

An e-mail inquiry from an individual whose name is unfamiliar to me had the look and smell of a trap. The inquirer wanted to know how I would counsel a person involved in what he obviously thought was a sinful marital relationship common among divorcees. Not wanting to become embroiled in a fruitless argument, my reply was a simple Scripture reference - John 8:11. To the woman accused of adultery Jesus said, "I do not condemn you. Now go and sin no more."

All of us are familiar with problematic life situations for which there is no clear cut, nicely trimmed or neatly packaged answer. With our feigned sophistication has come more complex social problems, many of which involve sinful conduct and relationships. We are incapable to unravel the messes we create. We may apologize and try to make amends, but we cannot undo what has been done. We are forced to face the reality of our sin and our sinfulness.

But there is a one-word answer to meet the reality of our sin. That word is "redemption." It is the essence of Jesus' words to the adulteress. Redemption meets reality head on and with finality. But now let us hear other words from Jesus, this time to His disciples as He sent them out. "Freely you have received. Freely give" (Jn. 10:8). As each of us has received grace we should freely grant it. Let us give ourselves, then, to the healing ministry of redemption and reconciliation (Eph. 4:32; 2 Cor. 5:17-19).

#### **REDEMPTION ACKNOWLEDGES SIN**

We must face the fact that our sin has created a cataclysmic conflict between twin elements of God's nature - love and holiness. Until and unless we recognize we have been hoodwinked, hijacked and kidnapped by Satan we will neither understand nor seek redemption. Jesus did not tell the adulteress that what she had done really wasn't so bad. He didn't try to make her feel good about

herself. Nor did He minimize her sin by comparing it favorably with sins thought by some to be worse.

#### **REDEMPTION ADDRESSES THE SINNER**

It is not possible to reverse the sinful action. And it is rare that the effects of sin can be undone. Redemption, therefore, addresses the sinner and changes his status, standing and situation.

Jesus did not focus on the adulteress' sin but rather upon her. There is a great lesson here for us. While we must acknowledge sin for what it is, the focus of redemption must always be upon the sinner. Reclaiming the sinner and not denouncing the sin.

#### **Redemption is about *reclamation*, not *denunciation*.**

Jesus states (Jn. 3:16) that God's love for us was demonstrated by providing redemption for all those who display faith in His Son. But Jesus continues in v. 17 to say, "For God did not send His Son into the world to judge or condemn the world, but that the world might be saved through Him." Explaining His earthly mission Jesus said to Zaccheus, "For the Son of Man has come to seek and to save the lost" (Lk. 19:10). One of Paul's faithful statements is that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, among whom I am foremost of all" (1 Tim. 1:15).

Paul declared that redemption is available for all sinners. To the Corinthian church that was comprised of sinners of every stripe (1 Cor. 5:9-10) Paul writes, "But you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God" (v. 11).

Acknowledge your sin and turn from your rebellion. God has promised to wash you clean in the blood of His Son as you are baptized into Him. Let redemption meet your reality

# Redemption meets Reality

by Gene McCoy John 8:1-11