**Jesus is the Light of the World**

John 8:1-32

Key Verse: 8:12, “When Jesus spoke again to the people, he said, ‘I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.’”

In this passage, Jesus saves a condemned woman. A woman is brought to the public with her shame completely exposed. But Jesus offered her a new life, saying, “Neither do I condemn you. Go now and leave your life of sin.” Then Jesus revealed himself as the light of the world. We all live in the darkness at some point or even now in different areas of our lives. But Jesus invites us to come to him to receive the light. I pray that through this passage we may enter into God’s light and let his light shine on us and be saved. We can experience a new life in Jesus by humbly accepting his words, “Neither do I condemn you,” and walk anew in his mercy and grace.

Let’s start with verses 1-11. “But Jesus went to the Mount of Olives.” (1) Jesus spent much time there to pray. During the Feast of Tabernacles, in Chapter 7, Jesus went up to the temple, where he went to teach the people. After the people went home, when the Festival was over, Jesus appeared again in the temple the next day where he sat down to teach. Why did Jesus come again to teach them (2)? In verses 37b-38, Jesus said, “Let anyone who is thirsty come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as Scripture has said, rivers of living water will flow from within them.” Jesus saw the spiritual thirst of the people, and invited them to come to him and drink. When we are thirsty, we should drink water. These people must have discovered their deep inner dissatisfaction and thirst, and came to Jesus to be filled. We can fill our hearts with so many things in this world, but unless we drink the living water from Jesus, we will never be satisfied. We can come to Jesus and let him fill our hearts, and be satisfied while in this world.

What happened while Jesus taught in the temple? All of a sudden the Pharisees and the teachers of the law came in. They brought in a woman with them. Verses 3-5 read: “The teachers of the law and the Pharisees brought in a woman caught in adultery. They made her stand before the group and said to Jesus, ‘Teacher, this woman was caught in the act of adultery. 5 In the Law Moses commanded us to stone such women. Now what do you say?’” They brought in a woman who had been caught in adultery. Not a pretty sight. According to the law (Deut. 22:22; Lev. 20:10), she had to be put to death. There’s no mention of the man, although some might think one of the Pharisees could have been that person. The Pharisees also came looking for a reason to accuse Jesus. (6a)

This woman must have been filled with shame, fear and hopeless. She had been caught in a very shameful act, and dragged into the public. More so, the religious leaders were ready to stone her. They waited for Jesus to give a reply. If he said yes, he would have ruined his own reputation and the Roman law; if he said not to, they would have accused him of breaking the law of God. But instead of saying anything, Jesus bent down and started to write on the ground with his finger. (6b) Jesus seemed to ignore the situation. We don’t know what Jesus wrote, but it is like when God wrote the law with his finger, Exodus 31:18: When the Lord finished speaking to Moses on Mount Sinai, he gave him the two tablets of the covenant law, the tablets of stone inscribed by the finger of God. With his own finger, God wrote the law and gave it to Moses.

When they kept questioning him, Jesus straightened up from the ground and said to them, “Let any one of you who is without sin be the first to throw a stone at her.” (7) What a response. Jesus’ reply surprised them all. Why did Jesus say this? It means he did not want this woman to be stoned. Only Jesus was without sin, so only Jesus could throw a stone. The Pharisees were also condemned like this woman, therefore none could stone her. We can easily judge or condemn or even blame others based on what we see or interpret, or based on the law. But Jesus made it clear that none of them could, or were qualified even to condemn or stone her. In many places in the Bible, God says, “Do not judge.” For example, Romans 2:1 it says, “You, therefore, have no excuse, you who pass judgment on someone else, for at whatever point you judge another, you are condemning yourself, because you who pass judgment do the same things.”

When they heard Jesus’ words, they tossed down their stones and walked away one by one, leaving the woman alone with Jesus (9). We should entrust all judgment to God and throw away our ugly stones. We never know how God is wanting to work or speak to that person, like he did for this woman, so we can have God’s perspective and not our own.

