

The Mercy and Judgement of Jesus

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[0 : 0 0] then the principal of the free church college and remember i'm saying something which at first i found rather strange but it's absolutely correct that we should use our imagination when we hear the stories that we we read in scripture using the imagination that we have to picture in our minds our minds eyes the events that we read off in scripture that we read off in relation to the grace and mercy and yes and the judgment of jesus that we find recorded in scripture and we use our imagination as we we come to this story the story that brings out the the loving mercy of jesus towards a sinner and yet at the same time where we see the judgment of jesus against the hypocrisy of those who claimed a spiritual superiority but had no saving grace so we'll use our imagination as we come to this story and try and picture then in your mind's eye the scene that's that's presented to you here at really at the start of the story because the story that we find here begins at an early morning hour it begins after jesus has been to the mount of olives the mount of olives that was in the northeast side of jerusalem just outside the city walls and of course it was the mount of olives where jesus would often resort to to go to pray to be alone with his father in prayer on this occasion after obviously having spent the night in the mount of olives jesus early next morning he goes to the temple the temple that was actually very close by to the mount of olives and we're told that jesus sits down that was the posture of teaching he sits down and begins to teach the people there in the temple courtyard the people gather around and they want to hear him they want to listen to him they want to be taught by jesus so there's a very you might say a very tranquil picture that we have at that very point of jesus teaching and teaching with authority is the son of god that picture is disrupted by spiritual bullies these teachers of the law that describes the experts the so-called experts in the law of moses and then there's also the pharisees the religious leaders of the people and we're told that they intrude upon jesus as jesus is teaching they come into his presence they're not there to listen to they're not there to be taught by jesus they're there to trap jesus they might appear to be hyper spiritual but in fact they're the lowest of the low in terms of their spiritual hypocrisy what do they do they place a woman before jesus they present this woman before jesus as women who'd been caught in adultery they these religious leaders they're claiming a spiritual superiority over this woman and they're using her to trap jesus to bring jesus to say something that's going to discredit him before the eyes of the people and indeed we may even say before the roman authorities but we'll again come to that in a moment so just in your mind's eye picture the scene what do we see what are you seeing we're seeing as it were the faces of spiritual arrogance the human faces of spiritual arrogance that claim not just a superiority over that poor woman that's brought before jesus they're claiming even a superiority a spiritual superiority and a spiritual arrogance over jesus but what else do we see what other face do we see we see the face of love we see the face of love and

the face of the lord jesus we see the the face of love for sinners as jesus shows that face before this exploited woman and so we've got two signs as it were here in this story on the one hand there's jesus the one who's full of grace and truth the one full of mercy the one full of forgiveness jesus the sinless son of god jesus the the savior of the world we see jesus but on the other hand we see these self-righteous religious leaders and we see their their brazen hypocrisy they're claiming a spiritual exaltedness that in fact is mere hypocrisy and in between jesus and and these religious leaders we see a woman yes she's a sinner she's a sinner but as we'll see yes a sinner condemned by these religious elites a sinner who's not condemned by jesus so we see here then the revealing of grace of forgiving grace we're seeing in jesus mercy mercy towards the an unrighteous sinner we're seeing jesus the friend of sinners of course we see too the ugliness the ugliness of of human sin expressed in that that hypocrisy of christless religion we see the faces of the ugliness of the ugliness of the ugliness of the ugliness of the religious leaders of the day so as we go through the story we're a story that's so well known to so many i want to do a number of things i want that we see jesus that we see him who who showed saving love sinless saving love to that individual to that woman brought before jesus that woman who was condemned by others but wasn't condemned by jesus yes jesus knew she was a sinner yes he he called her not to sin anymore he he yes he he wouldn't pass by the sin that the woman was was was involved in we see jesus in his forgiving love his forgiving grace towards that woman what else do we see we see those who are opposed to jesus and and seeing those who are in that position to be warned to be challenged to be warned concerning yes at many times our own inclination to to self-righteousness having a mindset that really is hypocrisy and then thirdly to see the woman see that that woman who was brought before jesus and yet to know and to see the hope that that sinners have for full forgiveness from god for our sins and that joy that we can hear when we know that our sins are forgiven that joy to hear these words not condemned not guilty because jesus took our condemnation upon himself and he gave himself for us on the cross let's begin with the the religious leaders that the self-righteous religious leaders they'd come before jesus as we noticed they they weren't wanting to be enriched by his teaching they didn't want to be led to be directed by what jesus was saying of himself as is the the the messiah the christ come to to bring salvation to his people they didn't want to be like the others there to sit at jesus feet and to hear him teach the the truths of salvation found in jesus alone they'd come to trap jesus they'd come to bring him you might say ultimate embarrassment to bring before jesus disgrace by what jesus would would say in response to that woman brought before

