

LIFE GROUP DISCUSSION

- 1 How do you personally understand the meaning of God's forgiveness in your life?
- 2 Can you think of a specific time when you felt forgiven by God? How did it impact your feelings and thoughts about your relationship with Him?
- 3 In simple terms, how does God's forgiveness change the way you feel about Him and your connection with Him?

WE DO LIFE TOGETHER!






SCAN QR

If you haven't been involved in a LIFE Group yet, send us a message us thru Fb, and we will get you connected to a small group.

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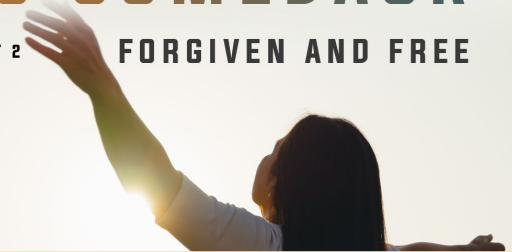
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SUNDAY WORD

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FROM SETBACK TO COMEBACK

PART 2 FORGIVEN AND FREE



TEXT: John 8:1-11 The story of Jesus and the woman caught in adultery is full of lessons. It's a story that moves the heart to anger at first but when Jesus steps in, you are moved to tears of relief and joy. This is a story of the power of God's grace.

THE LAW AND THE PHARISEES

In John 8:4-5, when the Scribes and Pharisees say to Jesus: "Teacher, this woman was caught in the act of adultery. The law of Moses says to stone her. What do you say?" These religious leaders loved to test Jesus with traps veiled as questions. They were hoping to "trap" Him into speaking out against the law. Back in those days, you didn't mess with the Pharisees. They were well-educated, well-known, and reputed to be men of wisdom and high moral standards. If anyone had a question about the Law of Moses, these were the men who had the answers. But although they were religious, they were not godly and their intentions on this day were not good. They were superior, arrogant, ruthless, manipulative, calculating, and hypocritical.

Naturally, Jesus did not give the scribes and Pharisees the answer they expected. Jesus' initial response was to bend down and write on the ground. It is the words Jesus spoke next that highlighted His revolutionary response to the men. John 8:7 - "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!" (NLT)

The Pharisees knew all the laws and could repeat them word for word. They observed all the laws perfectly. They practiced all the rites and rituals with excellence. They were intensely religious. But they did not have the love of God in their hearts.



What are the Lessons We Can Learn From John 8:1-11? 1. Religion and spirituality without love do not honor God. This story is a very good example of legalism in action. People often focus so much on the religious laws that they ignore the God who instituted the laws in the first place. These men were manipulative and cruel. Their charade tells us they had absolutely no love in their hearts for other people.

Why do you do all that you do? Is it to feel good about following the instructions in the Bible so you can say you are obedient? Is it to feel good about yourself? Is it to show off your relationship with God? Or, is it because you really love God and people?

The second lesson: Don't judge others because not one of us is perfect. This is the hard truth: People will often ignore their own sins to pay attention to yours. That's what makes it so easy to be judgemental. The Pharisees were so evil that they orchestrated the entire situation. They didn't see their sin in doing that. Based on the spiritual darkness of the times, it is highly likely that some of the men in the crowd were sleeping with her too. How else would they have known that she would make the perfect target to set up Jesus?

There are people who are like these Pharisees. Someone who is always quick to point out everyone's sin. Someone who is always talking about what other people are not doing right. Someone who is ready to drop the ax and decide who is worthy of attending church and who isn't. This person never talks about themselves though. Their life is top secret. Nobody really knows them. They are far from authentic. Do you know why? Because they know they are not as perfect as they would like people to think. It is to people like them that Jesus says "If you are without sin throw the first stone". I would be honest enough to say that I have been like one of these Pharisees. But as I got older, as I meditated on the things of God and His ways, and as I kept on reading the Bible, God taught me to see people in the eyes of God.

Here is the truth about these people: Judgemental and legalistic people are struggling to accept God's love and forgiveness. How do you deal with them? Compassion. See their behavior as a symptom of their inner struggle to make peace with their own sin. They probably don't realize how much God loves them and how much God does not hold their sins against them. Show them compassion and love anyway.

