

The Outcasts:

(*The Outcasts* is a series of Bible studies based on those people whom most levels of society would consider unimportant, insignificant or even repulsive. These people are often overlooked or cast aside, as if they have nothing to give the body of Christ. Rebels...backsliders...children...senior citizens...the handicapped...the uneducated...the homeless. Thankfully, God looks upon the heart and sees us for what we can become; beautiful witnesses for the Gospel of Christ. It is my prayer that through these Bibles studies you will be blessed and gain a clear vision for how the God of the Universe sees you; incredibly precious and valuable).

A Line in the Sand

By Mary Kane



"I am not going to try to be friendly to her again!" I thought to myself. Being a newcomer in church can be a difficult thing. In the process of changing churches, I had left many friends behind. It seemed as if everyone in our new church had established friend groups and they weren't seeking new members. I tried to make friends with a few ladies at church, but I felt as if I hadn't been very welcome.

In order to make new friends, I became involved in a few ministry groups at church. As I walked down the basement stairs of the church, on my way to play the piano for the Cubbies class, I saw Cheryl coming towards me. I gave myself a pep talk about reaching out, smiled and said, "Hi Cheryl!" To my disbelief she walked past me without saying a word. That was the final straw. I decided to give up on making any new friends at this church. Hurt and upset, I walked into the Fellowship Hall and sat down for a moment to think before I played for the Cubbies. As I nursed my hurt feelings, I overheard two other ladies talking about Cheryl, "...I know I feel that way too. Poor Cheryl, she's lost all her hearing in her left ear." I laughed to myself and asked God to forgive me for my harsh thoughts and judgmental attitude. God taught me a valuable lesson; I am not fit to judge the actions of others. He is all knowing and I am not. I decided I'd try again to make friends with Cheryl at the next opportunity!

Therefore let us not judge one another anymore,

*but rather resolve this,
Not to put a stumbling block or a cause to fall in our brother's way.*

Romans 14:13

Please ask our Heavenly Father to forgive you of your sin and fill you afresh with His Holy Spirit.

Now, please read John 8:1-12.

Where did Jesus go early in the morning?

He went to the temple to teach the people. In the Old Testament, we are reminded to "seek Him in the morning." I love to spend time with my Holy Father before the busyness of the day sets in.

Verse two tells us that Jesus "sat down to teach the people." The word for *sat* used in this verse means "to sit down, to settle down, to confer a kingdom on one." Jesus *sat* down in the temple to "confer" the truths of His kingdom to anyone that would listen.

What happened during the middle of this "Bible study" session?

Note in particular who brought the woman to Jesus:

The scribes and the Pharisees brought this woman to the temple. The scribes were a group of men who were very knowledgeable of the Mosaic law and in the sacred writings. They were connected with the priests and the elders of the people. They often added their own interpretations to the law, hoping to make its meaning clearer, but these additions became snares. The Pharisees were a strict sect that probably started during the Exile. In addition to the Old Testament, the Pharisees also followed a strict oral code of traditions. They prided themselves on their works and their ability to keep the Law.

Please describe the emotional state of the woman when she was brought into the temple.

Please fill in the missing words from the following verse:

“Then the scribes and Pharisees _____ to Him a woman caught in adultery. And when they had _____ her in the midst...”

Due to the original meanings behind the words *brought* and *set*, the scribes and Pharisees brought this woman before Jesus to be judged. Would Jesus find her innocent or guilty? If Jesus found her innocent, the scribes and Pharisees could accuse Jesus of overturning the Law of Moses.

Who was missing from this scene?

Have you ever wondered where the man was who was also caught in the “very act” of adultery?

According to Leviticus 20:10 what was the penalty for adultery and to whom did it apply?

Why do you think they brought only the woman to Jesus?

If both the man and the woman were caught in the "very act of adultery," they both should have been easily "caught" and brought to Jesus. It sounds as if the woman was the victim of a well planned plot.

Please read verse 8:5 again.

Does anything strike you odd about this verse?

It seems as if the scribes and the Pharisees expected Jesus to have a differing opinion from the Law of Moses; as if He were already known for His lavish mercy and grace. The scribes and Pharisees were not known for their mercy and grace; but for their condemnation and works. They did not know that all of the Law and the prophets hang on the commandment to love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul and mind.

This little scenario really had nothing to do with the Pharisees and scribes concern for the piety and righteousness of the nation of Israel. It also had nothing to do with helping a sister of the faith find healing and restoration. It was all about using a person to trap Jesus. Killing one woman more or less meant nothing to those who were intent on killing the Savior of the world. Ironically, despite their terrible intentions, the scribes and Pharisees brought the woman right where she needed to be...at the feet of Jesus.

**The Pharisees were hoping to trap Jesus that they might
_____ Him (verse 6).**

The word for *accuse* in this verse is *katagoreo* which means "before a judge." As we follow this word back to its roots, the definition becomes interesting. *Katagoreo* is derived from *ketegor* which translates "an accuser, a name given to the devils by the rabbi's."

Please read verse 19 now.

According to verse 19, Jesus said that the Pharisees did not know whom?

They did not know The Father.

Who was their father (verse 44)?

What is another name for Satan (Revelation 12:10)?

In this passage of scripture, then, we see Jesus and the scribes and the Pharisees both imitating their fathers; one offering life and grace, the other offering death and condemnation.