him these religious leaders they're bullies they're bullies that have brought this woman out into the open to try and trap Jesus and they think that you know they've got Jesus in a corner they think that they've found a solution to be rid of Jesus and his teaching in his ministry they've worked out a plan that they think cannot do anything but trap Jesus so they're going to bring before Jesus a question about this woman a question that they think is going to bring about such a dilemma that Jesus would be able to escape from it and so be discredited in the face of his hearers discredited even before the Roman authorities so the religious bullies they brought this woman before Jesus she's she's just this bait if you like this human bait to lure Jesus into making a statement that's going to incriminate him and so ruin his ministry as far as the woman's concerned yeah no she certainly has broken the seventh commandment that commandment we were looking at just a few days ago and on Wednesday evening I mean the woman herself hadn't denied her guilt and the law of Moses had said that she should be punished with death even though the penalty the death penalty for adultery in Jesus' day wasn't gently carried out to the sin or deplacating Jewish society so you know these religious leaders are testing Jesus they're going to trap him because if Jesus says stone her stone her what the law of Moses says then won't he be contradicting the words that he speaks of in compassion and mercy and lose face with the people who've been following Jesus and of course the Romans who are occupying that to that part of the world they themselves were only those who are permitted to put people to death so if Jesus says stone her he'll be contradicting he'll be going against the Roman authorities but if Jesus says don't stone her he'll be seen to be going against the law of Moses and his credibility as a teacher of God's law his credibility diminished so either way the Pharisees think the teachers of the law the scribes they think that they've got Jesus that Jesus won't be able to carry on as a teacher that always claims to be the Christ the this the promised Messiah they think well this is going to make Jesus appear to be a fraud and we'll be done with them and so they think they've got Jesus these religious leaders they have no mercy towards that poor woman the woman was being exploited to be used for their purposes their self-righteous purposes to trap Jesus this woman's sin was being exploited for their benefit because they really wanted nothing to do with Jesus and of course we know too that it's only the woman that was brought before Jesus if she'd been caught in adultery obviously there was a man involved the man was nowhere to be seen and also there were no witnesses being presented as well before Jesus in law there had to be witnesses to prove that particular sin of adultery so no eyewitnesses given the man himself not brought before Jesus and so we can see the whole thing was just a setup to trap Jesus these self-righteous individuals these men that show the ugliness of hypocrisy of sin

the sin of hypocrisy these individuals that were claiming a moral and spiritual high ground not for them to be considered guilty of the the sin of adultery and not for them to be considered guilty for for for breaking the commandments and being condemned but yet they were the ones who were condemning themselves because of that heinous sin of self-righteous hypocrisy that hypocrisy rooted so deep in the heart of man these individuals that were raising themselves morally spiritually above this woman because they claim implicitly they claim that they were good that they were right with god in fact they were guilty sinners but they couldn't recognize that they were in no position to condemn this woman when in fact they were guilty before god and and to be condemned for hearts that were far from god so in trying to trap jesus in fact were trapping themselves and trying to condemn someone else for sin they were actually condemning themselves because they wouldn't see that that sin rooted deep in their hearts isn't that a warning to to each one of us you know when when i when you when i when when we assume any kind of moral or spiritual superiority over anyone else when we claim a self-righteous acceptance before god you know whenever we try and justify ourselves through our own self-perceived righteousness what are we doing we're actually sinning against the holy god as god declares in his word there's no one righteous not even one and particularly when the sin of hypocrisy that hypocrisy of self-righteousness when that's committed even in the name of jesus in the name of jesus is tarnished somebody's written this he said the worst sins are not those of debauchery not those of immorality of willful hypocrisy it's that sin that god condemned on another occasion that we read off in isaiah 29 verse 13 this people draw near me or draw near with their mouths and honor me with their lips or their hearts are far from me you see jesus saw right through that hypocrisy we see that expressed and later on in the story in verses six to eight we see the wisdom of jesus and in answering his accusers jesus bent down and broke with his finger on the ground and as they continued to ask him he stood up and said to them that him who's without sin among you be the first to throw a stone at her and once more he bent down and roped on the ground jesus knows why these religious leaders brought this poor woman to him jesus he knew he could see into the hearts of these accusers he could see into hearts that would even use a poor woman for their purposes to trap him and discredit him before his followers jesus isn't going to retaliate what we see jesus doing he's going to show mercy towards this woman and he's going to show judgment against her accusers so there in the temple courts there in jerusalem jesus is questioned by well by those who hate him he's been questioned by those leaders whose their motive is impure so he said they're trying to trap jesus what does jesus do we're told that he just bends down bends down and and the dust he writes something in the dust with that sort of finger writing in the dust now we're not told what he's

