

A Precious Saviour

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[0 : 0 0] to verse 11 where Jesus as he is teaching in the temple is confronted by the scribes and the Pharisees who bring to him a woman who had been caught in the act of adultery and we want to see how Jesus deals with this situation.

As you read through these verses when you see the people involved in the passage here when you see the woman caught in adultery and the scribes who bring her to Jesus, maybe ask ourselves first who are the sinners in this passage? Who do we see as the sinners in this passage? Who is right and who is wrong? And perhaps immediately our mind goes to, well it's obvious it's the woman who was caught in adultery. But as you look at the passage as a whole, as you look at any part of scripture that speaks about people, whether it's individuals or collective groups, we see that in this passage everyone bar Jesus is a sinner. We know because that's what the Bible teaches us. And it's often easy to look at people who have sinned in a very public and a very obvious way and say, well that person has sinned. But not look at others and even look at ourselves. We know this woman has sinned. That is very clear to us. She's been caught in a sinful act. But we also see that those who bring her to Jesus, they come with their own motives which are set in sin as well. They came with this woman to seek to try and catch Jesus out.

And their hearts were full of sin as well. And what's fascinating is how Jesus deals with this situation and how the situation is transformed and how the outcome of the whole situation is not what maybe anyone expected at the start, but how very quickly at the end we see what a precious saviour Jesus is. The Bible teaches us that all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.

And as a church we meet with sinners all the time. Every day we'll be in contact with sinners. But another question we can ask ourselves is how do we treat them? How do we treat sinners around us?

Do we label some as being worse than others? Some whose maybe sin is obvious and public we perhaps label them?

[2 : 5 4] Or do we treat strangers differently to those who we know and love and care for? Or do we see everyone in the same light? Wherever we are standing, wherever we are looking at a people around us, in a home or in a workplace, in a school, wherever we are, even in our church, as we look around and see so many faces in front of us, do we see everyone in the same light?

Do we see all as the Lord sees us? That we are sinners ourselves? That we have fallen short of the glory of God?

Even today I'm sure in many ways we've all sinned. But it's so easy to become like the Pharisee who we read of in the Gospel of Luke, in that parable that Jesus used, when the Pharisee there is praying how good he is and how thankful he is and how thankful he is that he's not like this tax collector, the sinner who is beside him.

It's easy to come to have that kind of heart. And that's why we always have to look at ourselves and remind ourselves and remind ourselves that we are sinners, that we fall short. But in that, remind ourselves what a precious Saviour we have. The Psalms that we've sung from Psalm 103 and Psalm 130, they are Psalms we may be very familiar with and they speak to us so much about our sin.

But they remind us too, how precious a Saviour we have. Psalm 130, those words of verse 3, Lord, in your presence, who can stand if you our sins record? Well, apply these words to this situation here in John 8.

[4 : 56] Who could stand before the Lord? None, but those who could know the Lord's forgiveness. So we have a wonderful Saviour. We're not saying here that God condones sin. He is a holy God. He hates our sin.

And that's what we see as he deals with sin and all its consequences. There's a great price paid for us. Because, as we'll see as we read, the wages of sin is death. But we see the cross as our great hope in the midst of our sin.

The place where God has dealt with the sins of those of his people who will come and acknowledge our sins. We see that he gave his son at a great price and a great cost for our sins.

God is a holy God. He hates our sin. Yet he knows us. And he knows how easily we are led astray. He knows how we are made. He knows what we face on a daily basis.

In Psalm 103 it speaks so much of the wonderful grace of the Lord. But in verse 14 it says, For he knows our frame. He remembers that we are dust.

[6 : 22] He knows us. He remembers us. That we are dust. That we are weak creatures. And as we look at this passage in chapter 8, we see how Jesus is such a loving saviour.

He is sovereign over all and yet such a sympathetic saviour as well. It doesn't tell us of one who is soft on sin, but it tells us of one who loves sinners.

And reaches out to them in grace, forgiveness and love. And that's a powerful reminder to ourselves of how we are to be as a people.

As the church of God. Not to be like the Pharisee condemning sinners. Not condoning sinners. Not condoning sin. But showing grace, forgiveness and love.

