

ESF, Lord's day service message  
11/2/2014

## **The Lord of Truth and Grace**

Text: John 8:1-11

*<sup>1</sup> but Jesus went to the Mount of Olives.<sup>2</sup> At dawn he appeared again in the temple courts, where all the people gathered around him, and he sat down to teach them. <sup>3</sup> The teachers of the law and the Pharisees brought in a woman caught in adultery. They made her stand before the group <sup>4</sup> and said to Jesus, "Teacher, this woman was caught in the act of adultery. <sup>5</sup> In the Law Moses commanded us to stone such women. Now what do you say?" <sup>6</sup> They were using this question as a trap, in order to have a basis for accusing him. But Jesus bent down and started to write on the ground with his finger. <sup>7</sup> When they kept on questioning him, he straightened up and said to them, "Let any one of you who is without sin be the first to throw a stone at her." <sup>8</sup> Again he stooped down and wrote on the ground.*

*<sup>9</sup> At this, those who heard began to go away one at a time, the older ones first, until only Jesus was left, with the woman still standing there. <sup>10</sup> Jesus straightened up and asked her, "Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?"*

*<sup>11</sup> "No one, sir," she said. "Then neither do I condemn you," Jesus declared. "Go now and leave your life of sin."*

A man was in an accident, and his shoulder was slightly injured, but he decided he could "stick" the insurance company for a nice bit of money. He hired a lawyer who would go along with the plan, and they ended up in court. The insurance company's lawyer asked, "Mr. Smith, please show us how much your shoulder was injured by the accident by extending that arm upward as far as the shoulder will allow it to go."

The man obliged by raising his arm to a horizontal position and stopped. "That's it."

Then the lawyer said, “Mr. Smith, will you now please show us how far you were able to raise that arm before the accident.”

Again the man obliged and quickly raised his arm to the vertical so it was pointing directly toward the ceiling.

Ooops!

Have you ever been caught in the act of making a serious mistake? Have you ever been publically denounced for a mistake you made and of which you can't make any excuse? You were guilty and everyone knew it. You must pay for the price of your mistake. But what if the mistake is too serious and the price is too high to be paid?

Here is good news. Jesus can pay the price on behalf of you. He can pay the price and set you free from the guilt with grace and truth.

In the first chapter of the book of John, the apostle John introduced Jesus Christ as the Lord full of grace and truth.

Jesus is “*the One who came from the Father, full of grace and truth*” (verse 14).

“*From the fullness of his grace we have all received one blessing after another. For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ*” (verses 16-17).

In today's story, John explains why Jesus is the Lord - ~~of~~ full of grace and truth and what blessings we can receive from Him.

### **Full of truth and grace in silence**

Some people brought an adulterous woman to Jesus and demanded Jesus' answer what to do. They thought they could certainly put Jesus in a deadly trap. The trap had two sides. First, if Jesus told them to stone

her, they could accuse him of violating Roman law. Because according to Roman law, the Jews were not permitted to execute anyone. They also could deny that Jesus is the Savior of sinners. They would attack Jesus publically *“How can you be the Messiah, when you cannot save even one single sinner? You are not the Savior but a liar.”*

The other side of the trap was this: if Jesus told them not to stone her, they would accuse Jesus of ignoring the law of Moses. Because according to the law of Moses, such an adulterous woman should be stone to death. Then they would bring Jesus into their court and sentence him for being guilty of the law.

So either of the two answers would bring trouble to Jesus.

All the people there were turning their faces to Jesus and waited for his answer holding their breath: *“What answer will he give?”*

It was an intense moment. But Jesus did not hurry to give an answer. He did not say anything for a while and just bent down and started to write something on the ground with his finger (verse 6). Some people try to figure out what Jesus wrote at that time. Jesus might have written some word from the Scripture or something else. But we don't know for sure. The important thing is not the content of His writing at that time but why He was writing without saying anything.

Why did He not give an answer but take a moment of silence? Was it because He did not know what to say? Was it because He needed time to think about how to escape from the trap? Was it because He needed time to think about the right answer? None of these were the reason Jesus took a time of silence.

The reason He was silent was to give them time to search their conscience before He said something.

The truth He knew about them was that they were hypocrites. Even though He knew their intention to trap him, He did not expose their hypocrisy. Instead by taking a moment of silence, He gently spoke to their conscience. Jesus wanted to challenge them to repent from their hypocrisy through His silence. Jesus handled the truth gracefully. So His silence was not a lack of wisdom. His silence was a merciful persuasion for them to look at their hearts.

To the woman accused of adultery Jesus' silence was a nervous time. She was waiting for a verdict in shame and hopelessness. Jesus knew the truth that she had committed adultery. Jesus knew the truth that according to the law she had be stoned to death. However, Jesus also knew the way of grace. Jesus was preparing to save her from the condemnation. By silence, He was speaking to her not only of truth but also of grace.

