

Criticism...of sin!

"He who is without sin among you, let him cast the first stone."

This statement by Christ was hijacked to minimize adultery. "Oh, we all sin," it is claimed. Here's the line of reasoning. "In the instance of

John 8:1-11, a woman committed adultery, but Jesus did not condemn her. We should not, therefore, make a 'big deal' over such a trifling and personal matter." They may even allege that no one who is flawed by sin has the right to censure anyone for any transgression; after all, none of us is "without sin." No one, therefore, possesses the moral authority to condemn, much less criticize. Let's examine the claims...

What are the basic facts? A woman was apprehended in the act of committing adultery, i.e., she was engaged in sexual activity that violated either her own marriage commitment, or that of another. Adultery is a sexual act, and it involves the breach of the marriage covenant. There is clear biblical testimony.

"Let marriage be had in honor among all, and let the bed be undefiled: for fornicators and adulterers God will judge" (Hebrews 13:4). A modern theory, which holds that adultery is only "covenant breaking," whether or not sexual transgressions were involved, is without merit, and is, in fact, an attempt to sanctify adulterous relationships formed subsequent to unscriptural divorces. *The Bible doesn't approve and neither should anyone else.*

The Jews were not interested in justice. Had they been in pursuit of justice, they would have taken the woman to the appropriate authorities. What did Jesus have to do with legal affairs? Nothing at all. No, this was a trap laid for Christ. The Jews did not have the authority to execute law-breakers (see John 18:31). Though this fact has been disputed by liberal critics, the historical evidence sustains the biblical record. The accusers blundered. Their accusation contained information to expose their hypocrisy. They declared the woman had been caught "in the very act." That is significant. When the Jewish leaders decided to be so specific, "*in the very act*," they acknowledged an important point: they knew the identity of the male participant! **Where, then, was the man?** These critics were in violation of the law. The focus of Christ's statement — "He that is *without sin* . . ." — was this: "None of you is in a position to stone this woman, for you have disregarded the very law you profess to honor."

Whatever Christ wrote on the ground made an impact upon his critics. They slipped away into the shadows, progressing from the older to the younger. It is hard to focus upon another's sin when your own is exposed. They were no match for the Son of God (neither is any critic today). The Lord inquired: "Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?" Christ then added: "*Neither do I condemn you.*" The Greek word for "condemn" is a strong one, *katakrino* (the prefix *kata* strengthens the root form). It suggests handing down a judgment, passing sentence. She was not judicially sentenced. Jesus was not sanctioning adultery, nor minimizing the wickedness—quite the contrary. Christ was commenting upon the legal aspect of the situation. With the accusers gone, there was no case left! The witnesses were required to throw the first stones (Deuteronomy 17:7); without them the matter could not proceed. Christ unequivocally indicated that what the woman did was sin. He told her to "sin no more" (stop sinning).

Consider the following: There is none righteous, no not one (Romans 3:10). The author included himself. He sometimes found himself doing wrong (Romans 7:15). He had to fight to keep himself under the Lord's control (1 Corinthians 9:26-27). He knew that so long as he remained in the flesh he would never achieve perfection (Philippians 3:12). On the other hand, the apostle did not hesitate to "judge" a brother who was living in open, impenitent sin (1 Corinthians 5:3), and he rebuked those who tolerated such (1 Corinthians 5:1-13). Paul had learned that while we are not to judge according to appearances, we are obligated to "judge with righteous judgment" (John 7:24). Paul withdrew his fellowship from blasphemers like Hymenaeus and Alexander (1 Timothy 1:19-20), and again, exposed Hymenaeus and Philetus when they taught that the resurrection had occurred already (2 Timothy 2:17-18). He did not hesitate to mention that Demas fell in love with the world and forsook him (2 Timothy 4:10). A person does not have to be "without sin" before calling attention to the error that wicked practice. The misuse of John 8:1-11, as a covering for sin, is an evil within itself. **Criticism of sin is needed today.**

By Wayne Jackson

To all our visitors: *Please feel free to participate!*

You should expect to hear singing with voices only, a few "family" announcements, prayers spoken, and see the Lord's Supper offered, then free-willed giving, and gospel preaching from the Bible.

Any response is up to you and will be kindly received.

We are glad you decided to worship God with us on this first day of the week!



In the New Testament

Barnabas had another name. What was it?

Bonus: What does his name mean?

Bday/Anniv Lunch: 2nd Sunday...

Friday Bible Study: from 7 to 8 PM! We are studying some New Testament commands of God for us today...

NMCCH: We are waiting to hear of the next item to gather.

Ladies Day: Saturday at 8:30

(7/20), Grand Avenue, "Women Working Together Harmoniously."