But what about the woman? She was an *adulteress*, and the law demanded that she had to be put to death, or “*stoned”*. Humanly, we might look at her with shame. We don’t know for how long she lived this way, or even why. But she must have felt deep inner shame and fully unclean as she stood in public and before Jesus.

Jesus, who wrote on the ground with his finger, stood and looked at this woman. Look at verses 10-11: 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.” In Jesus, there was no condemnation. There was mercy and forgiveness. Although she stood ashamed, Jesus covered her completely, and said, “Neither do I condemn you.” She had been saved from her condemners and the guilt of her sin. Why did Jesus offer her mercy and forgiveness? Why didn’t he treat her based on the law, as we may treat ourselves or others? John 3:17 says, “For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him.” Jesus did not come into the world to judge the world, but to save. To save means to keep safe, to deliver and to set free. He came to save, keep safe and set free this woman and all sinners so we would not be stoned to death.

It is a terrible thing to walk in condemnation with a constant reminder of what we’ve done. We walk around with condemnation in our hearts many times. We wonder why we do the same things over and over again, even after we’ve repented or come to God. We also feel regret in our hearts because of our failings and want to cover up or hide. As the Pharisees demonstrated, the law punishes and condemns. But as Jesus demonstrated, he came not to judge, but to save.

Romans 8:1-2 say, “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.” There is no other way to be set free from the power of the law or our own sins without Jesus Christ. If she had not been brought to Jesus, she would have remained in her shameful life. Only Jesus can set us free and give us new life. In him, there is no condemnation because he sets us free from the power of the law of sin and death. Thank God for Jesus who cleanses us from a guilty conscious so that we can serve him freely! So we can know Jesus is our only solution.

There is something different the Pharisees experienced though. In verse 9 it says “those who heard began to *go away* one at a time.” Instead of bringing their problems to Jesus, or also standing exposed like the woman, they just walked away. They acknowledged they were without sin, but did not come to Jesus and confess anything. They just left. I learned personally this can be one of my biggest problems. We might say casually “I am with sin,” but we don’t do anything about it. We don’t bring it to Jesus, but we throw down our stones and just walk away. This is like a religious life. I go about my religious duties but never honestly assess my inner life or bring up my own sins or problems to Jesus. The Pharisees remained with hardened, stiff hearts. I honestly prayed to Jesus that I personally come to Jesus honestly and not remain superficial.

Jesus did not just forgive this woman, but also gave her new life direction. “Neither do I condemn you. Go now and leave your life of sin.” (11b). He wanted her to experience new life not just by receiving his forgiveness, but also leaving her life of sin. Jesus does not just forgive us, but also helps us to not go back to our sin. But why did Jesus say this? What does it mean to “leave” our life of sin? How is this possible?

In verse 12, Jesus spoke again to the people and said, “I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.” This woman lived in the dark, keeping her shameful, secret life until she was caught. Jesus said that if we follow him, we will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life. What does this mean to us?

In the light, nothing is covered or unseen. When we enter into a dark room, we naturally turn on the light so that we may see. Otherwise we can’t see a thing. But that is just physical light. How do we walk in darkness spiritually? I think primarily, like the Pharisees, it is when we are not honest and do not allow the light to come in. John 1:9 says, “The true light that gives light to every man was coming into the world.” If the light does not shine, we remain in the dark. Until the woman was brought to Jesus, her life remain in the dark. In 2005, the famous actress Angelina Jolie was found to have had a relationship with the actor, Brad Pitt, who was married to another famous actress. It was heartbreaking and at first they denied until it because obvious and public. A lot of things are kept hidden or under the cover in our lives, which keeps us in the darkness. Then we begin to feel anxious, fearful, depressed, lonely, angry and upset. We wonder where we are going, and ultimately what the purpose of our life really is. Working and talking with college students has been very eye-opening these last few months. They share how depressed and lost they feel, although they look so put together outwardly. But inwardly they explain they feel confused and empty, with thoughts of thoughts of what to do, peer pressure, and if they are making the right decisions. So we walking in the darkness. We are just searching and searching and feel empty and lost. Why do we feel this way? There is a reason why these things exist in our hearts.

