

JESUS FORGIVES, SAVES, AND SETS FREE (John 8)

The Woman Caught in Adultery

But Jesus went to the Mount of Olives. Now early in the morning He came again into the temple, and all the people came to Him; and He sat down and taught them. Then the scribes and Pharisees brought to Him a woman caught in adultery. And when they had set her in the midst, they said to Him, "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?" This they said, testing Him, that they might have something of which to accuse Him. But Jesus stooped down and wrote on the ground with His finger, as though He did not hear. So when they continued asking Him, He raised Himself up and said to them, "He who is without sin among you, let him throw a stone at her first." And again He stooped down and wrote on the ground. Then those who heard it, being convicted by their conscience, went out one by one, beginning with the oldest even to the last. And Jesus was left alone, and the woman standing in the midst. When Jesus had raised Himself up and saw no one but the woman, He said to her, "Woman, where are those accusers of yours? Has no one condemned you?" She said, "No one, Lord." And Jesus said to her, "Neither do I condemn you; go and sin no more."

While this story is packed full of drama and suspense, this was not a parable, but was in fact, a real life encounter with Jesus. He did use hyperbole (that is, extreme exaggeration) many times in His parables, in order for His listeners to pay attention to, and then to understand a teaching, a profound truth. That hyperbole then was used by Jesus in order to make a serious and very important point, such as saying that if your eye offends you to pluck it out or if your hand offends you to chop it off. The point being, as the woman caught in adultery was having a real life encounter with Christ Jesus, He simply told her, "Neither do I condemn you; go and sin no more." Last week we looked at the conversation of when Jesus was asked by His disciples for Him to to increase their faith, in **Luke 17**. What did He respond with? "If you have faith as a mustard seed, you can say to this mulberry tree, 'Be pulled up by the roots and be planted in the sea,' and it would obey you." (**Luke 17:6**) Interestingly enough, it seems that Jesus was actually referring to a mulberry tree that was right there, and He didn't expand that object lesson by casting that tree in the sea. That certainly doesn't sound very practical does it, especially in considering our calling: to share and show the love and the gospel of Christ Jesus? After all, Jesus didn't say 'they will know you are my disciples if you cast a mulberry tree in the sea'. He did though say, "By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another." (**John 13:35**) Forgiveness is a huge part of that, isn't it? It might get people's attention for a bit, if one were to truly speak to a tree and cast it in the sea, but Jesus Himself experienced a lack of faith from those people He

encountered even after He gave sight to the blind and made the lame to walk and healing all sorts of other infirmities and diseases, and yes, even raising people from the dead (including Himself)! Some were accusing Jesus of having a demon or that He was operating in the power of Beelzebub aka Satan. What took place in the dialogue before and after Jesus said that, about having the faith of a mustard seed, etc., where we can get an understanding of what Jesus really was getting at? Just prior to Jesus being asked to increase their faith, He was teaching His disciples about **forgiving others**, saying **"Take heed to yourselves. If your brother sins against you, rebuke him [always mindful of the fruit of the Spirit, "love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control." (Galatians 5:22-23)]; and if he repents, forgive him [Greek: "metanoeo", a change of mind-recognizing a need for change and then heeding to that need]. And if he sins against you seven times in a day, and seven times in a day returns to you, saying, 'I repent,' you shall forgive him." (Luke 17:3-4)** Forgiveness of course, begins even before one is confronted with the one being (hopefully) forgiven. It has to be in your heart to be able to forgive them, right? It was in the **Matthew 18** account of this dialogue that Peter asked Jesus how many times to forgive a brother who sins against him, "up to seven times?" "Jesus said to him, **"I do not say to you, up to seven times, but up to seventy times seven." (Matthew 18:22)** When one is abiding truly in Christ and in His Word, forgiveness becomes you. Most of the time, offenses just fly past you, slide right off of you. With our own personal encounter with Christ Jesus, we learn to live in and according to the love of Christ, of what the Apostle Paul spoke of in his "Love Chapter". "Love suffers long and is kind; love does not envy; love does not parade itself, is not puffed up; does not behave rudely, does not seek its own, is **not provoked**, thinks no evil; does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth; **bears all things**, believes all things, hopes all things, **endures all things.**" (1 Corinthians 13:4-7)

