

Never Man Spake

by Welcome Detweiler

Christ's solution to the problem of justice and mercy is to offer pardon to the guilty and at the same time expressing his disapproval of their sin, leading to eternal salvation.

Duration: 11:05

Scripture: John 8:1-12, John 8:32, John 8:34-36, John 8:44, John 8:58-59

Topics: "Guilt And Shame", "Need For Savior"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the danger of running away from God and ignoring the voice of conscience. He warns that those who have been awakened to their lost condition but choose to flee from God will ultimately end up in hell. The preacher contrasts this with the example of a convicted sinner who stays in the presence of Christ and acknowledges their guilt and helplessness. He urges religious people who pretend to be saved to face the truth of their unsaved state and not deceive themselves or others. The sermon emphasizes the importance of recognizing one's guilt before God's perfect law and the need for a Savior.

Transcript

I am reading from John's Gospel, chapter 8. And early in the morning he came again into the temple, and all the people came unto him. And he sat down and taught them. And the scribes and Pharisees brought unto him a woman taken in adultery.

And when they had set her in the midst, they said unto him, Master, this woman was taken in adultery in the very act. Now Moses in the law commanded us that she should be stoned. But what sayest thou? This they said, tempting him that they might have to accuse him.

But Jesus stooped down, and with his finger wrote on the ground, as though he heard them not. So when they continued asking him, he lifted up himself and said unto them, He that is without sin among you, let him first cast the stone at her. And again he stooped down and wrote on the ground.

And they which heard it being convicted by their own conscience went out one by one, beginning at the eldest, even unto the last. And Jesus was left alone and the woman standing in the midst. When Jesus had lifted up himself and saw none but the woman, he said unto her, Woman, where are those thine accusers? hath no man condemned thee? She said, No man, Lord.

And Jesus said unto her, Neither do I condemn thee. Go, and sin no more. In the seventh chapter of John's Gospel we have the record of the chief priests and Pharisees sending officers to arrest Christ.

But the officers returned without carrying out their mission. When they were asked, Why have ye not brought him? They replied, Never man spake like this man. It is almost evident from this that even in our Lord's day the policemen came to know the Savior.

However, the cold-blooded religionists were no doubt enraged because their scheme fell through. So they hit on a new scheme by bringing before him a woman taken in adultery. They brought this woman to Christ not because they were shocked at her conduct, still less because they were grieved that God's holy law had been broken.

Their object was to use this woman to further their own evil design. They were anxious to discredit the Lord Jesus before the people. They did not wait until they could ask him in private, but interrupting as he was teaching the people, they rudely challenged him to solve what must have seemed to them an unsolvable problem.

They were certain that they could accuse him by whatever answer he would give. The woman had been taken in adultery, and the act of adultery required that she should be stoned. But what sayest thou? Had he said, Let her go, they would accuse him of being an enemy of the law.

And they had heard him testify, Think not that I am come to destroy the law or the prophets. I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill. On the other hand, if he would give command to stone her, they would have ridiculed the fact that he claimed to be the friend of publicans and sinners.

No doubt they were satisfied that they had him completely cornered, for it was evidently a question that even the Sanhedrin could not agree upon, some meaning to the lenient side and others to the legal carrying out of the law of Moses. So far as human reasoning is concerned, it was the profoundest moral problem how justice and mercy could be harmonized. The law of righteousness demands the punishment of its transgressors.

God's holy character cannot allow that which is defiled to enter his presence. What, then, is to become of the poor sinner? He is a transgressor of the law, and his moral pollution is manifest. His only hope lies in mercy.

His salvation is only possible by grace. But how can grace and mercy flow to the sinner without slighting God's holy character? Human wisdom could never have found an answer to this question, but Christ is about to demonstrate the answer. First he stooped down with his finger out on the ground.

I suppose that his religious enemies thought he was stalling for time, and mistook his silence for embarrassment. They continued to press their question upon him, until the searching reply came. He that is without sin among you, let him first cast the stone at her.

