

# He is without sin

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Let us turn to **John 8: 3-11**

## **John 8: 3-11**

- 3 The scribes and the Pharisees \*brought a woman caught in adultery, and having set her in the center *of the court*,
- 4 they \*said to Him, "Teacher, this woman has been caught in adultery, in the very act.
- 5 "Now in the Law Moses commanded us to stone such women; what then do You say?"
- 6 They were saying this, testing Him, so that they might have grounds for accusing Him. But Jesus stooped down and with His finger wrote on the ground.
- 7 But when they persisted in asking Him, He straightened up, and said to them, **"He who is without sin among you, let him be the first to throw a stone at her."**
- 8 Again He stooped down and wrote on the ground.
- 9 When they heard it, they *began* to go out one by one, beginning with the older ones, and He was left alone, and the woman, where she was, in the center *of the court*.
- 10 Straightening up, Jesus said to her, **"Woman, where are they? Did no one condemn you?"**
- 11 She said, "No one, Lord." And Jesus said, **"I do not condemn you, either. Go. From now on sin no more."**

This is a beautiful passage that can help us appreciate who the Lord Jesus is: the glory of His being, the wisdom of His actions, the power that comes through in the way He conducted Himself.

This is a situation where, as we read it, we may sometimes feel sorry for the Lord Jesus being caught in such a difficult situation. It may come through to us: How is He going to get out of that situation? Wouldn't the important thing be how to solve this problem, how not to get into trouble?

But as we read the passage, we find that it does not come through that way in its meaning. What comes through is that the Lord Jesus was not trying to get out of a difficult situation.

It is important for us to appreciate that. If we think that His main purpose was to try to escape from a trap, to get out of the situation, we are mistaken.

The way the Lord Jesus conducted Himself gives us a very different picture. He was not disturbed. He was calm. He did not seem to be very anxious to do something about the situation.

Many people may expect the Lord Jesus to respond quickly: "Give an answer. What is your answer?" But the Lord Jesus did not do that.

He was the Master of that situation. He was the one in control. He was the one who would direct the course of events. He was not a victim of that situation.

The people had to wait for Him to respond. Yes, they were anxious. They wanted to know how would the Lord Jesus respond but they had to wait.

He stooped down and with His finger wrote on the ground.

Why did he do that? There are possible reasons but we are not told. Could be as a man, He wanted to make sure of the right path to take, He spent time to pray.

But more than that, the likelihood was that He wanted to impress upon the people the meaning of that situation: Do you know what is happening? Do you know what you are doing? Do you understand what is the right response in the situation?

So the situation seemed to be one in which the Lord Jesus had to answer a question: "To stone or not to stone" but the response of the Lord Jesus was totally different. He did not say to stone or not to stone. He said, "He who is without sin among you, let him be the first to throw a stone at her."

Notice the tables were turned.

It was not the Lord Jesus who had to answer a question; it was the people who had to answer the question. They had to choose; they had to respond and the Lord Jesus was in command of the situation.

What was He seeking to do?

The question as it stood seemed rather straightforward: God had commanded through Moses, so are we to obey or not to obey? That seemed to be the situation.

But the Lord Jesus was not answering that question. The Lord Jesus was telling them, "Do you know what is the right way to live your life? Are you aware of what kind of spirit you are of? Are you in a position to really understand the situation and to make a judgment of it?"

The way the Lord Jesus responded could very likely be an expression of what He said in the Sermon on the Mount and many of these people could have heard what He said at that time. Let us look at **Matthew 7: 1-5.**

**Matthew 7:1-5**

- 1 "Do not judge so that you will not be judged.
- 2 "For in the way you judge, you will be judged; and by your standard of measure, it will be measured to you.
- 3 "Why do you look at the speck that is in your brother's eye, but do not notice the log that is in your own eye?
- 4 "Or how can you say to your brother, 'Let me take the speck out of your eye,' and behold, the log is in your own eye?
- 5 "You hypocrite, first take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take the speck out of your brother's eye.

The Lord Jesus was addressing the people: "Do not judge so that you will not be judged."

The people were judgmental. They did not really care for the woman; they did not understand her circumstances, her difficulties or her problems. They seemed to be seeking to keep the commandments of God but in reality, their intention was evil.

They wanted to destroy the Lord Jesus who had done so much good for the people. He went around doing good, healing people, helping them, teaching them the right way to live but they wanted to destroy Him. Yet they wanted to be the judge.

The Lord says, "Do not judge so that you will not be judged. For in the way you judge, you will be judged; and by your standard of measure, it will be measured to you." So if they were to proceed in that direction with that kind of spirit, God would deal with them for their wrong spirit, not because the Law of Moses was wrong but because the way they went about it was wrong.

"Why do you look at the speck that is in your brother's eye, but do not notice the log that is in your own eye?" This is a very common problem. We can see the problems in other people's lives but we may not quite be aware of the bigger problem that may be in our own lives. And this is something that all of us need to learn well. It is very easy to be judgmental towards others but not at all critical about our own lives. We give excuses for our own lives but we criticize other people readily.

More than that, the Lord Jesus said, "Or how can you say to your brother, 'Let me take the speck out of your eye,' and behold, the log is in your own eye? You hypocrite, first take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take the speck out of your brother's eye."

