

Forgiveness or Condemnation.

John 8:7-11 (NRSV) ⁷When they kept on questioning him, he straightened up and said to them, "Let anyone among you who is without sin be the first to throw a stone at her." ⁸And once again he bent down and wrote on the ground. ⁹When they heard it, they went away, one by one, beginning with the elders; and Jesus was left alone with the woman standing before him. ¹⁰Jesus straightened up and said to her, "Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?" ¹¹She said, "No one, sir." And Jesus said, "Neither do I condemn you. Go your way, and from now on do not sin again."]]

This is one of the poignant encounters of Jesus. This story depicts a universal condition that mirrors your life and my life.

Jesus has full authority and right to condemn the woman caught in the act of adultery.

But he does not.

Adultery is not a solitary sin, so the accomplice must be right there with the stone in hand.

Yet the very person who was fully party to the sin, stands with the stone in hand ready to cast judgement.

You and me will either be the condemned or the one with the stone in hand.

Before the eyes of sinless Jesus, both the accused and the accusers were equally sinful.

The woman did not deny her sin, but the others not only covered up their sins, but are now hastening to remove her from the sight, so that they need not be reminded of their own sin.

Jesus did not approve either the woman's actions or the crowd's desire for blood. And that is precisely why he feigned indifference.

Actually He was scribbling in the sand pretending not to be in the thick of the action. Only when they pressed He looks up at them and says, "Let one who is sinless, may him cast the first stone."

And again He stared at the sand scribbling. There must have been pindrop silence. It is interesting to note that it was the elders who exited first, smitten by their conscience.

It didn't take long time for the elders who have a lot of "experience in sin" to diagnose the sinfulness of their lives and start leaving.

When the mirror was held to their soul, they knew they were no better than her and left.

But it was actually the woman who went out released and blessed by Jesus.

I would rather be at the feet of Jesus asking to be forgiven, rather having the stone in the hand to condemn.

Sadly most Christians, have stones in their hand little realizing that the Saviour has paid it all and we are called to preach grace and forgiveness.

But when we constantly condemn others, we unconsciously think of ourselves as better and conveniently condemn others who do not measure up according to our standards.

This the Lord abhors.

It is only the one who confesses the sins is forgiven and receives mercy, but not the one who hides sin.

Somehow after we have become "respectable" Christians, we feel we are immune to sin and head and shoulders above people like the common prostitute.

But whether it is adultery or white collared lie, Jesus paid the heavy prize on the Cross. It is no less than the Blood of Christ for both. Forgiveness and grace never come cheap.

When He extends grace and mercy, why should we condemn?

The question is "Do I stand in need of the grace of the Saviour or do I stand with the stone in my hand?"

The woman received grace and forgiveness, the respectable folks left smitten, but I don't know whether they were forgiven.

In which company would you want to be?