Here we have the lawgiver himself turning the searching light on these men who pretended to have a high regard for the law of Moses. Even today you will find a calming subtlety about those who profess to keep the law as a means of salvation. They take the liberty to interpret the law of Moses to suit themselves and their legalistic religious setup.

In this incident, Christ upheld the law by adding all of the details that accompany it. God's law is holy, and none but a holy hand can enforce the law's sentence. The law required two witnesses before its sentence could be executed, and those witnesses must assist in the carrying out of the sentence.

In this case, there was no one left to testify against the woman, and so the law was powerless to touch her. This paved the way for Christ to act in grace. The law and the gospel of grace work hand in hand to bring the sinner to Christ.

The law cannot save. It cannot even help save. That is not the purpose of the law.

The law can only bring a sinner to his wit's end where he will stand helpless at mercy's gate, and God will never save a sinner until he is conscious of guilt and owns his undone condition. If you are still unsaved and think that you are pretty good, it is evident that you have never looked at yourself in the sight of God's inflexible law. Face it, and you will change your mind and become conscious that the best thing that can be said about you is that you are a lost, guilty, hell-deserving sinner because you stand guilty before God's perfect law.

I wonder if you have carefully noticed that there is no promise made to the person who partly keeps the law, and he who claims to keep the whole law without offending in one point is not telling the truth. We must give credit where credit is due, and at least the enemies of Christ were faithful to their conscience, and beginning at the eldest, even to the last, they went out one by one. The searching rays of divine truth turned the heat on them.

The Lord was still writing on the ground, and after the last accuser had left, the woman had a chance to slip away also. But we have here a picture of convicted religionist leaving the Savior, and a convicted confessed sinner staying in his presence. There are many people who have been convicted of their sins, and instead of coming to the Savior for eternal life, they are running away from the only one who can meet their need.

Let me press it home to your heart and conscience. How long have you been trying to run away from the Lord? How long have you been trying to cover and hide your sins? I want to speak to some of you religious people pretending that you are saved, when down deep in your heart you know that you're not saved at all. Where do you get the nerve to tell people that you are saved when your faithful conscience thunders, you are as lost as anyone can be? That's what I call running away from God.

It's a wonder that you're not perfectly miserable. I don't know of any better way to be guaranteed misery than to dodge the voice of conscience. Do you know what happens to a person who has been awakened to see his lost condition, who runs away from God? I'll tell you.

If he keeps on running long enough, he'll run right into hell. He's going in that direction, and he can't miss it. There's only one alternative, and it is a blessed one.

Do what the condemned woman did. Face the issue in the presence of Christ. Tell the truth.

I'm guilty. I'm helpless. I'm lost.

I stand at mercy's gate. Mercy, what hast thou to offer? Mercy will reply, I have a loving Savior to offer, who took your place in judgment and died for all of your sins on Calvary's cross. Justice has been satisfied.

You may only be forgiven when you receive that Savior as your only hope for eternity. Besides washing you from the penalty of all your sins, this Savior will give to you a power that will enable you to live a life pleasing to God, whose constraining love will deliver you from the bondage of sin. Some who abuse the Scriptures by taking verses out of the context and stress their own fancies will tell us, when Christ said to the woman, Go and sin no more, he taught sinless perfection.

But the rest of the Scriptures will not permit such abusive interpretation. Remember the context. Christ was put on the spot by his enemy, and they expected him to condone the woman's sin, and thus accuse him of being unrighteous.

In the two statements, neither do I condemn thee, go and sin no more, he handled the situation in a very artful manner by offering pardon to the guilty, and at the same time expressing his disapproval of her sin. Am I speaking to an unsaved person tonight? Your sins must be a tremendous burden. You're carrying the load of your sin day after day.

You should do the wise thing. Come to that same Savior who is able and willing to save guilty sinners. He's not going to condone your sin, but he loves you, and he is able to save you and deliver you from a life of sin to change your life completely.

This very hour you may be saved if you will turn away from yourself and all of your doing and all of your trying to save yourself, and turn to the open arms of a Savior who is waiting to help you, waiting to save you, and that for all eternity.

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