and asked her, "Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?"

11 "No one, sir," she said. "Then neither do I condemn you,"

Into this state of Sin Jesus enters. He offers a passage out of this state of sin. He offers forgiveness. Earlier I quoted Ephesians and stated we were dead in our sins. Completely and totally dead. But God did not leave us in this state. *Ephesians 2 goes on to say...*

4 But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, 5 made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions—it is by grace you have been saved. 6 And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus, 8 For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God— 9 not by works, so that no one can boast. 10 For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.

I decided to go back to the sermon I preached a few years ago on Ephesians 2 and retrieve some of the quotes I used . Here is *Martin Lloyd Jones' comment on this text...*

The Christian is not a man who is hoping to be forgiven: the Christian is not a man who hopes that ultimately he will be able to satisfy the demands of the law and to stand before God. If he is a Christian who understands Christianity he says, I am already there, I have ceased to be dead, I am alive, I have been quickened, I have been made alive

What is “quickenings”? Quickening is regeneration and nothing else. What is regeneration? Regeneration is an act of God by which a principle of a new life is implanted in man, and the governing disposition of the soul is made holy.”

Jones goes on to define this wonderful term grace. He states.....

The whole essence of the teaching at this point, and everywhere in all the New Testament, is that we have no sort or kind of right whatsoever to salvation, that the whole of salvation is, that though we deserve nothing but punishment and hell and banishment out of the sight of God to all eternity, yet God, of His own love and grace and wondrous mercy. Has granted us this salvation. Now this is the entire meaning of this term “grace”.

This is good news. This is wonderful news. Jesus Christ offers forgiveness. This is what

is being offered to this adulteress woman. No sin is too great. Nothing we have done can separate us from the offered love of God. Come and be forgiven

Lesson # 3 True repentance a change in our actions. *John 8:11 concludes with these words...*

"Then neither do I condemn you," Jesus declared. "Go now and leave your life of sin."

I stated earlier that the world has lost it's understanding of sin... but let me also say I believe the church has often lost it's understanding of repentance. Repentance means to stop moving in one direction and to turn around and go in another direction. So often you hear the words "Accept Jesus as your Lord and Savior and all your sins will be forgiven and you will be saved." Let me say I absolutely believe that sentence is true. However.... it is true in all the fullness of its meaning.

"Accept" does not mean some idle words.

- It means a true surrender.
- It means an absolute commitment.
- It mean repentance.
- A Total change of directions.
- It means going from being lost to found.

- It means going from blindness to sight.

We accept Jesus as “Lord and Savior.” Absolute Lord.

- Lord of our families.
- Lord of our workplaces.
- Lord of relationships.
- Lord of our finances.
- Lord of our emotions.
- Lord of our actions.
- Lord of our morality.
- Lord of all

Jesus looked at the woman and said repent. By the way...we do not know if she did. We do not know if she became a follower of Jesus.

The Pharisees tried to trap Jesus. He would not be trapped... instead he taught a wonderful truth. Instead he demonstrated an act of love and forgiveness. The Pharisees went away... but they continued to look for a way to arrest and execute Jesus. Eventually they found a way.

Repent. Accept Jesus as your Lord and Savior. Move from the state of sin to the state of Grace. Receive the forgiveness of our Lord Jesus. Praise the Lord... we are forgiven.

AMEN