



## Sermon Discussion Questions

04-28-2024

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Series: Restored

Week 4: Restored from Condemnation

1. ICE BREAKER: Were you ever 'caught' as a child or teenager doing something you shouldn't have been doing? Or have you ever caught your child doing something they knew they weren't supposed to do? Share some funny stories of being caught!
2. Read our Scripture for this week, John 7:53-8:11:

*<sup>53</sup>Then they all went home, <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.”*

What stands out to you as you read this passage? Talk about the fact that only the woman is being accused of adultery in this passage. What happened to the man? How did Jesus react? What questions do you have?

3. Reread John 8:2-4. In these verses, the Pharisees are accusing the woman of sin. The definition of sin is “to miss the mark.” As Pastor Dale said, “Sin has less to do with shame before God, and more to do with missing the created intent of your life.”

Discuss this definition of sin. Is this similar or different to the explanations of the word ‘sin’ that you have been taught before? How does sin keep us from living out the original created intent of our lives?

4. It’s important to notice in this passage that while Jesus was compassionate to the woman, He also never lessened the power of sin. Sometimes people put these two ideas at odds, as though Jesus loving unconditionally means He approves of our sin. That idea, however, is unbiblical. In verse 11, Jesus calls the woman to leave her life of sin.

Why do you think people often lean more towards the idea of the compassion of Jesus? How can this idea be harmful if it is not balanced with an understanding of the power of sin? Talk about how Jesus calling us out of our sin is actually an extension of his compassion.

5. Read Colossians 2:13-14, *“When you were dead in your sins and in the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made you alive with Christ. He forgave us all our sins, having canceled the charge of our legal indebtedness, which stood against us and condemned us; he has taken it away, nailing it to the cross.”*

Talk about how this verse relates to the story of the woman caught in adultery. Why is this verse good news for all of us? What does it mean to you to be 'alive with Christ'?

6. Reread John 8:6-8. In these verses, we see that the Pharisees are ready to stone the woman, and she is certainly experiencing condemnation. Condemnation can be understood as, "judgment associated with genuine guilt." The woman knew she had done wrong, but never offers any defense of herself.

Talk about condemnation. Is there any place for it in the Christian life? Why or why not? What is the difference between condemnation and conviction? How does God use conviction to change us for the good, more into His image?

7. F.B. Meyer once said, "It's a terrible thing for a sinner to fall into the hands of other sinners." Sometimes Christians pay more attention to the sin of a neighbor than to our own, or make one 'type' of sin seem worse than all others. This is often a barrier that keeps people from going to church!

React to the Meyer quote. What does this mean to you? Why do we often want to focus more on another's sin than on our own? What does a church look like when that happens? How can we remove this barrier for pre-Christians who are interested in God, but not in the church?

8. Kierkegaard said, "Sin is not wanting to be oneself before God." Sometimes we don't want to be ourselves before God because we see ourselves in the worst light, and are ashamed of our worst moments.

Look back at the story. What did Jesus offer the woman in her worst moment? Talk about Kierkegaard's quote. What does this definition of sin mean to you? How can we be more fully ourselves before God?

9. Reread John 8:10-11. Sometimes the condemnation we are stuck in is self-condemnation, or the inability to realize and fully experience the forgiveness of Jesus. This can be present in old mottos in your head, moral mistakes you've made, or memories you can't get past.

Has there ever been in a time in your life when it's been hard for you to forgive yourself, or to let Jesus forgive you? What was that like? What are some ways that we can experience the forgiveness of Jesus?

10. PRACTICE: Choose one of these verses and meditate on it for at least 5 minutes as a group while someone plays some quiet instrumental music. Read it slowly, pray through any words that stand out to you, and ask God to make the truth of no condemnation real to your heart and soul.

- Romans 8:1-2, *"Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit who gives life has set you free from the law of sin and death."*
- John 3:16-17, *"For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him."*
- John 8:9-11, *"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. Jesus straightened up and asked her, "Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?" "No one, sir," she said. "Then neither do I condemn you," Jesus declared. "Go now and leave your life of sin."*