writing so many speculations so you read the commentaries there are 101 different uh possible reasons now we're not going to speculate we're not told and we can simply say this Jesus didn't have any wish to give his accusers the satisfaction of an immediate direct reply but the accusers that these religious leaders they keep driving at Jesus for an answer and then Jesus stands up and in standing up he shows his authority and Jesus gives them an answer of divine wisdom divine beauty and the matter's dealt with there and then let him who's without sin among you the first throw a stone at her let him who's without sin cast the first stone it's all that Jesus said then he continued writing on on the dust and the ground he's dealt with the matter he's not going to carry on this with these accusers he said what's needed to be said and given that answer just a few words just a few words of response and yet Jesus answers every aspect of that to what they could what was considered a dilemma in his answer what's he done well he's kept to the law of Moses you read in Deuteronomy 17:7 it's the passage in the Old Testament that speaks of the need for witnesses to to the crime to be the first to throw stones at a guilty person well there were no witnesses there so Jesus has answered that particular question the witnesses had to be the people who weren't guilty of that particular crime now there's no mention of course in Jesus dismissing the the sin of adultery but what Jesus is saying is that you know if these teachers are beloved these Pharisees are claiming to be witnesses then they've got to be the first ones to cast the stones as the law of Moses demanded but of course they weren't the witnesses they couldn't verify what they claimed none of them are going to pick up any stones and claim that they're without that sin so each of these accusers one by one they leave the scene and then we're told that only Jesus and that woman remain left Jesus stands up he stands up again and he turns to the woman and he asks her are there any left you condemn her she replies no no one Lord and then in that great statement of grace of forgiving grace Jesus says to her neither do I condemn you go and from now on sin no more what are we seeing here surely what we're seeing here is is the hope that the sinner has the forgiven sinner has of full forgiveness full forgiveness from God for for your sins we're seeing joy the joy of being declared not condemned why because Jesus Jesus bore that condemnation the condemnation that you and that I deserve for our sins and Jesus bore the condemnation of God on the cross in your place in your place in my place condemned he stood there's Jesus standing before that woman and of course let him who's without stone cast the without sin cast the first stone well Jesus of course was without sin but he doesn't cast the stone any stones against Jesus only Jesus could have condemned that woman for for his being without sin but here's Jesus who come to bring salvation who come to receive the lost and rescue the lost but Jesus says I've come not to call the righteous but sinners to repentance

[20 : 21] so there's jesus in that amazing statement of forgiveness when he says neither do i condemn you isn't isn't what we're seeing here the wonder the glorious wonder of the forgiving love of god it's god who who justifies sinners yet at the same time maintains that integrity as as god who hates sin jesus didn't ignore the fact that the woman had sinned and sinned in a particular way jesus isn't avoiding the fact that every sin deserves death before a holy and righteous god jesus is showing the wonder of grace the wonder of forgiving grace of saving grace in not condemning the sinner because jesus alone would bear her sin and the sin of all who are his and bear that sin on the cross it was on the cross yes sin would be condemned on the cross god would condemn sin and jesus bore our sins and was punished with them and there on the cross the lord jesus christ would be condemned in your place in my place in the place of that woman caught in adultery your place in my place there on the cross jesus would take that punishment of that woman but you that i deserve and that jesus would do so by his finished work the work of jesus and he took our place on the cross because there on the cross jesus took the punishment that i deserve that you deserve for for your sins there on the cross jesus would take the punishment that woman deserved for her sins did so as our substitute the lord jesus christ him for us so that you so that i may be forgiven for our sins on the basis of that punishment punishment for sin the punishment that jesus faced that jesus took for sinners such as our sins for sinners for our sins through jesus yes god in his in his forgiveness god says yes you've sinned what you've done what you've done what you've thought in your heart what's what you've harbored in your heart what you've what you've sinned yes offends a holy and righteous god with hearts stained by sin god's saying yes his standards have been transgressed broken that you deserve them but the wonder of salvation is this that jesus took your place on the cross he faced death for your sins so that you might not suffer the penalty for your sins isn't excusing the sin jesus wasn't excusing the woman's sin we're all culpable we're all responsible for our sins each and every one of our sins the very sins of our heart are worthy of god's condemnation god isn't god isn't god isn't interested in excusing sin no but god promises to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all our unrighteousness and that through the finished work of the lord jesus on the cross so let's just take take a few moments to to grasp what was happening there in the temple courts in jerusalem and yes to to gasp in astonishment at the love of jesus for sinner back to the passage two people remain standing after the accusers have gone away there's the holy sinless son of god the one who's pure in righteousness the one who's great in his grace

