

Sermon Series: “Christ at the Crossroads”—Lord of Life Lutheran, Westfield, IN—2/20/2005

Title: “Christ at the Crossroads of Shame”

Text: John 8: 2-11

Intro: *Ills.: Jesus of Nazareth video clip*

Theme: When Satan sends the fiery dart of shame into our lives, Jesus calls us to respond to His mercy rather than to react to its judgment.

When our sin brings judgment (Print and read John 8: 2-8)

- Rejecting the guilt that drives you back to shame
 1. Legalism and self-righteousness which blinds us into denial
 1. The Scribes and Pharisees in their blind sin were trying to use another’s sin to justify theirs
 1. Entrapping a woman lost in sin to trap Jesus into a misstep (*caught in the act of adultery vs. 3*)
 2. Quoting O.T. law (Deut 22:22) “*If a man. . .*”—where was the man in this sinful scenario (probably accuser)
 2. Our own unconfessed shame leads us in legalism to point out another’s sin so we don’t have to deal with own
 2. Refusing to use or live in the shame of sin
 1. Legislating behavior (*We are made adequate as servants of a new covenant, not of the letter but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life. 2 Cor. 3: 6*)
 2. Responding out of pride (*He who restrains his words has knowledge, And he who has a cool spirit is a man of understanding. Prov. 17: 27*)
 3. Reacting to the accusation of Satan (*Who will bring a charge against God's elect? God is the one who justifies. Rom 8: 33*)
- Needing mercy rather than justice
 4. Whether in the hurt that you have caused and are trying to cover up
- 3. The way to remove shame is not to exact justice
 1. Or in the hurt caused by others on you (abortion, abuse, injustice, etc.)
 2. “*Let the one who is without sin, cast the first stone.*” vs. 7
- 4. Give and receive mercy in the midst of a sinful fallen world
 1. “*But go and learn what this means: 'I desire compassion, and not sacrifice,' for I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners.*” Matthew 9:13
 2. Instruments of God’s mercy and grace to each other rather than instruments of death and judgment
 3. **Ills.: Mercy for Unpaid Parking Tickets**

When our condition requires a verdict (Print and read John 8: 9-11)

- Receiving the conviction which leads from shame to repentance
 5. Jesus touched the woman’s heart with a conviction that brought about repentance
 6. *For the sorrow that is according to the will of God produces a repentance without regret, leading to salvation, but the sorrow of the world produces death. 2 Cor. 7: 10*
 7. Jesus wants to bring a conviction within us which turns us back to his forgiveness to remove the shame once for all
- Looking forward rather than looking backward
 8. Often, we live under the bondage of remorse when we have already freed
 1. *Christ has freed us so that we may enjoy the benefits of freedom. Therefore, be firm in this freedom, and don't become slaves again. Gal. 5: 1*
 2. The only time we should look back is when we look to the cross upon which the sins of the past were removed
 3. *He made you alive together with Him, having forgiven us all our transgressions, having canceled out the certificate of debt consisting of decrees against us, which was hostile to us; and He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross. Col 2: 13-14*

9. Jesus calls us to look forward to a new way of thinking and a new way of living
 1. Not just saving the woman from a stoning but a freeing her up for a life free from shame
 2. *“Leave your life of sin” vs. 11*
 3. Jesus wants to deliver us so that we can begin living the rest of our lives for the rest of our life
 4. *Instead of Shame you will have a double portion and instead of humiliation they will shout for joy.*
Isaiah 61: 7

Mercy for Unpaid Parking Tickets

Forgiveness was in the air Saturday, December 18th, 2004, in Boise, Idaho. That's where a cross-denominational group of pastors gathered outside of city hall and sat at tables for three hours with checkbook in hand. The members of the Treasure Valley Pastors Association proceeded to write checks to the city on behalf of those with unpaid parking tickets. The much-publicized event called Grace Gift/Paid in Full Project was not all that complicated. To take advantage of the free offer, those with outstanding violations simply had to acknowledge their guilt by showing up and asking for the payment. Up to \$10,000 was earmarked for the unprecedented demonstration of forgiveness. The money was raised from local businesses and was made available on a first-come-first-served basis. "We wanted to help people understand, in a practical way, that even though we've all made mistakes, God's grace and forgiveness is received, just by asking," said Montie Ralstin, Pastor of Boise Valley Christian Communion and president of the pastors' association sponsoring the even. Although the offer struck many as too-good-to-be-true, not all who heard about the modern-day parable were positively impressed. Some thought the pastors should donate the monies raised to charities that helped the poor. Responding to that criticism, Pastor Michael Boerner remarked, "I would agree, I think it's a really poor use of finances just to pay someone's parking ticket if that's all it was, but really it's not about that." **Citation: Greg Asimakoupoulos, Naperville, Illinois; source: KBCI TV 2 News (12-15-04) and Parkingticketgrace.com**

John 8:2-11

²Early the next morning he returned to the temple courtyard. All the people went to him, so he sat down and began to teach them. ³The scribes and the Pharisees brought a woman who had been caught committing adultery. They made her stand in front of everyone ⁴and asked Jesus, "Teacher, we caught this woman in the act of adultery. ⁵In his teachings, Moses ordered us to stone women like this to death. What do you say?" ⁶They asked this to test him. They wanted to find a reason to bring charges against him. Jesus bent down and used his finger to write on the ground. ⁷When they persisted in asking him questions, he straightened up and said, "The person who is sinless should be the first to throw a stone at her." ⁸Then he bent down again and continued writing on the ground. ⁹One by one, beginning with the older men, the scribes and Pharisees left. Jesus was left alone with the woman. ¹⁰Then Jesus straightened up and asked her, "Where did they go? Has anyone condemned you?" ¹¹The woman answered, "No one, sir." Jesus said, "I don't condemn you either. Go! From now on don't sin." [GW]