

## Guilt, Gloating, and Grace

John 8: 1-11

Intro: *A great English prince...went to visit a famous king of Spain. The prince was taken down to the galleys to see the men who were chained to the oars and doomed to be slaves for life. The King of Spain promised, in honour of the prince's visit, that he would set free any one of these men that the prince might choose. So the prince went to one prisoner and said: "My poor fellow, I am sorry to see you in this plight; how came you here?" "Ah! sire," he answered, "false witnesses gave evidence against me; I am suffering wrongfully." "Indeed!" said the prince, and passed on to the next man. "My poor fellow, I am sorry to see you here; how did it happen?" "Sire, I certainly did wrong, but not to any great extent. I ought not to be here." "Indeed!" said the prince, and he went on to others who told him similar tales. At last he came to one prisoner, who said: "Sire, I am often thankful that I am here, for I am sorry to own that if I had received my due I should have been executed. I am certainly guilty of all that was laid to my charge, and my severest punishment is just." The prince replied wittily to him, "It is a pity that such a guilty wretch as you are should be chained among these innocent men, and therefore I will set you free." C. H. Spurgeon. <sup>1</sup>*

Clearly the illustration of Spurgeon resembles the account that we have in Scripture today. One was guilty, that was certain. Others had committed crimes themselves, but refused to admit them or saw the deeds of others much worse than their own. Christ our Lord provided pardon for one who was undeserving.

I want to take a few moments today to consider the **facts** revealed concerning: **Guilt, Gloating, and Grace**.

### **I. The Disgrace of Sin (3-5)**

**A. The Exposure of Her Sin (3a)** – **And the scribes and Pharisees brought unto him a woman taken in adultery.** This woman was brought before the Lord guilty of adultery. We have no way of knowing if this was her first offence or if she had committed this crime many times before without being caught. It really doesn't affect the seriousness of her situation. The fact is she was guilty of adultery and now her sin was exposed for the Lord and all to see. The sinful life she lived in private had become very public.

- We may not be guilty of committing adultery, but we have all been guilty of committing sin. God does not judge or categorize sin as we do. In His eyes, all sin is serious and creates division because of His holiness and our guilt.

- We may even think that we are getting by, that no one knows or sees, but God sees and He knows. Rest assured that our sins will not go unexposed. Eventually they will be brought to light and we will have to face them. [Num.32:23b – and be sure your sin will find you out.](#)

**B. The Evidence of Her Sin** (4) – [They say unto him, Master, this woman was taken in adultery, in the very act.](#) The evidence was irrefutable. She had been caught [in the very act.](#) We might say that she was caught with her “hand in the cookie jar.” There was no doubt that she was guilty.

- Our sin may never have been witnessed by others. We maybe had never committed anything that was noticed by the world, but yet we were guilty and condemned before God. The evidence was there and there was no way to deny or refute it! [Rom.3:10 – As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one:](#) [Rom.3:23 – For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;](#)

**C. The Expectation for Her Sin** (5) – [Now Moses in the law commanded us, that such should be stoned: but what sayest thou?](#) The law of God declared that this woman should be put to death for her crime. She had committed deeds worthy of death. She was guilty; the evidence was there, and now her accusers cried out for her punishment to be swift and severe.

- The same holds true for each of us. The penalty for sin is death. It is inescapable apart from Jesus Christ our Lord. [Jam.1:15 – Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death.](#) [Rom.6:23 – For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.](#) Our accuser, Satan, goes before the Father, the great Judge, and argues for our death because of the guilt that sin has caused. Apart from Christ we are all guilty and worthy of death.

## **I. The Disgrace of Sin** (3-5)

## **II. The Deeds of Self-righteousness** (3-9)

**A. Their Indignation** (3-4) – Clearly there is no compassion or sympathy for the accused. They dragged her in, before the Lord, demanding that justice be carried out for her crimes. They could not see their own need because of their indignation for her.

- Have we not all met the legalists that possess no compassion for the lost and wayward? Have we not met those who can't see their own need because they are so consumed with the sin and failures of others? In fact, we have likely been guilty of a condemning spirit ourselves.
- These usually have the same character traits:
  - self-righteousness without forgiveness
  - criticism that lacks love
  - judgmental and lacking compassion
  - censoring without understanding
  - condemnation that lacks sympathy
  - punishing without a desire for restoration

**B. Their Motivation** (6a) – This they said, tempting him, that they might have to accuse him.

The legalists had an indignation for this woman, but she was just a pawn in a larger scheme of deception and rebellion. They felt as if they had placed Jesus in a position to which He could not respond. If He condemned her, He would have been viewed as One without compassion, not the Friend of sinners. If He let her go, He would have been accused of disobeying the very law of God. She was used to get to Jesus.

