

John 8

CONTROVERSIAL PASSAGE (7:53-8:11)

In most of your Bibles, you will notice that John 7:53 to John 8:11 is either set off in brackets or is in a footnote. The reason for this is that most Majority of the New Testament scholars do not think it was part of the Gospel of John when it was first written, but was added later.

OVERVIEW OF 8:1-11

The adulterous woman

During this period, only the Roman government had the legal authority to exercise capital punishment, but there is some evidence that Jewish authorities, in violation of Roman law, executed women for adultery (Keener, 736).

We should also note that the law that requires the execution of the woman also requires the execution of the man who was her partner in sin. This story makes no mention of the man. In that patriarchal society, people were more likely to excuse a man than a woman for sexual sin. Also, these scribes and Pharisees need only this woman for their nefarious purposes. It is really Jesus who is on trial here. The scribes and Pharisees have seen him deal mercifully with sinners, and hope to show that he has strayed beyond the bounds of the law to do so.

What's the trap?

If Jesus doesn't approve the stoning, He breaks the Jewish law cited above. If He approves it, He breaks the Roman law that prohibits Jews from issuing capital punishment. Sounds like a pretty good trap.

THE MISUSE OF JOHN 8:1-11

Some misuse John 8:1-11, as a covering for unrestrained sin, here's their line of reasoning.

- i. "In the instance of John 8:1-11, a woman committed adultery, but Jesus did not condemn her. We should not, therefore, make a 'big deal' over such a trifling and personal matter."
- ii. Others "paint" with an even broader brush. They allege that no one who is flawed himself by sin has the right to censure anyone for any transgression; after all, none of us is "without sin." No one, therefore, possesses the moral authority to condemn.

Paul taught that there is none righteous, no not one (Romans 3:10). That included himself. He sometimes found himself doing wrong (Romans 7:15). He had to fight to keep himself under the Lord's control (1 Corinthians 9:26-27). He knew that so long as he remained in the flesh he would never achieve a permanent plateau of perfection (Philippians 3:12).

On the other hand, the apostle did not hesitate to "judge" a brother who was living in open, impenitent sin (1 Corinthians 5:3), and he rebuked those who tolerated such (1 Corinthians 5:1-13). Paul had learned the Master's truth that while we are not to judge according to appearances, we are obligated to "judge righteous judgment" (John 7:24). Paul thus withdrew his fellowship from blasphemers like Hymenaeus and Alexander (1 Timothy 1:19-20), and again, exposed Hymenaeus and Philetus when they taught that the resurrection had occurred already (2 Timothy 2:17-18). Nor did he hesitate to openly mention that Demas fell in love with the world and forsook him (2 Timothy 4:10).

It is obvious, therefore, that one does not have to be “without sin” before he can call attention to the grievous error that wicked men practice on a sustained basis.

Quote from John Piper:

The point is not that judges and executioners must be sinless. The point is that righteousness and justice should be founded on a gracious spirit, and if it's not, what you get is the heartlessness and hypocrisy of Pharisaism. That's the point throughout the Gospels, not just here.

When they are all gone, Jesus ends the story saying to the woman, “Neither do I condemn you; go, and from now on sin no more” (recall John 5:14). Not: Neither do I condemn you, so it doesn't matter if you commit adultery. But: I am re-establishing righteousness in your life — and for the Pharisees, if they will have it — on the basis of an experience of grace. Don't commit adultery any more. Not mainly because you fear stoning. But because you have met God, and have been rescued by his grace — saved by grace!

I AM THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD

This statement, like those Jesus made in preceding chapters, is rich with Old Testament images. In the exodus from Egypt the Israelites were accompanied by a pillar of fire and cloud, encompassing them with physical light, and symbolising the presence of the Lord [Exodus 13ff]. This pillar hovered over the Tabernacle after it was built. During the Feast of the Tabernacles, which had probably just finished when Jesus made this statement, the Temple was illuminated, reminding the people of God's presence with them on their journey from Egypt to Canaan, and drawing attention to its significance as the earthly 'dwelling place' of God.

In the Psalms light is associated with God. Ref to (Psalm 27:1, 36:9, 43:3, 56:13b, 118:27).

Isaiah also identifies God as the 'Light of Israel' [10:17], identifies the coming Servant of the Lord as 'a light for the Gentiles' [42:6], and in 60:1-3 and 19-20 looks ahead to a glorious time of salvation when the light of the Lord will enlighten and draw to himself people from all nations.

IF YOU REMAIN IN MY WORD

What is the test of authentic belief? Jesus says: “if you remain in my word” (v. 31). Jesus makes three promises, but they apply only “if you remain in my word.” The three promises are that:

- ✓ We will truly be his disciples (v. 31).
- ✓ We will know the truth (v. 32).
- ✓ The truth will make us free (v. 32).

True discipleship involves becoming like the teacher in thought and action.

- ✓ He would not only learn the teacher's teachings
- ✓ He would learn how the teacher thought
- ✓ How he analysed data and formed conclusions
- ✓ How he conducted himself.

The disciple would try to become as much like the teacher as possible. That is what Jesus is asking us to do here. We are to learn from him and to become as much like him as possible

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Jesus Deals with Sinners

1) Imagine yourself in the crowd, feeling perfectly justified condemning the woman. How would you react to Jesus' remark in v. 7?

2) Can you remember a time when you were definitely wrong and someone forgave you? How did that make you feel?

3) Why are we more eager to condemn other people's sins rather than our own?

4) Why does the church tend to overlook the sins of hypocrisy, legalism, gossip, and pride, but judge sins like drunkenness, immorality, homosexuality, etc.?

4) What can we learn about witnessing from Jesus' pattern of giving the Law to the self-righteous, but **offering grace to sinners**?

That's how God's grace should work in our hearts. Like the adulterous woman and the hypocritical crowd, we are all guilty and condemned before Him. But rather than condemning us, He loved us enough to die in our place and offer us a full pardon. And since it cost Him so much, we can't take His grace cheaply. We can't sin and shrug it off by saying, "I'm under grace." I want to please the one who loved me and gave Himself for me (Gal. 2:20). That same grace is available to every sinner who has been caught in the act!

Resolve in your own heart that from this day on to live a life consecrated to Jesus Christ.

"Go . . . sin no more."

I am the Light of the World

5a) Read John 8:12a Jesus makes a second **I AM** claim: "**I am the light of the world**". What do you think He means by this claim?

5b) What promise does Jesus make to those who follow Him? See John 8:12b

6) Read John 8:31-32 Jesus therefore said to those Jews who had believed him, If you remain in my word you will truly be my disciples; and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free.

6a) How do we "remain" (hold) in his word?

6b) What will believers experience if we heed his promise?

7) What do you think Jesus means when in verse 51 He says, "I tell you the truth, If anyone keeps my word, he shall never see death?"

Children of Abraham Vs Children of the Devil

8a) In v33, the people respond that they are already free because they had never been a slave to anyone. What was Jesus' response to their claim? John v8:34

8b) Who do you belong to? What is the indicator in your life of who your father is? John v8:47

Prayer

In John 8, the Lord Jesus Christ makes three Great promises—three promises that require a commitment to Him if their blessings are to be experienced in our lives:

- ✓ "Whoever follows me...shall have the light of life" (vs.12)
- ✓ "If you remain in my word ...you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free" (vs. 31-32)
- ✓ "If anyone keeps my word, he shall never see death" (vs. 51)