Often the Lord may speak of what we have to hear through silence. Sometimes we wonder why God is silent when we think He has to say something, or do something. We cry out, "God why are you silent in such a time as this?"

God's silence does not mean that God does not care about what we are going through. God takes care of us even when we don't hear anything from Him. Through silence God may test our faith, mold us to be thoughtful and more patient. God always prepares for the best for us while He is silent. God encourages us to trust Him in stillness. "*Be still and know that I am God.*" (Psalm 46:10)

### **Full of truth and grace to save a life**

When the people forced Jesus to answer their demand of what they should do to such a sinful woman, Jesus said: "*If any one of you is without sin, let him be the first to throw a stone at her.*" Then was there

anyone who could stone her? No! Look at the response of the people to that word in verse 9: *At this, those who heard began to go away one at a time, the older ones first, until only Jesus was left, with the woman still standing there.* By saying this word, Jesus saved the woman's life from being condemned and stoned to death.

Jesus fulfilled the law of justice without sacrificing the law of grace.

The people who brought the woman to Jesus had the knowledge of the law of God. They knew exactly what the law says about how such a sinner must be condemned. They demanded justice based on the law. But they ignored the grace in the law of God. The law was that a sinner can be forgiven if the sinner believed in God's grace through the sacrificial blood of the lamb. It was the law of grace.

In fact it is the key theme of the whole book of Leviticus, one of the five books of Moses' law.

The justice was that such a sinner like the woman must be condemned to death. But the grace was that such a sinner could be forgiven and be saved from condemnation.

There was conflict between justice and grace. But Jesus reconciled the conflict with truth. The truth is that everybody is a sinner just as the adulterous woman. The truth is that there is no one who is free from sin. The truth is that without God's graceful forgiveness, there is no one who has hope. With the truth, Jesus satisfied both justice and love.

Ultimately to fully satisfy the justice of all our sins, Jesus sacrificed His life on the cross. Through His death on the cross He was condemned on behalf of us and set us free from the condemnation. Through His cross Jesus fulfilled both the law of justice and the law of grace.

Romans 3:24-25 *all are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus. God presented Christ as a sacrifice of atonement, through the shedding of his blood—to be received by faith. ...*

### **Full of truth and grace that gives us a second chance**

Bob Hoover was a famous test pilot and a frequent performer at air shows. Once when he returned to his home in Los Angeles from an air show in San Diego, both engines of his World War II propeller plane suddenly stopped. With skill and a lot of luck, he safely landed the plane without injury to himself or the other two passengers. After the emergency landing he inspected the airplane's fuel. As he suspected, the plane had been filled with jet fuel rather than gasoline. He then asked to see the mechanic who serviced his plane. The mechanic, horrified at the prospect of seeing the man he had nearly killed, anticipated the full force of Hoover's anger. But Hoover put his arm around the mechanic and said, "To show you I'm sure you'll never do this again, I want you to service my F-51 tomorrow."

Giving that man a second chance could cost him his life, but he gave it anyway.

We all have made serious mistakes. Sometimes when we make a mistake in life it feels so final. When you make a serious mistake you might think its all over for you. But in Jesus you still can find a second chance, an opportunity to start a new life.

When Jesus proclaimed that He did not condemn her for her sin, He declared. "*Go now and leave your life of sin (verse 11).*"

With these words, Jesus gave her a second chance. No matter how serious a mistake we have made, in Jesus we can find a second chance.

Even if you've messed up, God still has a plan for your life. The bible talks about many men and women who messed up, but with God, they got another chance (Moses, Tamar, Paul, Peter etc.).

But then Jesus encouraged her to take the second chance seriously.

Jesus said this to let her know that although she was forgiven, she should not take sin lightly. Jesus said this to warn her that although a sinner can be forgiven through the grace of God, there is still a cost the sinner must pay. What cost did she have to pay even though she was forgiven by God for her sin of adultery and saved from death? It was shame. Shame was the cost she had to pay. She was put in great shame when she was dragged out publically and her sin exposed.

There is no sin which is free of cost. In Jesus' grace a sinner can be forgiven, but the grace does not mean that it is ok to sin again and again with an idea that there is God's forgiveness. Forgiveness of God does not mean that it is Ok for you to sin from time to time. Sin brings out the cost you have to pay even if you are forgiven. Romans 6:1-2 *"What shall we say, then? Shall we go on sinning so that grace may increase? By no means! We are those who have died to sin; how can we live in it any longer?"*

Jesus brings forgiveness of God's grace to us to help us start a new life. Jesus gracefully loves us but He does not spoil us with His graceful love. Jesus is not only the Lord of grace but also the Lord of truth.

Jesus also teaches us here to take care of people with the right balance of truth and grace. He teaches us to take care of people with both grace and truth. It is to forgive and love people with firm boundaries of truth. It is not to spoil them with grace, but to encourage them to live in the truth.