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A just weight
and balance

are the
LORD'S:

Thus saith the Lord...

- Today's story reads like a modern soap opera with immoral activities
 - One in which the privileged escape while the less fortunate are punished.
(**John 8:1-11**)

- At the core of this incredible story is what happens when a sinner is placed at the feet of the Lord Jesus Christ.

- In the text John clearly identifies two different voices that speak to our situation in life: critics and Christ.

- The voice of critics condemn criticize, destroy mock, and humiliate.
- Their method is to use any means available to exploit your weakness and your failures.

- The woman in question is no more than a token to those who took her to Jesus, the bit of cheese on their religious mousetrap.
- However, even in the midst of those who hate him and would trap him, Jesus finds a way to deflect their venom from the woman and restore her dignity.
 - People matter to God.

- What are the worst sins?
- If you were to categorize them what sin would be number one?
 - Would it be adultery?
- Is it the worst sin of sins?
- Is it the supreme vice?

- Sins of the flesh are bad.
 - But they are the least of sins.
 - So what is the greatest sin?
- The greatest sins are spiritual.

- The scribes and Pharisees were out to get some charge on which they could discredit Jesus;
- And here they thought they had him on the horns of a dilemma.

- When a difficult legal question arose the thing to do **was to take it to a Rabbi** for a decision.
- So the scribes and Pharisees approached Jesus **as a Rabbi** with a woman taken **in adultery.**

- It is clear they feel they have Jesus **trapped** by this;
- They have an **airtight case.**
- But **beware** in this game.

- Before we proceed further let's analyze this adultery situation.
 - First of all it is definitely a sting operation.
 - Second, this was planned in advance.
- Third, we need to ask the question any good lawyer would ask:
“Where is the other guilty party?”

- As we all know,
it takes two
to commit adultery.
- Why only the woman?
- Was the other party
one of their own
who helped set up
this woman?

- The dilemma into which they sought to put Jesus was this:
 - If he said that the woman ought to be stoned to death,
 - Three things followed.

- First,

he would lose the name
he had gained for love
and for mercy and
never again would be
called the
friend of sinners.

- Second,
- He would come into collision with the Roman law,
- For the Jews had no power to pass or carry out the death sentence.

- Third,
- If he said that the woman should be pardoned,
- It could immediately be said that he was teaching men to break the law of Moses,
- And that he was condoning and even encouraging people to commit adultery.

- This was the trap in which the scribes and Pharisees sought to entrap Jesus.
- But he turned their attack in such a way that it boomeranged back on them.

- At first Jesus stooped down and wrote with his finger on the ground.

- Why did he do that?

- The Armenian Bible

{about the 4th Century}

translates the passage this way:

- ***"He himself, bowing his head, was writing with his finger on the earth to declare their sins; and they were seeing their several sins on the stones."***
- Armenian Bible not recognized as as authoritative scripture.

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- The scribes and Pharisees continued to insist on an answer--and they got it.
 - Jesus said in effect:
 - **"All right! Stone her!**
 - ***But let the man that is without sin be the first to cast a stone."***

- They are stunned.
 - **Speechless!**
- They were sure he was going to **let this woman go,**
 - But instead he completely **upholds the Law of Moses.**
- He says: "Yes, she must be stoned.
 - But I am going to appoint you **the executioners.**"
- They are **dumbfounded** at his words.

- **Adultery**
is terribly destructive.
- It **destroys**
marriages,
- **Wrecks**
relationships.
- It is a **life shattering** sin.

- In the eyes of **strict justice** it is deserving of death,
 - And Jesus **upholds that fact,** much to the surprise of the **scribes** and **Pharisees.**
 - But that is **not all Jesus does.**

- He also sees the hearts of these men.
- What he says, in effect, is, "***You are no better off than she is.***"
- Your hearts are filled with **murder** and **hatred.**"

- **Malice**

gleamed in their eyes

as they sought to

exploit this woman's

unfortunate situation

in order to get at Jesus.

- But Jesus read their hearts, and what he saw was worse than her sin.

- It may well be that the word for “*without sin*”

(anamartetos, <G361>)

- Which is a derivative of G264

“*To be without a share in*”

means not only without sin,

- But even without a sinful desire.

- Jesus was saying:
" ***Yes, you may stone her,***
 - **But only if**
you never wanted to do
the same thing yourselves."
 - There was a **silence!**
 - And slowly the accusers
drifted away.

- So Jesus and the woman **were left alone.**
- Jesus said to the woman:
"Has no one condemned you?"
"No one, sir," she said.
 - Jesus said:
"I am not for the moment going to pass judgment on you either.
- **Go,** ***and make a new start.***

- Here we learn two things about the attitude of the scribes and Pharisees.