What did Jesus do while the "Accusers" were busy accusing him and the woman (verse 6)?

Scripture says that "Jesus *stooped* down and wrote on the ground..." *Stooped* sounds like such a harmless word. Once again we will be greatly blessed by a look into the original language used in this verse! The original word for *stooped* is *kupto* which means "to stoop down, to bow the head." *Kupto* comes from another Greek word, *kuma* which translates "of impulse and restless men, tossed to and fro by their raging passions." In my mind I see Jesus moved by compassion for this poor woman trapped within her own sin, accused by those who are no more righteous than herself. This is the same passion that made Jesus willing to lay down His life for our sin upon the cross.

Why do you think Jesus pretended not to hear the scribes and Pharisees?

They thought they had Him. Jesus had no way of escape this time! Like children on a playground they kept repeating the question over and over, "what do you say, what do you say?!"

Jesus' answer is brilliant... "He who is without sin among you, let him throw a stone at her first."

Jesus did not deny that the woman was guilty. He knew she was guilty. Neither did He beg the Pharisees to let her go. He went to the heart

of the matter—who has the right to cast judgment upon another person and deem them unsavable... unredeemable... unusable for His kingdom... worthy of death.

One of the definitions of *sin* according to *The Blue Letter Bible* is “to wander from the law of God.” The Keepers of the Law were also Breakers of the Law. The law was never meant to save, but to condemn and point out our need for a Savior. No one is capable of keeping the Law, but the Pharisee pretended they could. Jesus revealed the fact of their hypocrisy. The Book of James says if a man is guilty of breaking one law, he guilty of breaking them all. The Pharisees knew they were guilty...they were as guilty as the woman. In condemning her, they were condemning themselves.

According to the Word of God in Deuteronomy 17:7 and John 8:7, what are the qualifications needed in order to throw the first stone?

Who was the only One who fulfilled these qualifications?

The Only One who was qualified to condemn the woman and throw the first stone, chose instead to show her mercy and grace. Why did Jesus chose mercy and grace? Didn't the law clearly state that the wages for this sin was death by stoning? What was God up to? Are there any other instances of God showing mercy for such a grievous sin?... David. David committed adultery with Bathsheba. God sent Nathan to confront David and bring him to repentance. Ephesians 2:4-5 says that God is a God of mercy and grace. Hebrews 13:8 says that He is the same yesterday, today and tomorrow. The God of Grace of the New Testament is the same God as the God of the Old Testament. It is *my opinion* that God offered His mercy and grace to all, from Genesis to Revelation, but there

were some who refused His grace and did not repent and therefore experienced harsh repercussions.

What happened to the Pharisees in the beginning of verse 9?

Jesus did not speak to the scribes and the Pharisees about the sin of the woman; it was none of their business. Jesus spoke to them to about their own sin issues. The scribes and the Pharisees were convicted of their sin by their consciences and left the temple.

Who left first?

Why do you think the oldest left first?

Perhaps they could more easily remember their sin because they had more opportunities to sin than their younger counterparts. One by one, the scribes and Pharisees left.

Please describe what the woman may have been feeling at this point in time.

Did you notice that during most of this encounter that the woman was silent? She did not argue with her accusers; Jesus dealt with them. She did not claim that she was innocent, they all knew she wasn't. Jesus did not offer her grace because of her innocence; he offered her grace because of His innocence.

The accusers had all left, until finally, Jesus was left alone with the woman. But don't forget, Jesus wasn't in the temple alone that day; He was teaching "all the people" who came to Him. This whole situation with the woman caught in adultery, unfolded before the people. What a lesson the people learned that day!

What do you think "all the people" learned that day about the kingdom of God?

What did the scribes and the Pharisees learn that day?

What did the woman learn that day?

Please go back and read verse 11-12 again.

In verse 11-12, what two things did Jesus tell the woman?

1. **He told her that He did not condemn her.** I think deep within her heart, this woman believed in Jesus, otherwise His opinion of her case would not have mattered. If she did not care, I think she would have left with the last of the Pharisees. I think she knew, deep in her soul, that this Man had the power to remove her shame and guilt.
2. **He told her to "go and sin no more."** The word *go* in the original Greek means "to pursue the journey on which one has entered, to lead or order one's life, to follow one, that is: become his adherent."ⁱ

Jesus ends this encounter with the woman with a fresh start. He does not relegate her to a life of shame and uselessness; He invites her to reorder her life and to follow Him.

- The Pharisees came to shame; Jesus offered dignity.
- The Pharisees came to condemn; Jesus offered grace.
- The Pharisees came to kill; Jesus offered life abundant.

Who do you want to follow?

Now, please describe how the woman probably felt at this point in time!

Perhaps like me, you need to know that no matter what your track record, or no matter how many people have condemned you, that God is always ready to offer you a fresh start. Hallelujah!

In what area of your life do you need a fresh start?

What do you need to do in order to follow Jesus in this area?

What step will you take today in order to follow Jesus more closely?

In closing, please take a quick look back at verse 12.

By what name does Jesus call Himself?

What does this name reveal about His character?

Jesus reveals to all the people in the temple that He is the Light of the World! He did not call Himself the “Law of the World” that He might condemn us, but the Light of the World that reveals the truth of our condition so we may receive forgiveness, and follow Him.

ⁱ *The Blue Letter Bible CD*, CD-ROM, version 2.11. Sowing Circle, 2006.