- There are those among us today who may look differently on the outside, but they are the same of the inside. They have no concern for man's eternal soul. They are not concerned with their personal lives or needs. They simply want to impose their ideals on others to promote their own agenda!

**C. Their Accusation** (6b-9) – Here we discover how Jesus dealt with the accusations of the Pharisees.

**1. He Ignored Them** (6b, 8) – But Jesus stooped down, and with his finger wrote on the ground, as though he heard them not. [8] And again he stooped down, and wrote on the ground. These sought an argument with Jesus but He did not give them the satisfaction of their desire. He simply ignored them and wrote in the sand. We have no idea what He wrote, but we do know that Jesus refused to argue with them.

- There is sound wisdom in the actions of Jesus. Typically, the bigger man is the one who keeps his mouth shut and refuses useless bickering. We will never win the confidence of sinners through arguing or being judgmental.

- Jesus ignored their critical, proud, self-righteous attitude for a while, but He didn't ignore it for long. Notice:

**2. He Confronted Them** (7, 9a) – So when they continued asking him, he lifted up himself, and said unto them, **He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her.** [9a] And they which heard it, being convicted by their own conscience, went out one by one, beginning at the eldest, even unto the last: Jesus eventually dealt with their sin. They had brought a woman in, supposing that she might be put to death, but Jesus turned the tables on them. He forced them to consider the sin in their own lives.

- Can you imagine the scene? Just moments before there were cries for judgment. I'm sure that the accusers had made quite a scene. Now upon the rebuke of Jesus there was an eerie silence, only the sound of stones hitting the ground and men walking shamefully away.

- We too face an accuser, but I rejoice that my Lord declares that I have been pardoned of my sin. At the rebuke of Christ, Satan has to flee.

### **I. The Disgrace of Sin** (3-5)

### **II. The Deeds of Self-righteousness** (3-9)

### **III. The Deliverance of Salvation** (9-11)

**A. The Person of Salvation** (9b-10) – and Jesus was left alone, and the woman standing in the midst. [10] **When Jesus had lifted up himself, and saw none but the woman, he said unto her, Woman, where are those thine accusers? hath no man condemned thee?** The accusers had left, one by one, leaving only the accused and the Lord. There the woman faced the One who had the authority to forgive or condemn. She stood face to face with the One she must reckon with. She was not worthy of His compassion, but Jesus stood there offering grace to one who was worthy of death.

- An eternal truth is revealed in this text. Man does not have the ability to condemn or declare guilt, but Jesus does. It makes no difference whether we have the approval of men, or their rejection for that matter. All must stand face to face with Christ, accountable to Him!

**B. The Pardon of Salvation** (11a) – She said, No man, Lord. And Jesus said unto her, Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more. The Pharisees had left and now she faced the moment of truth. The charges had been revealed and the evidence presented. They were not worthy to stone her, but Jesus was. He could have put her to death for her sins, but He extended pardon rather than divine punishment. Jesus forgave her sin and cleansed her of all unrighteousness.

- Clearly she had dealt with the shame of her sin being made public. She had sought the mercy of the Lord and He had given grace and mercy.
- We too were all guilty before the Lord, condemned and worthy of death, but He made a way for all to be saved. We can be forgiven and cleansed in His precious blood.

**C. The Power of Salvation** (11b) – The woman's account was marked "paid in full." The slate was wiped clean, her sins were no longer remembered against her. She was offered new life in Christ.

- Upon departing Jesus charged her to go, and sin no more. She had been delivered from her sin and she was expected to live a life that honored the Lord. That isn't to say that He expected her to live without sin, but that she was to seek the righteousness of God. She was no longer to willfully seek sin. Her life was to reflect the One who had forgiven.
- That is what we refer to as sanctification. We are to live a life that honors the Lord. Our lives are to be a reflection of our Savior. The only way that we can accomplish that is through the power and presence of the Holy Spirit. May we ever seek to avoid sin and exalt our Lord.

This passage reveals that Christ has the power to confront and deal with sin on any level. Maybe you are here today and there is some physical sin that you need to repent of. Maybe it is a spiritual sin of self-righteousness or a condemning spirit. Maybe you have never been saved. Whatever the case may be, Jesus stands ready to forgive. He will condemn none who come to Him in repentance. Why not come as He leads?

<sup>1</sup> One Thousand Evangelistic Illustrations, Database @ 2006 WORDsearch Corp.