The Lord is not saying that we should not try to take the speck out of our brother's eye. If there is a speck in our brother's eye and we can help him to remove it, we should do so.

But before you try to do that, remove the log from your own eye because the log in your eye prevents you from seeing clearly and you can cause serious damage if you try to remove the speck from your brother's eye.

So the Lord Jesus wants us to know that we must learn to do things the right way: to care for our brethren, to seek to help them so that they will live well. To remove specks from their eye is a good thing, is a right thing if we are motivated by love, we are concerned for their well-being. But in order to do that, we must first develop our own lives.

The apostle Paul says: "If anyone is caught in a trespass, you who are spiritual, restore such a person in a spirit of gentleness..." Yes, we should care, we should help those who have transgressed - but it is "you who are spiritual".

We need to correct ourselves first.

That is why the Lord Jesus said: "He who is without sin among you, let him be the first to throw a stone at her. You are judgmental. Are you without sin? Can you see clearly in the situation?"

So He said: "You hypocrite, first take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take the speck out of your brother's eye."

So we need to first come before God that God may deal with us so that whatever is not right in our lives, we are prepared to deal with them, correct them properly and deeply. And if we do that, we will be in a good position to help others so that in love, with carefulness, with accuracy, with prayerfulness, in a spirit of humility, we can contribute to the lives of others.

So then, who is without sin?

All those people who were there, all of them were sinful people. There was none without sin.

We all know there was only one person there who was without sin: the Lord Jesus Christ. He is without sin. He was without sin, He is without sin; He has been without sin.

And what did He do?

He was the most qualified to throw a stone at her but He did not. He was the one who chose not to stone her.

Why? Why did the Lord Jesus do that? Why did He not apply the Law of Moses in that situation?

Well, that is the difference between law and grace.

The Law was given by Moses but grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. It is by the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ that we will find forgiveness. It is through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ that we can be saved from our sins.

**2 Corinthians 5: 21**

He made Him who knew no sin *to be* sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

“He made Him” - God made the Lord Jesus who knew no sin *to be* sin on our behalf. The Lord Jesus took our place on the cross. We were the ones who deserved to be condemned to death but He took our place. God allowed it to be so. He made Him who knew no sin *to be* sin on our behalf. What was the purpose? “...so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.”

We can never be righteous by ourselves, by our own abilities; and in our state of sinfulness, we can never become righteous. It is only because He who knew no sin became sin on our behalf: He took our place.

And this is illustrated in what happened to this woman. This woman had sinned; she deserved God’s judgment. So too all of us have sinned; we all deserve God’s judgment.

But instead of punishing her, the Lord Jesus said, "I do not condemn you, either. Go." The Lord Jesus allowed her to go; He did not put her to death.

But He said, "From now on sin no more." The Lord Jesus came not just to make it possible for us to be forgiven of our sins. He came to help us so that we will sin no more. This is very important for us to appreciate.

Many people concentrate on the first part – that we can be forgiven of our sins – but not so many people are so very concerned about sin no more. But we need to understand that in order to appreciate the depth and significance of forgiveness of sins, we must take seriously these words: "Go. From now on sin no more."

Are we committed to this path?

That does not mean that this woman would never sin anymore but she must be committed to that path. So too must we.

If we take it lightly, it means we do not take seriously the cost of the cross to make it possible for us to be forgiven our sins. It is because of our sins that He who knew no sin had to suffer for sin.

If we appreciate that, certainly we will not want to sin anymore even though we may not succeed immediately; but this becomes our commitment: we will live that way.

If we fail, we will continue to seek His forgiveness but we continue to work at it, that we will not sin anymore. We will not take it lightly. Is this something that we appreciate?

The Lord Jesus took His time to respond, to give them time to consider; to let the issues, the meaning, sink in into them. What is the reality of that situation?

It is not the Lord Jesus answering a question. It is for them to face their lives before God: what kind of life were they living?

So, as they heard His words, they were affected in their conscience and they went away one by one. They recognized the meaning and they could no longer stand there and continue with the same spirit to condemn.

We can learn from the Lord Jesus how to respond to situations in life.

Many Christians may feel themselves victims in situations of life. They are afraid of what non-Christians may say or do or question, and they have difficulty answering. It is as if we have to provide an answer to whatever they may ask of us or demand of us.

Let us learn from the Lord Jesus. He is the Master of the situation.



We learn from Him: we need not be afraid of what men may say or do because in Him we can face the situations meaningfully; not with arrogance or pride, not because of self-confidence or our own abilities or position, but simply because we love God, we love what is good, we care for our fellow men, we wish them well. Why should we be afraid of them?

So the Lord Jesus in responding that way shows to us the wisdom in which He conducted Himself.

So too we need to be prayerful. We look to God for wisdom in situations that we go through. We seek to understand what God wants to accomplish in that situation and we work together with Him.

As we also learn to **sin no more** we will be in a better position to understand our fellow men and our brethren accurately, and we will be in a better position to help them deeply and long term in the kingdom of God.

Let us then come before the Lord and ask Him to help us to appreciate who He is so that we can learn from Him and be transformed to be like Him.

Let us ask Him to help us to appreciate what He has done for us on the cross: how costly it was, how meaningful it is. And let us respond to Him as we should.