In the beginning of creation, the earth was formless, empty and darkness covered it. God, on the first day, spoke, “Let there be light,” and there was light. There are many theories about the light, how it is formed, and its function. But one thing we can be sure of from the Bible is that true light comes only from Jesus Christ. He said, “I am the light of the world.” While I am in the world, I am the light of the world.” Without him nothing was made that has been made.” “The true light that gives light to everyone was coming into the world.” (1:9)

When we feel we are walking in the darkness, in despair, shame, guilt, fear, where do we go to? What do we do? Come to Jesus. He will shine in us because is the light of the world and remove all the darkness from our lives.

Sometimes,however, we refuse to come to the light, like the Pharisees. We might just be afraid. Afraid of being caught or shamed. But in Jesus there was no condemnation of shame. His perfect love will cast out fear. Another issue is we enjoy our darkness and we actually don't want to be in the light. John 3:19-21 says, “This is the verdict: Light has come into the world, but people loved darkness instead of light because their deeds were evil. Everyone who does evil hates the light, and will not come into the light for fear that their deeds will be exposed. But whoever lives by the truth comes into the light, so that it may be seen plainly that what they have done has been done **in the sight of God.**” When we are in the light, there is freedom because everything that is done is done in the sight of God. Then there’s nothing to hide, nothing to be ashamed of. Jesus doesn't force us to live in the light but gives us all an opt unity to just come.

What happens when we live in darkness and do not come into the light? In verses 13-30, Jesus spoke to the religious leaders who challenged him and rejected his words. They hardened their hearts and refused to believe in him. Because they refused to believed and kept their hearts stiff, they remained in the darkness. “You are from below; I am from above. You are of this world; I am not of this world. 24 I told you that you would die in your sins; if you do not believe that I am he, you will indeed die in your sins.” Without stepping into the light and remaining in unbelief, we will remain in sin and darkness. We will just stumble and die on our sin.

We have a decision to make: to walk away from Jesus and continue to live a religious life, or come to Jesus and live in the light. I was very humbled by this truth as I saw the Pharisees. My heart grew hardened because I stopped being honest with myself and others, but I learned once again this is the only way to have a relationship with Jesus. To be honest and come into the light. He said in Revelation 3:20, “Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with that person, and they with me.”

In 1 John 1:8-10 we read: 8 If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. 9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness. 10 If we claim we have not sinned, we make him out to be a liar and his word is not in us.” Jesus purifies us from all sins, so we may walk and have fellowship with him. In his light, we have fellowship with God and others. I pray that God may help us to come into the light and be honest to live as free children of God with the light of his word in our hearts.

In 2008, I had been a slave to my own lustful desires. I studied the Bible for one semester in the fall after coming to college, but fell into the temptation of partying and mingling from boy to boy as if to satisfy me. But I was still unsatisfied and would cry almost every night. It got worse when I failed one class and caught mononucleosis. I felt ashamed. One day, while walking down the street from class, I felt I should call my Bible teacher and resume Bible study and go to our Bible House. But then a very audible voice came to my mind: “You are too unclean, and God will never forgive you.” I knew in my heart it was not true, but the power of condemnation remained in my heart, and I never came back. For one whole semester I kept the shame but continued with my partying life, until finally my friend said, “what are you doing with your life? Where are you going?” I called my aunt and asked, “Will God take me back? I’ve made so many mistakes.” My aunt, being so simple and wise said, “You bet.” I sat on a lawn and confessed to God everything I did. But instead of feeling the shame, there was peace, and His joy. I felt the chains of my sin and shame breaking off one by one, and for the first time knew he had set me free. He removed the lie of condemnation and has led my life since. I am not perfect, but have experienced God’s love and mercy until now with no doubt. I resumed Bible study. But through seeing the Pharisees, confession is not just a one time event. I must come into the light of Jesus everyday. Instead of hardening or covering my heart or sins, I can live in the light. There is no condemnation in Christ Jesus. May we stand in the light and be forgiven and live a new life in Christ Jesus beginning today. Let’s cry out to Jesus for his light to shine upon us and be set free. Jesus said, “I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.”