That certainly begs the question, how many times then will God forgive you? The woman who was caught in adultery and then brought to Jesus, had a very personal encounter with Jesus. He didn't say, "take up your mat and walk". He didn't tell her to go wash her eyes in the pool of Siloam. He was revealing a very important doctrinal point on forgiveness, not only the forgiveness of God through Christ Himself but also the forgiveness of others. He seemingly knew what was in her heart, that she had a heart of repentance. He said, **"Woman, where are those accusers of yours? Has no one condemned you?"** She said, "No one, Lord." And Jesus said to her, **"Neither do I condemn you; go and sin no more."** After Jesus had talked about forgiving one another in **Luke 17** and then being asked to increase the disciples' faith and Jesus speaking of having the faith of a mustard seed to be able to tell a mulberry tree to go plant itself in the sea, Jesus gave another parable that ties this all together. **"And which of you,**

having a servant plowing or tending sheep, will say to him when he has come in from the field, 'Come at once and sit down to eat'? But will he not rather say to him, 'Prepare something for my supper, and gird yourself [sound familiar: the armor of God (**Galatians 6**)] and serve me till I have eaten and drunk, and afterward you will eat and drink'? Does he thank that servant because he did the things that were commanded him? I think not. So likewise you, when you have done all those things which you are commanded, say, 'We are unprofitable servants. [as Jesus said, "without Me you can do nothing". (**John 15:5**)] We have done what was our duty to do.'" (**Luke 17:7-10**) By believing on Christ Jesus and receiving Him, we then have our hope and live the remainder of our lives down here, according to what God spoke through Isaiah the prophet saying, " 'Surely your salvation is coming; Behold, His reward is with Him, and His work before Him.'" (**Isaiah 62:11**)

The Apostle John tells us, "My little children, these things I write to you, so that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous." (**1 John 2:1**) He also tells us, "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." (**1 John 1:9**) As we go to Christ Jesus for forgiveness of sins, He requires from us then to forgive others. When we have our hope in Christ that will be not be condemned but will be saved from the second death, we are to not condemn others. Also we don't want Jesus to be judging us based on our past sins do we? That means that we can't be judging others either. That also means that we have to forgive ourselves and not condemn ourselves. As Jesus tells us, "Judge not, and you shall not be judged. Condemn not, and you shall not be condemned. Forgive, and you will be forgiven." (**Luke 6:37**) One part of the story of the woman caught in adultery that usually gets overlooked or not mentioned. Not only did the woman have a personal encounter with Christ, the accusers did also. Hopefully some of them learned a valuable lesson that day about forgiving others and not judging or condemning others. Also, you know the story about when Jesus spoke to the lame man and first told him his sins were forgiven? Not only was Jesus making the point that He was and is able to forgive sins but that is monumentally more important than being healed in the flesh. The Apostle Paul said to the church at Corinth, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort those who are in any trouble, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God." We love God because He first loved us. We can forgive others because He first forgave us! Praise the Lord!

It is then of the utmost importance to know the four things that Paul spoke of in **1 Corinthians 1:30**, that God is for us in Christ Jesus. He is our Wisdom! He is our Righteousness! He is our Sanctification!

He is our Redemption! Meaning He will guide us in His wisdom, He makes us right with God, He sets us apart in His Holiness, and He leads us in His redemption! Christ alone and He has revealed that to us, saying, **"I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life. No one comes to the Father except through Me."** (John 14:6) "For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them." (Ephesians 2:8-10)