- # 1 It shows us their conception of authority.
 - They were the legal experts of the day.
 - In their authority they were mean spirited.

- **Sympathy**

was out of the question.

- They conceived
of their role

as giving them the right
to stand over others

like grim investigators.

- To watch for every mistake and every deviation from the law,
- And to descend on them with savage and unforgiving punishment.

- **# 2** This incident shows vividly and cruelly the attitude of the scribes and Pharisees to people.
- They were not looking on this woman as a person at all;
 - They were looking on her only as a thing,
an instrument whereby they could formulate a charge against Jesus.

- They were using her, as a man might use a tool, for their own purposes.
- To them she had no name, no personality, no feelings;
 - She was simply a pawn in the game whereby they sought to destroy Jesus.

- The minute people become things the spirit of Christianity is dead.

- The scribes and Pharisees used their authority to destroy people.

- God uses his authority to love men into goodness;
- To God no person ever becomes a thing.

- Further,
this incident
tells us a great deal
about Jesus
and his attitude
to the sinner.

- It was a **first principle of Jesus** that only the man who himself is without fault has the right to express judgment on the fault of others.
- "**Judge not**," said Jesus, "**that you be not judged**" (**Matthew 7:1**).

- One of the most common faults in life is that so many of us **demand standards from others** that we never even try to meet ourselves;
- And so many of us condemn faults in others **which are glaringly obvious** in our own lives.

• Only God
has the final right
to judge,
for the simple reason
that no man
is perfect enough
to judge any other.

- However,
until that final judgment
we are to:

- ***Judge not according
to appearance,
but judge righteous judgment.***
(**John 7:24**)

- ***By their fruits
you shall know them.***
(**Matthew 7:16**)

• It is
very important
that we
should understand
just how Jesus
did treat this woman.

- It is easy to draw the wrong lesson and gain the wrong impression that Jesus forgave lightly and easily, as if the sin did not matter.

- What he said was:
"I am not going to condemn you just now; go, and sin no more."

- Jesus is giving her **a second chance.**

- Someone has written the lines:
 - "How I wish that there was
some wonderful place
Called the Land of
Beginning Again,
 - Where all our mistakes
and all our heartaches
and all our grief
 - Could be dropped like
a shabby old coat at the door,
And never put on again."

- In Jesus there is the **gospel of the second chance.**
 - He was always **intensely interested,**
- Not only in what a person **had been,**
- But also in what a person **could be.**

- He did not say that what they had done **did not matter;**
 - To Jesus broken laws and broken hearts **always matter;**
- But he was sure that every man/woman **has a future** as well as a past.

- Jesus confronted this woman with the challenge of the sinless life.
- He did not say: "It's all right; don't worry."
- Here was no easy forgiveness;

- Jesus pointed her to new heights of goodness of which she had never dreamed.
- Jesus confronts the bad life with the challenge of the good.

- Jesus believed in the **potential of human nature.**
- When he was confronted with someone who had gone wrong, **he did not say:**
"You are a wretched and hopeless creature."
- He said: **"Go, and sin no more."**

- Jesus did not blast men/women with the knowledge that they were miserable sinners,
- But to inspire them:
I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.
(**John 10:10**)

- The most offensive sin described in this story **is not the adultery;**

- It is the **malice**, **arrogance**, and **ignorance** of the Pharisees to use the sin, of another person **for personal gain** while ignoring the sin that resides in their own heart.

- The voice of the critic seeks to condemn you by **exploiting** and **exposing** all your failures.

- In contrast, the voice of Christ **confronts our sin with love** and provides a better way to live.

- Jesus confronted the woman with a choice that day
- Either to go back to her old ways
- Or to reach out to the new way with him.

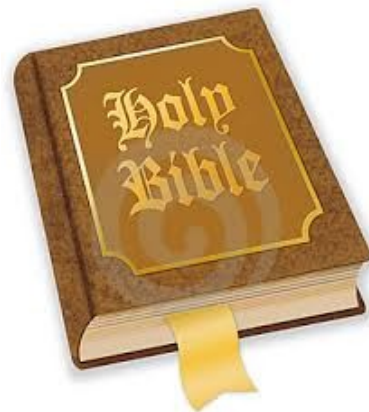
- This story is unfinished,
- For every life is unfinished
- Until it stands before God.

- **Think on these things**
- **Philippians 4:8**

**The doors of the church
are open.**

**The Spirit and the Bride
Say
“Come”.**

Revelation 22:17



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