THE WOMAN

For people to treat you badly, they have to see you as less than human first. They have to first tell themselves that you are nothing, you're a nobody. For them, this woman was just a piece on a chess board game. Just a pawn in the game to trap Jesus. I'm sure somebody knew her name but when they brought her to Jesus they called her "This woman". They didn't use her name.

The third lesson: Be careful of people who do not value and protect your worth. The Pharisees completely forgot that she was a human being with feelings. A person with hopes and dreams. An individual who belonged to someone. What kind of crowd was this that she found herself in? These were people who would use her for sex and then drag her disgracefully in front of a crowd to be stoned to death.

Be careful of people who do not value you. People who think you exist to fulfill their needs or to make them feel good about themselves. Watch out for people who use you but never have anything to give back to you. Look out for those who will throw you under the bus instead of standing with you when difficulty comes. Instead, align yourself with people who will help you make good decisions. These are people who will let you know when you are going in the wrong direction and guide you toward the light. Get into a community with people who will know your worth in Christ and honor God.

Fourth lesson: Satan wants to hurt us, take our things, and ruin our lives. This woman had her struggles. When the Bible says she was caught in the act, there is a suggestion that she had done this over and over again. But the only reason she got the attention of these overly religious men was because they wanted to trap Jesus.

They set her up not to punish her but to get Jesus to say something that would give them a good reason to arrest Him. The woman and her sin were weaponized in order to bring down Jesus.

Sometimes we make decisions that lead to terrible consequences. Other times the things we face are a result of the enemy's timeless battle to rage against God. And Because God loves us so much, the enemy will try to destroy us. If the devil can't get to God to hurt Him, then we are his next best chance of inflicting pain on God. Job is a perfect example. But don't worry, Jesus has got your back.
JESUS

Fifth lesson: God knows how to deal with every situation you have. When the Pharisees asked Jesus what should be done to the woman caught in adultery, He said nothing at first. Remember, this was a trap. If He had said she should be set free, He could be accused of breaking the law of Moses. This was held high in Jewish religious practice.

If Jesus had said she should be stoned to death, this would cause two problems. First, up to this point by now, Jesus was seen as a friend of sinners and full of mercy and grace. If He approved her execution, it would go against who He presented Himself to be and this would destroy the confidence that the crowds had built in Him. Second, if Jesus approved stoning the woman to death, the Roman law would have been broken. The Jews were now under Roman rule and they had taken the rights of the Jews to execute anyone for religious offenses. Jesus would have been in trouble with the Romans if He said she should be stoned to death.

Jesus always knew exactly what to do. God is never puzzled by any situation you encounter because He is all-knowing, all-wise, and all-powerful. No matter how powerful humans may seem, they can never outsmart or confuse God. God is always greater. Are you having an issue at work with someone trying to destroy you? Ask God how to handle it. Is your professor or classmate trying to make your life hard? Ask God what to do. Is a sister or a brother trying your patience and salvation? God has a strategy for that too. Is your husband or wife making you crazy? Believe me, God's got you covered. Are your children rebelling? God can set them straight. God always, always, always has a solution.

Sixth lesson: God wants us to understand who He really is. There are some people who always present God as a big bad father who hovers and watches for you to make a mistake so He can zap you with some cruel punishment. This is the plan of the enemy for you to misunderstand the character of God. Because if the devil can get you to believe lies about God, God's plans for your life will either get delayed or destroyed. God is not standing and waiting for you to sin so that He can strike you with punishment. Instead, God is waiting for you to acknowledge your guilt so that you can receive forgiveness. So that you can let go of guilt and shame and live in freedom.

Seventh lesson: God gives second chances to the guilty. The woman was guilty. There is no doubt about that. I mean, she was caught in the very act. But, there is something very important about what Jesus said to her. Let's read John 8:7; 9-11 - "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!"...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." (NLT)

Let's look at this closer. Jesus knew she was guilty. He definitely was not ignoring her sin. But, Jesus forgave her. Then, He allowed her an opportunity to go and show that she could do better in her life. Don't get me wrong. It wasn't that her sin didn't matter to Jesus. It did! But, Jesus gave her another chance. What mattered more to Jesus at that time was her salvation, her redemption, her freedom, and her future.