Jesus the Light of the World

Then Jesus spoke to them again, saying, **"I am the light of the world. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life."** The Pharisees therefore said to Him, "You bear witness of Yourself; Your witness is not true." Jesus answered and said to them, **"Even if I bear witness of Myself, My witness is true, for I know where I came from and where I am going; but you do not know where I come from and where I am going. You judge according to the flesh; I judge no one. And yet if I do judge, My judgment is true; for I am not alone, but I am with the Father who sent Me. It is also written in your law that the testimony of two men is true. I am One who bears witness of Myself, and the Father who sent Me bears witness of Me."** Then they said to Him, "Where is Your Father?" Jesus answered, **"You know neither Me nor My Father. If you had known Me, you would have known My Father also."** These words Jesus spoke in the treasury, as He taught in the temple; and no one laid hands on Him, for His hour had not yet come. Then Jesus said to them again, **"I am going away, and you will seek Me, and will die in your sin. Where I go you cannot come."** So the Jews said, "Will He kill Himself, because He says, 'Where I go you cannot come'?" And He said to them, **"You are from beneath; I am from above. You are of this world; I am not of this world. Therefore I said to you that you will die in your sins; for if you do not believe that I am He, you will die in your sins."** Then they said to Him, "Who are You?" And Jesus said to them, **"Just what I have been saying to you from the beginning. I have many things to say and to judge concerning you, but He who sent Me is true; and I speak to the world those things which I heard from Him."** They did not understand that He spoke to them of the Father. Then Jesus said to them, **"When you lift up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am He, and that I do nothing of Myself; but as My Father taught Me, I speak these things. And He who sent Me is with Me. The Father has not left Me alone, for I always do those things that please Him."** As He spoke these words, many believed in Him. [Likewise with us, Jesus stated in **John 14:23**, **"If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our home with him."**]

The Truth Shall Make You Free

Then Jesus said to those Jews who believed Him, **"If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed. And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."** They answered Him, "We are Abraham's

descendants, and have never been in bondage to anyone. How can You say, 'You will be made free'?" Jesus answered them, **"Most assuredly, I say to you, whoever commits sin is a slave of sin. And a slave does not abide in the house forever, but a son abides forever. Therefore if the Son makes you free, you shall be free indeed."**

Abraham's Seed and Satan's

"I know that you are Abraham's descendants, but you seek to kill Me, because My word has no place in you. I speak what I have seen with My Father, and you do what you have seen with your father." They answered and said to Him, **"Abraham is our father."** Jesus said to them, **"If you were Abraham's children, you would do the works of Abraham. But now you seek to kill Me, a Man who has told you the truth which I heard from God. Abraham did not do this. You do the deeds of your father."** Then they said to Him, **"We were not born of fornication; we have one Father—God."** Jesus said to them, **"If God were your Father, you would love Me,** for I proceeded forth and came from God; nor have I come of Myself, but He sent Me. Why do you not understand My speech? Because you are not able to listen to My word. You are of your father the devil, and **the desires of your father you want to do.** He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own resources, for he is a liar and the father of it. But because I tell the truth, you do not believe Me. Which of you convicts Me of sin? And if I tell the truth, why do you not believe Me? He who is of God hears God's words; therefore you do not hear, because you are not of God."

Before Abraham Was, I AM

Then the Jews answered and said to Him, **"Do we not say rightly that You are a Samaritan and have a demon?"** Jesus answered, **"I do not have a demon; but I honor My Father, and you dishonor Me. And I do not seek My own glory; there is One who seeks and judges. Most assuredly, I say to you, if anyone keeps My word he shall never see death."** Then the Jews said to Him, **"Now we know that You have a demon! Abraham is dead, and the prophets; and You say, 'If anyone keeps My word he shall never taste death.'** Are You greater than our father Abraham, who is dead? And the prophets are dead. [By the way, they were wrong there too! God is not a God of the dead but the living!] Who do You make Yourself out to be?" Jesus answered, **"If I honor Myself, My honor is nothing. It is My Father who honors Me, of whom you say that He is your God. Yet you have not known Him, but I know Him. And if I say, 'I do not know Him,' I shall be a liar like you; but I do know Him and keep His word. Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day, and he saw it and was glad."** Then the Jews said to Him, **"You are not yet fifty years old, and have You seen Abraham?"** Jesus said to them, **"Most assuredly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I AM."** Then they took up stones to throw at Him; but Jesus hid Himself and went out of the temple, going through the midst of them, and so passed by.

What then is your response to your personal encounter with Christ?