To those around us. And remembering it for ourselves as well. So I want us to see three things in these verses. We want to focus first of all on the woman.

[7 : 34] The sinful woman. Then we're going to see the crowd. The sinful critics. And then thirdly, we'll see a precious saviour.

So first of all, the sinful woman. Now her sin is clear for us. From the outset, we see here the scribes and the Pharisees.

They bring this woman to Jesus who has been caught in the act of adultery. We see that from verse 3. And they say to Jesus, Teacher, this woman has been caught in the act of adultery.

Now in the law, Moses commands us to stone such woman. So what do you say? They have this woman and they have the answer of what is to be done.

And in many ways you could say, well, they're right. They are using the law. The law of Moses commands us to stone such a woman.

[8 : 37] So they've got the basis there for how they're going to deal with her. She's guilty in the face of the law and before the world. She's been publicly humiliated here.

And so they know the answer. So they're saying to Jesus, how are you going to deal with this woman? What do you say? But you notice in verse 6 how it says, This they said to test him, that they might have some charge to bring against him.

And nothing is hidden from the Lord. He knows just why they've brought her and what their plan is. But isn't it interesting how they bring the woman to Jesus?

The obvious question is, where's the man? Where's the man? How come he's not been brought to Jesus as well? We don't have the answer here, but we see that their attitude was one where the woman is at fault and that's all that matters.

And she is being used by them to get at Jesus. And they're highlighting her sin. But we are all as guilty as this woman.

[9 : 50] We are all guilty before God. And what they don't realize is they too are guilty. This woman, she will know that she has sinned.

And they know that she has sinned, but they're forgetting that they too are sinners. They're publicly exposing her in this way, bringing judgment upon her.

And yet they're avoiding the sin in their own heart. Her sin may have been hidden initially, but it's exposed.

And again, it's just this reminder to us that all of us are sinners. Whether our sin is obvious before the world or not, it's known to God.

And say, for example, the book of Proverbs. It speaks this way of our sin in chapter 28, verse 13. Whoever conceals his transgression will not prosper.

[10 : 54] But he who confesses and forsakes them will obtain mercy. Blessed is the one who fears the Lord always. But whoever hardens his heart will fall into calamity.

Again, there's that reminder to us that our sin is always before God. We don't hide anything from him.

And though it's the scribes who are, as it were, highlighting this woman's sin, she is aware of it and the Lord is aware of it too. And it doesn't have to be a big sin.

It doesn't have to be something that's public and obvious for us to be unable, as it were, to stand before God, as Psalm 130 speaks about.

Lord, in your presence who can stand if your sins record whatever our sins are? They don't have to be big sins. Our sin leaves us short of God no matter what our sin is.

[11 : 57] Somebody once described it in this way using the example of someone who had run a race. And this race was a long race, trying to beat a record for the time it would take to run from New York to San Francisco.

From one side of the United States right across to the other coast, over 3,000 miles. And a number of people have accomplished this.

I think the record at the moment stands at 42 days to run across the United States. It sounds incredible. We've got some good runners in our own midst here, but I don't know if any of them could run 3,000 miles across America.

But what one person spoke about after achieving this, they were asked, well, what was the most difficult part for you? What was the hardest challenge for you?

The biggest hurdle you have to overcome? And they didn't speak about the challenges such as going up the mountains or crossing hot, dry, long stretches of desert.

[13 : 11] It wasn't what we might imagine would be the big obstacles. The person answered in this way, the thing that came closest to defeating me was sand in my shoes.

Just a little thing, some grains of sand in their shoes is what came closest to defeating them. Not the big obstacles.

As a reminder to ourselves, our sins don't have to be big to defeat us. Just the little sins are enough to destroy us.

Any sin is enough to destroy us. And you see this woman's sentence. Her accusers were right. Because according to the law, she deserved to die.

You can see that in the laws of the Old Testament. In Leviticus and Deuteronomy. She deserved to die. According to the law.

[14 : 11] And don't we all? The wages of sin is death. That is what our sin deserves. Whatever our sin is, that is what it deserves.

