

Encountering Jesus: The Accused

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Text: John 8:2-11

NOTES:

A. Introduction:

1. How do we know what God is like?

- a. When we superimpose our circumstances, experiences, relationships with authority figures on our concept of what God is like, we get a skewed perception of Him.
- b. **Jason B.:** *"I decided to follow Jesus at 15 years of age. The last 16 years I've spent trying to construct what God is like from Scripture, learning from passages like Paul, who tells us that we can know what God is like by observing Jesus – Col. 1:15."*

2. Sin:

- a. When we feel condemnation from others, ourselves, fear that God will be disappointed in us.
- b. This story (John 8:2-11) shows how Jesus reacts to a woman caught in sin.

B. The woman caught in adultery – context and plot:

1. Finding the sinful woman and bringing her to Jesus was a setup by the scribes and Pharisees.
 - a. This trap had a legal dynamic, trying to ensnare Jesus to go against Roman authority by condemning the woman to death.
 - b. This trap had a religious dynamic, causing Jesus to go against the Torah, should He be compassionate & spare her
 - c. These rulers were themselves trying to shortcut legal proceedings. And where was her partner in crime, the adulterous man?
2. Jesus responded to their accusation of the woman with silence, instead writing on the ground (John 8:6,8).
 - a. What did He write? Variety of opinions.
 - b. He wrote with His finger (John 8:6). God also wrote with His finger another time – Exodus 31:18. **Pastor Jason:** *"This is the One who inscribed the law on stone in the first place, here again not to abolish the law but fulfill it."*
3. Jesus refused to condemn:
 - a. He challenges the one "without sin" to throw the first stone. "Without sin" implied not only had the person committed no acts of sin but was sinless in nature.
 - b. **Pastor Jason:** *"There is one Person who is sinless by nature, one Person who could throw a stone, but there is no stone in His hand. He gets up with a word of hope and an invitation to a new life."*

C. What we learn about Jesus from this story:

1. **Jesus is not a pawn of political institutions.**
2. **Jesus is not swayed by the crowd.**
3. **Jesus is not like the accusers.** God steps in in the person of Jesus to be this woman's advocate. He defends the marginalized and broken.
4. **In Jesus we see love and kindness but also truth and authority.** **Pastor Jason:** *"We must follow Jesus down the path of this tension, upholding grace and truth."*
 - a. He called the woman's adulterous lifestyle what it was: "sin" – John 8:11. He didn't say "It's no big deal." Adultery is a big deal.
 - b. **Sin is living in a way contrary to the way of God. It is not just our actions but speaks also to our heart's desire to rebel against God.**
 - c. Sin is hard to speak about in our current postmodern culture because its existence implies there is a truth to be upheld above each person's "individual truth." Postmodern thought reflects a reaction to systems that wanted to control people. It has elevated each individual's truth and liberty to the place of highest good, above that of society as a whole or groups within society. **Pastor Jason:** *"Anyone who would ask you to appeal to a higher standard is irrelevant to bigoted and dangerous."*
5. **Jesus' words to the woman open the door to a new future:** "Neither do I condemn you, go and sin no more" – John 8:11.
 - a. If we do sin, Jesus is our advocate – 1 John 2:1-2.
 - b. Jesus paid the debt for our sin. He is our advocate who died on a cross taking the stones this woman's sin and our sins, deserved – Isaiah 53:5-6.
 - c. Jesus' message to the woman is the message to us: "Go and sin no more..." but if we do sin "we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous" – 1 John 2:1,2.

DISCUSSION:

1. How was the Pharisees bringing the woman caught in adultery a trap? How did Jesus' reaction to the situation turn the tables on them?
2. How did Jesus show grace to the woman? How have you experienced His grace? Share your experiences.
3. How did Jesus speak truth? What is sin? Why is it hard to speak about sin to our unsaved family members, friends, and neighbours? How have you handled the tension of demonstrating / speaking both grace and truth?
4. Jesus told the woman to "sin no more" – John 8:11. Sounds easy, but is it? What might breaking a lifestyle cycle of sin involve practically? What part does knowing that Jesus is our advocate (1 John 2:1,2) play in this process?

PRAYER

Dear Jesus, please draw our attention to Your finished work on the cross, where we see Your justice, truth, compassion, and grace in perfect harmony. May we respond to our sin and to the world through this revelation. Amen.