and there before him standing a woman a sinner for guilt beyond question but Jesus doesn't say to her once he's standing with her he doesn't say to her you know get away from me you sinner doesn't throw her out of the courtyard as a miserable hopeless helpless sinner no he tells her that he doesn't condemn her that she's to go go from there and sin no more Jesus hasn't excused her sin she is guilty Jesus forgives her and he forgives her sin based on that divine justice that recognizes the sin that declares the sinner not guilty the basis of Christ having taken her place our place the place of sinners on the cross now we don't hear any more about this woman she's obviously met with Jesus she's heard Jesus speak these words of grace to her forgiving grace she's heard him say to her that she's not condemned and that she's got to leave her life of sin she leaves that seen there in the temple a forgiven person she's a new creature she's she's met with Jesus and she will never have been the same again just as anyone who meets with Jesus who comes into the presence of the savior a new creature one who's forgiven her sins her sins and never the same again you recognize when you come before the holy sinless savior you recognize I recognize myself a sinner and in need of God's forgiveness it comes as you are don't come with any kind of arrogance and thinking well I'm not a sinner after all I don't do terribly horrible things don't come to him with any kind of self-righteous arrogance that assumes that you don't need forgiveness for your sins but come to Jesus come to him and yes recognize that you are a sinner and come to him repenting of your sins and you'll know the joy the joy of that freedom that that forgiveness for your sins I pray that you will have will see and have seen Jesus that you'll see the one who won't cast any stone stone against you who come to him for forgiveness yes you know that you're a sinner you know that it's God alone who forgives sins will come to the one who said they wouldn't cast away anyone who comes to him in faith yes you are yes you may well have a life of sin a life of past sin sins that you know that wear and are an affront to God sins that yes that you're utterly ashamed of come to him come before him that that true repentance sorrow for your sins know that you are a guilty sinner but come knowing that there's no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus so listen again to the words of Jesus as he as he spoke to that woman as he said that I don't condemn you and go and sin no more let's have done with lesser things let's have done with those things that once held us in our grip let's have done with that spiritual adultery when we follow other other gods let's have done with that adultery of heart that causes each one of us to sin against God and yes against a beloved let's have done with considering that the evils of this world are of no consequence that come to Jesus come to him with all your heart come to him serving him delighting to serve him

come to him as you see by faith as you see the Lord Jesus and see him as you can echo these words bearing shame and scoffing rude in my place condemned he stood sealed my pardon with his blood hallelujah what a savior amen let us pray Lord we bow before you in praise and in gratitude for that great salvation that you have made effective through the finished work of the Lord Jesus and may it be Lord that there are those who are hearing who will seek you who will seek your face will come to you in full repentance of their sins and receive the Lord Jesus as savior Lord we bow in your presence we bow with that with that thankfulness of heart that we're not left ourselves that we're not left to wonder how we might know salvation we thank you Lord that you've made known the great truth of saving grace that great truth that we know of and find in your word your word of truth so here is Lord as we continue before you in worship here is Lord as we offer up unto you the praises of our heart who before us we ask we ask these things in Jesus name amen now we're going to close in Psalm 12 Psalm 12 the same Psalms version as he was just putting up on the screen help Lord because the godly have quite vanished and faithful folk we can no longer see one tells falsehood even to his neighbor just as we were seeing there in John 8 with flattering lips they speak deceitfully and so on the verses that Ian's put up Psalm 12 1 to 8 to God's praise the vilest revelations have quite humbled the $\pi\alpha$ Awards the favor and statue that we are not yet to diese road in the raf of your spirit to come notice that the truth that the 350 of us hasöft and Jesus Viot x in raf scaling Schools Vot x

And calls to the end to his neighbor With flattering bliss They seek deceitfully Now may
the Lord God Of all this rich land earth And every tongue Breast he's with gospel word
Such people say We with our tongues will triumph We own our best

Who then can be our Lord Because the weak have suffered Great oppression And by the
hand And the weak he's rolling Christ Now I will guard them From those who abide them
To help and save the Lord I will arise The words proceeding

[33 : 12] From the Lord our Father As pure as silver Which by fire is dried Like silver Which when
bolted In the furnace From it emerges Send thy truly pride Close in prayer Lord be with us
Be near us Now may the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ Love of God the Father And the
fellowship of the Holy Spirit Be with us all

Both now and forevermore Amen Amen Amen Amen Amen Amen Amen Amen