That's what Romans 6, 23 makes clear for us. But Romans 6 goes on to say, But the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Nobody gets away with sin. But the only hope for the sinner is to come to Jesus. And he offers ours and anyone in this world hope.

As the only one who is able to deal with our sins. This woman is a sinner. And so are we.

The second thing we want to see is the sinful critics. And you see here the scribes and the Pharisees who bring her to Jesus.

[15 : 16] In their effort to humiliate this woman. They bring her to the best possible place. The place where the large crowd is gathered. Where people often gather to see what is happening.

To hear what is happening. In the public place, the temple is where many would be gathered on every day at occasions. And so they're bringing this to do it very publicly.

They're bringing her to Jesus to catch him out. So that they would have something to hold against him. A charge to bring against him. But what they didn't bargain for was that they brought her to the very man.

Who could deal with her past and her problems. And who could overcome them. And who could make them right. And it's so easy for us to have this kind of heart ourselves.

Where the sin committed gets in the way of the grace on offer. When we're judging others.

[16 : 24] We're focusing on the sin committed. And it's not that we then forget grace. But we almost leave that to the last minute.

And decide for ourselves. Do they deserve this grace? And you see that in the hearts of these scribes and Pharisees.

They don't bring her to Jesus. To show her mercy. To show her grace. They've no thought of it. They had a plan.

But they didn't realise that they were bringing her to someone who wouldn't play by their rules. And they try and catch him out.

They try to stump Jesus. But what they realise is. All too soon is that they've met. Their match. And you see in verse 6.

[17 : 21] This is said to test him that he might have some charge to bring against him. But Jesus bent down and wrote with his finger. On the ground. You ever come to someone and.

You've got something important to say to them. And all they're doing is maybe just. Carrying on on their phone. Not even lifting up their head. To look at you. And you're thinking.

Well. I'm trying to talk to you. I've got something important to tell you. Will you not at least look at me. And here Jesus is. It's almost like he's ignoring them. They've got this charge.

They've brought this woman. It's an important matter. And yet he's looking down. To the ground. Writing on the ground. With his finger. What did he write?

We're not told. But there's something in what he wrote. That maybe caught that attention. What the Lord is saying.

[18 : 19] Should always catch our attention. What the Lord has written. Should always catch our attention. Because as we read God's word.

As we look at God's word. What do we find in it? We find others. We find others. We find others who have sinned. And fall short in so many ways. But it shows us ourselves.

And whatever Jesus is writing. And then as he speaks to them. It exposes them. And that's the power of God's word.

To ourselves as well. It exposes our hearts. It exposes our sin. It exposes everything about us. And what he says then in verse 7.

As they continued to ask him. He stood up and said to them. Let him who is without sin among you. Be the first to throw a stone at her.

[19 : 18] They had come prepared. They had their stones with them. They had already brought the charge against them.

But also they brought the outcome as well. They were going to take charge in this. And they were going to put this woman to death. But Jesus exposes them.

What Jesus was saying to them is. You hypocrites. Just like the Pharisee. We read of in the Gospel of Luke 18.

The Pharisee went up to pray. Who thought he was so good. And he done all things right. Thankfully he wasn't like the sinner beside him. Who went away justified? Not him.

But the sinner who repented and bowed before God. Pleading for mercy. So Jesus says. Let him who is without sin.

[20 : 23] Cast the first stone. And at this point. It's as if all the shouting stops. And what do you hear in the midst of this now?

Once more he bent down. And wrote on the ground. But when they heard it. They went away one by one. Beginning with the older ones.

And Jesus was left alone. With a woman standing before him. He had convicted their hearts. They had tried to catch him out.

But this was not the time that they could do it. He revealed their hearts. He revealed their hearts. To themselves. And one of the hardest things that we so often face.

The revelation of ourselves. Of who we are. Of what we have done. Against God. Of how we have sinned.

[21 : 27] Against God. And the more we see ourselves as being sinful. The more we realize. We can do nothing about it ourselves. But what's sad about this is.

One by one. They went away. They went away. Away from the very place. And the very one. Who could help them.

