

JOHN 8 : 1 – 12 THE NEED FOR LIGHT !

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."

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."

In the night during a heavy blizzard, if the power goes out, what's the first thing you need? Some kind of light!—a flashlight, a match, something. If trapped in a mine by a rockslide, what a joy to see light shining through an opening in the rocks. The first thing God made after creating the heavens and the earth was light! Who is the one source of help and relief in this sin-darkened world? Jesus, the Light!

In our text, Jesus was in Jerusalem for the week-long Feast of Tabernacles or Feast of Booths. God had commanded that every year the people were to live in tents (tabernacles) / huts / booths for own week, to celebrate how the Lord had faithfully provided for them forty years while they lived in tents in the wilderness. At the feast, Jesus taught in the Temple courts, and the people flocked to Him. He taught of man's lack of righteousness, and of the great mercy and forgiveness of God. Many trusted that He was the Promised Messiah. These actions rubbed the self-righteous Pharisees and leaders the wrong way. They hoped to discredit Jesus. *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.* The leaders thought they had the perfect trap. They interrupted His teaching and presented this woman. They were sure He would want to be merciful to her. BUT in the Old Testament, Moses had written, *He who commits adultery with his neighbor's wife, the adulterer and the adulteress, should be put to death (Leviticus 20:10)!* Would Jesus contradict Moses, and then still claim to be sent from God?! ----- As a side note: Where was the man who was involved? Had he been promised immunity? Was this a "set-up"? Consider the woman, hounded by the leaders, and made to stand before Jesus of Nazareth the man of God! Did she know He was the Savior? Maybe not yet.

Do you sense the darkness here—a darkness deep down in the soul? There was need for the light of Truth, the recognition of error, and a clinging to the mercy of God. Jesus didn't start with the woman; He started with the Pharisees! They were in deep darkness too, not rightly grasping the intent of the Old Testament. --- Why did God have given such a rule with such a harsh sentence? or any of the Commandments? Does God like to make people squirm and then toast them? *God our Savior will have all men to be saved (I Timothy 2:3-4).* The Laws of God display to us our lack holiness in our actions, words, and

thoughts. *By the law is the knowledge of sin (Romans 3:20).* Were the leaders bringing this woman to Jesus to get her to see her sin, repent, and be forgiven? Hardly. They wanted Jesus to condemn her. They did not see their own sin; they could only cold-heartedly see hers. Do you ever deal with sinners in that way? Do you forget about leading them to repentance and forgiveness, and only want to condemn them for their errors?

Jesus stooped down and wrote on the ground with His finger, as though He did not hear. Jesus made it plain that He was not caught up by their intensity. He stooped down to write on the ground, as if, “Calm down; hold your horses.” And what was He writing? Was it something for the woman, standing there with her head down in shame? *They continued asking Him; and He raised Himself up and said to them . . .* He straightened up, surely to look them square in the eye. He told them to look into their own hearts, *He who is without sin among you, let him throw a stone at her first.* In other words, “Are you guilty of similar sin? Did you ‘set up’ this woman? Are you so perfect?” ----- Anf you? Can you be self-secure in your own conduct? What sins lie hidden in your past or in your heart right now? How much darkness lies in your own heart and mind?

Again He stooped down and wrote on the ground. He let His words sink in for a while and wrote some more. They were caught off guard by His statement. Were the words in the dirt for them? Jesus’ words struck home. *Then those who heard it, being convicted by their conscience, went out one by one, beginning with the oldest even to the last.* They knew they were sinners and should be crushed too. One by one each walked away, thinking only of the shoes in which he stood, from the oldest to the youngest. Those who had lived the longest and had the longest record of sin, those who had grown wiser and more mature, not so not so rooster-like—cocky—in the blindness of youth, left first. Then all. Jesus brought truth into the darkness of their proud hearts. When dealing with sinners, the ultimate concern is leading them to see their sin, to repent, and cling to Jesus for forgiveness. Whether any of these men turned to the Lord for forgiveness, we do not know.

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.” Jesus stood up again to talk to the woman. With compassion for the lost, He asked her about her accusers. She, who knew her sin all too well, now humbly and gratefully said they were gone. BUT there was still Jesus to deal with. who knew her sin all too well. *And Jesus said to her, Neither do I condemn you.* Do you hear that?! Jesus, God’s Son, brought to her the light of God’s grace-filled love and forgiveness. Jesus had come to seek and to save the lost. He would die for the lost. What a flood of relief must have washed over her heart with that pardon, “Not Guilty!” From Jesus, who certainly could have condemned her, Forgiveness! ---- When you are dealing with your own guilt, when you are dealing with other sinners, don’t miss the Gospel!—the Good News of forgiveness in Jesus! God pardons you, even you. And you “knew better.” Do not withhold that light of forgiveness from the sinners seeking pardon in Jesus. Do not fail to bring light to their guilt-ridden hearts.

The light of forgiveness produces growth in the heart—love for Jesus and a desire to sin no more. Forgiveness is never a license to sin all you want. It is comfort, light, and life, in Him. Grow in Him. Do you hear last words Jesus said to the woman. *Go and sin no more.* The new man of faith in the heart, fueled by love for Jesus who loved you first, fights against the sinful nature and old Adam whom Satan beckons to sin more. How foolish to return to the darkness and dishonor the Lord, who suffered, died, and rose to save you.

Did the woman stay and listen more? We don’t know. But Jesus continued teaching the people who must have witnessed this chain of events and marveled. *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 Light of Life is here for you. Jesus is your merciful Savior. Fight those same old sins as well as the new sins. Paul the Apostle wrote, *For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light (Ephesians 5:8).* Rejoice in Jesus you Light and your Savior! Have a blessed Epiphany day and year!

Amen. So be it!

---Pastor Kanzenbach