

3. The Blind See

Imagine the relief this woman felt. Moments earlier she had been facing a death sentence. If anyone had thrown a stone, all of the others would follow.

Can you see yourself in the place of the accusers? When you know that someone has done wrong and sinned, are you quick to accuse and throw stones verbally if not literally? Can you see yourself in the place of the woman, no doubt you are guilty of sin and therefore facing a death sentence but hoping for mercy rather than justice?

John 9:39-41 NLT - 39 Then Jesus told him, "I entered this world to render judgment--to give sight to the blind and to show those who think they see that they are blind." 40 Some Pharisees who were standing nearby heard him and asked, "Are you saying we're blind?" 41 "If you were blind, you wouldn't be guilty," Jesus replied. "But you remain guilty because you claim you can see."

Not long after his encounter with the woman, Jesus healed a man born blind. But according to John 9:39 he also was here to show those who thought they could see that they were in fact blind. *How had Jesus' encounter with the Pharisees and the woman demonstrated that? Are you willing to have Jesus show you your blind spots, receive God's mercy yourself and extend it to others?*

WRAP-UP

The Scribes and Pharisees were so intent on following the Law that they missed God's mercy. Jesus was both just and merciful. He didn't excuse guilt; in fact, He sees that all have sinned. When we acknowledge our guilt, believe in Jesus as Messiah and accept His mercy, then we can have life. If we don't see Him as Messiah, we are the ones who remain blind and condemned.

MEMORY VERSE

John 8:7b NLT - 7b ... "All right, but let the one who has never sinned throw the first stone!"

PRAYER (20 MIN)

Ask your group to pray for you regarding one area where you can apply this study in your life.

Challenge- Continue reading John this week in chapters 7-9.

"Leave Sin=Have Life!"

Believe and Have Life #4

INTRODUCTION

As we continue our study in the Gospel of John this week, we encounter the woman caught in adultery. In this well-known event Jesus is confronted by the Scribes and Pharisees with a woman who is guilty under the law, and their question was meant to trap him into either administer justice or mercy. This should challenge us as well, how does God balance being both just and merciful. We see the solution in this study.

Ice Breaker

How strictly do you observe the law? If you are headed back to your car, but it is parked across the street, do you walk half a block to cross at the corner or jaywalk directly to your car across 4 lanes of traffic?

Key Passage

John 20:30-31 NLT - 30 The disciples saw Jesus do many other miraculous signs in addition to the ones recorded in this book. 31 But these are written so that you may continue to believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing in him you will have life by the power of his name.

STUDY QUESTIONS

1. Keeping the Law

John 7:19-23 NLT - 19 Moses gave you the law, but none of you obeys it! In fact, you are trying to kill me." 20 The crowd replied, "You're demon possessed! Who's trying to kill you?" 21 Jesus replied, "I did one miracle on the Sabbath, and you were amazed. 22 But you work on the Sabbath, too, when you obey Moses' law of circumcision. (Actually, this tradition of circumcision began with the patriarchs, long before the law of Moses.) 23 For if the correct time for circumcising your son falls on the Sabbath, you go ahead and do it so as not to break the law of Moses. So why should you be angry with me for healing a man on the Sabbath?"

The Scribes and Pharisees who opposed Jesus in the Temple were dedicated to observing the Law of Moses. That included the 10 commandments Moses brought down the mountain and the hundreds of other laws devised by Jewish leaders over time to define what those laws meant.

Exodus 20:10 NLT - 10 but the seventh day is a Sabbath day of rest dedicated to the LORD your God. On that day no one in your household may do any work. This includes you, your sons and daughters, your male and female servants, your livestock, and any foreigners living among you.

Mark 2:27-28 NIV - 27 Then he said to them, "The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath. 28 So the Son of Man is Lord even of the Sabbath."

How did Exodus 20:10 explain the purpose of the Sabbath? What is the benefit of rest dedicated to the Lord versus any other rest? Why does simply "not doing work" miss the point? Do you think we can become so focused on "doing work for the Lord" that we miss dedicating our day to Him and become dedicated to doing the task?

2. Guilty but Not Condemned

The following day the Pharisees were still unhappy over their encounter with Jesus. Jesus had accused them of breaking the Law, but they saw Jesus as the lawbreaker, and they were out to prove their point- enter the woman caught in adultery. The circumstances leave many questions unanswered- Just how did these holy men happen to catch this woman "in the act" (hiding under the bed perhaps?) And what happened to the man she was with (adultery isn't a solo act).

In light of their last exchange with Jesus, it is evident they were challenging Him in a point of Law- she committed adultery, she is guilty and should be put to death. So, what would it be? Justice because she deserved death for her sin, or mercy because God is full of mercy and abounding in love? Jesus found a way to embody both.

John 8:5-8 NLT - 5 The law of Moses says to stone her. What do you say?" 6 They were trying to trap him into saying something they could use against him, but Jesus stooped down and wrote in the dust with his finger. 7 They kept demanding an answer, so he stood up again and said, "All right, but let the one who has never sinned throw the first stone!" 8 Then he stooped down again and wrote in the dust.

Jesus knew what the law demanded about putting someone to death for committing evil. Who must throw the first stone according to Deuteronomy 17:7?

Deuteronomy 17:7 NLT - 7 The witnesses must throw the first stones, and then all the people may join in. In this way, you will purge the evil from among you.

Jesus did not declare her innocent, but he focused instead on the guilt of the accusers when he suggested "let the one who never sinned throw first." If someone had thrown a stone, what would they be publicly declaring? Was there anyone there who could declare that he hadn't sinned (hint- there is only one)? In what way did Jesus' response to the accusers uphold the Law and display justice? Jesus' curious behavior raises some questions.

What do you think He was he writing in the dust, and did the accusers leave because of what he wrote?

John 8:9-11 NLT - 9 When the accusers heard this, they slipped away one by one, beginning with the oldest, until only Jesus was left in the middle of the crowd with the woman. 10 Then Jesus stood up again and said to the woman, "Where are your accusers? Didn't even one of them condemn you?" 11 "No, Lord," she said. And Jesus said, "Neither do I. Go and sin no more."

We will never know what Jesus wrote. But we do know that when they heard what Jesus said they left. Only then did Jesus speak to the woman.

To the accusers Jesus showed himself just, but to the woman he showed himself merciful. What does Jesus say keeps us from dying in our sins (Jn 8:24)? Notice how the woman addressed Jesus in her response (v. 11). Did she believe?

John 8:24 NLT - 24 That is why I said that you will die in your sins; for unless you believe that I AM who I claim to be, you will die in your sins."

In choosing not to condemn the woman Jesus exercised His divine right to forgive sins. Then He gave her important instructions for her next steps, "Go (*poreuō*) and sin no more." The word *poreuō* is defined as "to continue on one's journey" or "to depart from life". This woman's journey had been derailed. But Jesus invites her to receive His mercy, continue her journey, but leave a life of sin. That is His message to us as well; leave sin behind and live fully alive in Christ.