Their hearts. Were hard. And they turned away. From the one. Who could help them. But who was left. The woman.

And only the woman. Standing. Before him. We have the sinful woman. And the sinful critics.

And as we come to the conclusion. What we see is. The sympathetic. Saviour. She is left. Before. Before. Before. The Lord.

[22 : 29] And she was facing him. In this moment. In verse 10. Jesus stood up. And said to a woman. Where are they? Has no one.

Condemned you? And she said. No one Lord. Just the two of them. Face to face. Only Jesus.

Could have cleared the temple. In this way. And here she stood. Before the only one. In the world. Who was qualified. To take up a stone.

And stoner. Or to take up all the stones. And stoner. And she was facing. Her ultimate judge.

And he shows. And he shows. Mercy. Jesus said. Neither do I. Condemn you.

[23 : 27] What powerful words. In there. Neither do I. Condemn you. And. There is an image. Of how every sinner.

Must appear. Before the judgment seat. Of Christ. Face to face. With the Lord. And our sins.

Deserve. Condemnation. And the only way out of this. Is to come in repentance. To come saying.

Lord. Be merciful to me. A sinner. And the wonder of grace. Is that it's on offer. To us all.

Jesus. Teaches her. Repentance here. I do not condemn you. Go. And from now on. Sin. No more. Now he's not saying there.

[24 : 23] She's going to be perfect. And never have another sin. In her life. But he's saying. Go and turn. Away from sin. And she has the word.

Lord. On her lips. No one. Lord. And as she stands before him. She receives. Two blessings. Two gifts.

From God. First of all. You see. She has a new master. A new Lord. Her simple. Confession. Here.

No one. Lord. Lord. That's all it takes. For the sinner. To be saved. To recognize. The Lord. Is the only one.

Who is able. To help. Because there's no one else. Who can save. Romans again. Reminds us of that. In chapter 10. If you confess. With your mouth. That Jesus is Lord.

[25 : 19] And believe in your heart. That God raised him. From the dead. You will be saved. There's a simplicity. To it. Simplicity. That every sinner.

Needs to hear. That there is salvation. In Jesus Christ. Yes. We can. Condemn the sin. Of all we see around us. And ourselves included.

But we can show them. That there is a gracious. Savior. One who is able to save us. From all. Our sins. A new Lord.

Is what. Every sinner. Needs. And Jesus. Is the one. Who is able to give. Every sinner. A new life. Somebody put it like this.

Jesus specializes. In taking. Wasted. Ruined. Lives. And saving them. By his grace. And restoring them. To usefulness. There's a powerful reminder.

[26 : 17] For ourselves. There. As we come in. To contact. With sinners. As a people. It is Jesus. Who takes. Wasted. Ruined.

Lives. And saving them. By grace. Restores them. To usefulness. And how many. Testimonies. Have you heard. Over the years. Of people.

Who are far. Away from God. Who are at. Their wits. End. And the Lord. Brought them. To salvation. The world. Would have condemned.

Them. In their sin. But Jesus. Showed grace. And saved them. From their sins. The apostle. Paul. So often. Stands out.

The world. Would have condemned. Him. But Jesus. Showed grace. I'm sure. I've mentioned. This man. Before. Bill Gilvere. He was. Well known.

[27 : 10] In the Glasgow. Ganglands. In the 40s. And 50s. He was one. Who was feared. Always. Carrying a weapon. Around him. To intimidate. Or to cause harm.

To those. He came into contact with. And yet. By the grace of God. He was transformed. And used. And became a powerful. Evangelist. Some of you will know.

Suraj. In Nepal. He was in. The college. At the same time. As me. He came over to Scotland. To study. But longed. To learn.

He's just. Not the biggest. One to look at. But he was someone. Who was feared. He was in gangs. He carried knives. If you're walking. Towards him. If people are walking. Towards him.

A glorious transformation. People who are used by him. To show others. The riches of the gospel. We don't condone. Sin.

To Jesus. Or do we drag them. Like the scribes. Condemning them. For their sin. Instead of showing them.

Thank you. To I track him. To God's praise. Want to peace. Bye. Now. Bye.

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