

WHERE WAS THE MAN?

Read John 8:1-11; Leviticus 20:10; Deuteronomy 22:22-24.

In this setting, we find Jesus teaching in the temple. And, as usual, his enemies came trying to trick Him so they could accuse Him of teaching something that was against the law.

The scribes and Pharisees brought to Him a woman whom they said they had caught in the 'very act of adultery'. They posed the question to Him of what would He say should be done to this woman. If Jesus said to stone her (as the law of Moses stated), not only would He appear to be heartless, but He would also invite opposition from the Roman government. And, if He 'ignored' the situation, He would be accused of teaching against the law of Moses.

But, before we look at Jesus' response, let's go back and look at this situation. The scribes and Pharisees knew that the law of Moses stated that the penalty for this act was stoning. But, stop just a moment!!!! Leviticus 20 and Deuteronomy 22 give us the wording of the law. Note what it says: "And the man that committeth adultery with another man's wife, even he that committeth adultery with his neighbour's wife, the **adulterer and the adulteress** shall surely be put to death." (Leviticus 20:10) "If a man be found lying with a woman married to an husband, then they shall **both of them die, both the man** that lay with the woman, **and the woman**: so shalt thou put away evil from Israel." (Deuteronomy 22:22) (Bold lettering is mine.)

Do you find it strange that the scribes and Pharisees brought only the woman? If they caught her 'in the very act', then the man still had to be present. Why would they not bring him also? Speculation could say that perhaps it was someone prominent in the city, or someone they knew personally. But, we do not know, and it really is not important except for the fact that the male partner was not condemned by the spiritual leaders of the day. (Does this remind us of our attitude today? We look at one person who commits a 'sin', and then we look at another person that commits the 'same sin', yet we want to say that one person is OK, and the other is not. Aren't you glad that God is not prejudiced like we are? If He forgave some of us, yet did not offer forgiveness to all of us, then He would not be the One of whom it is stated, "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only

begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” (John 3:16) Notice the word ‘whosoever’; it includes ALL; although we, as humans, like to pick and choose those whom we feel deserve salvation. Perhaps we need to ask forgiveness, also?? I will leave you to ponder that question at another time.)

Now, returning to the woman. The question posed to Jesus was intended as a trap. How did He respond? He responded by not responding----verbally, that is. He stooped down and began to write something, with His finger, in the sand. There is a lot of speculation about what He wrote, although we do not know for sure. But, perhaps it was a list of the many sins of the scribes and Pharisees who had brought her. Perhaps the list could have included stealing, cheating, envy, jealousy, lying, failure to honor a parent, etc. Or, perhaps he asked the same question that we have asked, “Where is the man?” Although we do not know what He wrote, we do know that the leaders did not like to feel ‘ignored’, so they continued to ask Him the same question. He finally faced them, and stated the one qualification which her accusers must possess. “He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her.” (Romans 2:1 also states “...for wherein thou judgest another, thou condemnest thyself...”)

Jesus stooped to the ground and continued to write. Did He write more of their sins? Did He write a list of the woman’s good qualities? Again, we do not know, but we do know that His writing caused them all to make a hasty exit, ‘one by one beginning with the eldest, even unto the last’. The result of a guilty conscience?

Now, Jesus faces the woman. Note that He did not question her about whether or not the accusations were true. There seemed no doubt about that. However, He looked at her through the eyes of a shepherd, not an executioner. (After all, He was the only one who was without sin, so therefore the only one who could rightfully condemn her.) Was her soul stained? Yes. Was this her only sin? Probably not. But, with the heart of a Saviour, He asked her, “Where art thou accusers? Hath no man condemned thee?”

While we may not have the leaders of the religious community accusing us, we do have an accuser, and his name is Satan. He likes to remind us of ‘where we have been’. But, the next time he does that, remind him of ‘where he is going’ !!

Just as Jesus longed for the accused woman to spend eternity in heaven, so He has the same longing for us. So, let Jesus' response to her resound in your soul as He states "Neither do I condemn thee."

But wait-----do not stop there. He also gave her a command. "Go and sin no more." She called Him, "Lord". Whether this was full acknowledgement of who He was, or if it was a term of respect, we do not know. But, this woman's life was obviously changed in a positive way when she met Jesus. And, the same is true for us today. Note that His answer to her showed mercy and also a warning. Jesus did not treat her sin lightly; neither did He desire that she just escape the punishment for this sin, but He wanted her to be restored to a life of purity.

But, let's return to the man----if he, too, had been brought to Jesus, would he have also been forgiven? I will answer that question by asking another. Why would He forgive one person and not another? If we come with a repentant heart, He is there with open arms---and our gender, age, heredity, etc., play no role.

So, let us come to Him today. He is the only One who can forgive and remove our sin, and make us 'white as snow' (Isaiah 1:18, 19). But, you might say---'You don't know what I have done!' Or, 'But it has been years since I have allowed Him to be Lord of my life!' Or, perhaps you have other excuses---and there are many which Satan will be glad to place in your mind. Satan also loves to make us think that we are a child of God, just because we 'know about Jesus'. But, we must not only believe, but also receive what we believe. Know that no matter what you have done, or how long it has been, He is, as mentioned before, waiting with open arms, ready to hold you close and make you an heir with Him.

Please come to Him, repent, and accept Him as Saviour and Lord.

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