

In Need Of Mercy And Grace

- *John 8:1-11*

- **Throughout the N.T., one of the resounding themes we see played out time and again is the subject of mercy; specifically mercy being extended to people who were obviously guilty & completely undeserving.**
 - We live in a justice driven society where when any wrong is done, we demand some type of punishment ... it seems only fair. It blows our minds to see mercy being handed out to people who willingly & openly break the laws of this land & especially the laws of God.
 - Yet it also makes us extremely grateful b/c we find ourselves many times desiring & longing for this same undeserved mercy in our own lives.
- **Mercy: Compassion or forgiveness shown toward someone who deserves to be punished; the discretionary power of a judge to pardon someone or to mitigate punishment;**
 - We will talk about mercy & grace together during this sermon, but they are completely different. A good way to understand the meaning of mercy is to see how it relates to grace:
 - Mercy - not getting what you do deserve / withheld punishment
 - Grace - getting what you don't deserve / unmerited favor
- **READ SCRIPTURE**
- **In this passage, we find Jesus teaching the people in the Temple & He is interrupted by a crowd of accusers who have found a couple in the act of adultery & this woman & her sin has been brought openly before the public & even Jesus Himself.**
 - The religious leaders had busted into this woman's house as she was "in the act" of adultery.
 - Almost makes you wonder if this was a devised ploy to get revenge on her or were they just interested in the plan that they were about to play out.
 - She barely has time to gather something to cover herself before she is drug out into the city where the accusers are by now making a huge scene as they drag this woman along the way.
 - Then they come to the Temple & find Jesus teaching the people & they begin to reveal to Him the awful sin & the broken law that this woman was a part of.
 - By the way, this was an awful sin. Never minimize the evil of adultery. It is a very wicked sin no matter who the people are that commit it.
 - Sometimes we become desensitized to certain sins b/c we hear about it so much; but this was a serious sin.
 - The Law required that *both* guilty parties be stoned ([Lev. 20:10](#); [Deut. 22:22](#)), not just the woman.
 - The scribes and Pharisees handled the matter in a brutal fashion, even in the way they interrupted the Lord's teaching and pushed the woman into the midst of the crowd.
- **For the Jewish leaders, this was exactly what they had been waiting for. The purpose of this accusation was to get Christ to contradict Himself. He claimed to both honor the law and save sinners.**
 - So they cast the woman down before Jesus & as they condemn her, they recite the law of Moses very piously & then asked Jesus, "What do you say?"
 - If He said, "Yes, the woman must be stoned!" then what would happen to His reputation as the "friend of publicans and sinners"? The common people would no

doubt have abandoned Him and would never have accepted His gracious message of forgiveness.

- But, if He said, "No, the woman should not be stoned!" then He was openly breaking the Law and subject to arrest.
- Then we see Jesus do something special as He stoops down & began writing on the ground as if they were not even talking.
 - Now we would all love to know exactly what Jesus was writing. Maybe it was a comforting word to the woman. Maybe it was a reminder that He would never leave her or forsake her. We don't know exactly what He wrote, but the accusers were not impressed as they continued to press Jesus for an answer.
- This was not the first time the religious leaders had attempted to put Jesus in the middle of a situation, but now they seemed to have the perfect challenge.
- **Instead of passing judgment on the woman, Jesus turned the tables on these hypocritical leaders.**
 - Was Jesus angry at the way they treated the woman? You better believe it.
 - But more than that, Jesus wanted to cut through their deception.
 - He did not want them condemning another person without first judging themselves.
- **It was required by Jewish Law that the accusers cast the first stones (Deut. 17:7).**
 - "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." (v.7)
 - Jesus was not asking that sinless men judge the woman, for He was the only sinless Person present.
 - The reference to "sin" here refers not just to any sin ... but specifically the sin of adultery which can be committed in the heart as well as with the body (Matt. 5:27-28).
 - He who was not guilty of that sin could throw stones. Christ wanted no hypocrisy here.
 - The Bible tells us that they were convicted by their own consciences, and one by one they left the scene, and Jesus was left alone with the woman.
 - Not one accuser was left. They were all immoral. They were all guilty of adultery.
 - Now Jesus could focus His attention on healing the broken.
 - The Bible tells us that Jesus forgave her & compelled her to go and sin no more.
 - But don't miss this important detail. Jesus asked the lady where her accusers were for a reason.
 - "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? " (v.10)
 - The law required two witnesses to condemn someone (Deuteronomy 19:15).
 - Furthermore, the law said the witnesses were to throw the stones (Deuteronomy 17:7).
 - With no witnesses left, Christ in accordance with the law would not condemn the woman. Therefore, He could keep the law and still be merciful to the woman.
- **There are times where people will look at this passage as Jesus being too easy on sin or even that He broke the law.**
 - For Jesus to forgive this woman meant that He had to one day die for her sins.

- Furthermore, Jesus perfectly fulfilled the Law so that no one could justly accuse Him of opposing its teachings or weakening its power.
- Forgiveness of sins does not condone the sin. Neither does condemning sin close the door to mercy and grace and forgiveness.
- **The Law was given to reveal sin (Rom. 3:20), and we must be condemned by the Law before we can be cleansed by God's grace.**
 - As crazy as this may sound, law and grace complement each other in this scenario as well as in the life of the believer.
 - Nobody was ever saved by keeping the Law, but nobody was ever saved by grace who was not *first* indicted by the Law. There must be conviction before there can be conversion.
- **Jesus stooped down to minister to this lady as the accusers had gathered round to condemn her. Jesus also stooped to help me & you as the old accuser stood condemning us of every wrong we had ever done.**
 - He stooped down when He was willing to come to this earth & be born in a manger.
 - He stooped down as he ministered to the crooks & the lepers.
 - He stooped down as He allowed His accusers to beat Him, mock Him, whip Him & spit upon Him.
 - And thank God, He stooped down one final time as He kneeled to take our cross.
- **But then ... He stood up! Yes, He stood up for the woman in the face of His accusers & He stood up victorious on that third day for He had conquered death, hell & the grave for you & me.**
 - Just as this woman caught in the very act of sin was cleansed & set free, so are you & I when we place our trust in Jesus Christ & claim His blood as the payment for our sins.
 - Hebrews 7:25 – “Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them.”
 - Though we were all spiritually dead b/c of our sins against a Holy God, He gave us new life through Christ Jesus.
 - If you have accepted Jesus Christ as your Savior this morning, you have been saved by God’s miraculous grace.
 - Ephesians 2:8 - “For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God:”
 - We have been resurrected to newness of life in Christ & have been made joint heirs with Christ.
 - You see, God’s grace changed me.
 - Does it make me deserving of the cross? Absolutely not.
 - But b/c of His grace, when the accuser comes my way, I know that I have an Advocate who will defend me just as Jesus defended this woman.
- **Do you know Jesus Christ this morning as your PERSONAL Savior.**
 - I’m not asking if you are familiar with Him or if you know a lot about Him.
 - I’m asking you this morning have you ever made a confession of your sins & accepted His sacrifice as the ONLY payment for your sins?
 - If not, will you do it today?