

God's (un)Secret Identity: Our God is Gracious

Part 4 *Our God is Gracious, so let us live free* John 8

7/4-5/2020

It was Friday at noon, and the sun over Jerusalem was blotted out, plunging the city in darkness  
A cry pierced the gloom, *'My God, My God, why have you forsaken Me?'*

Pouring into the soul of Jesus Christ, was the guilt of billions of sins, catapulted there by the  
wrath of His Heavenly Father, for *'God made him who had no sin to be sin for us'*

The guilt and sins of millions of people of faith-from Adam and Eve, to our yet unborn  
children-streamed onto the pure, sinless head of Jesus, until He became sin and those  
millions became righteous

The guilt and death they/we deserved, now placed on Jesus Who willingly died in our place  
The just for the guilty, the innocent for the sinner, the righteous for the unrighteous, crucified

The cross is the place of grace where the sins of 1 of those millions of people were poured onto  
Jesus Christ, saving her, declaring her innocent and free from all divine condemnation

We are about to see the story of this 1 person, and it will be unlike anything we could expect

***"For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through Him." John 3:16-17***

John 8 includes a story surrounded by doubts that it was part of the original gospel of John, yet it  
resonates with exactly Who Jesus is, and what He came to do

It begins by taking us immediately into a heart-wrenching scene that takes place in the Temple of  
Jerusalem while Jesus was teaching early in the morning

A group of Scribes and the Pharisees dragged a poor young woman to Jesus and threw her  
down at His feet, humiliating her before everyone

**8:3** tells us that she *'had been caught in adultery'*, caught *'in the act of adultery.'* **8:4** clarifies  
Scribes, who were experts in the Law of God, and Pharisees who were Jewish pastors, say to  
Jesus, *'Now in the Law Moses commanded us to stone such women. So what do you  
say?'* **8:5**

This is nothing but a trap for Jesus, and He knows it

We only need to look at the end of chapter 7 and discover that the religious authorities were  
feeling threatened by Jesus, they were losing their control of the people

This poor young woman is a pawn in a test, ***"that they might have some charge to bring against  
Him."*** **8:6**

If Jesus said to *'stone her'*, they could report Him to the occupied Roman authorities who made  
it illegal for the Jews to exercise capital punishment in this case

If Jesus said, *'don't stone her'*, they could report Him to the Jewish council under the charge of  
being a heretic who denies the Law of Moses

It appears to be the perfect trap!

What would Jesus do?

He doesn't address this young woman at first, and why am I referring to her as a young woman?

The Law of Moses did outlaw adultery, and the penalty was the execution of both people, but  
stoning was not specified, and it was only 1 or 4 methods for capital punishment

It was actually by strangulation at the time of Jesus, unless the adultery was of a betrothed bride  
Jewish women normally became engaged as early as ages 13 or 14, and the penalty of adultery  
with an engaged woman was stoning, of both parties

So it appears likely this is a young woman of 13-16 years old, and the man was not brought  
 And this girl must be terrified, facing the penalty alone, her punishment at the discretion of this  
 Rabbi named Jesus, which were known to be merciless to adulterers  
 Just the mention by the scribes and Pharisees of stoning was beyond frightening  
 The victims would be taken up to the roof of a 2 story building or a cliff of the same height, and  
 thrown off, usually dying from impact with the ground  
 But then the two witnesses who testified against them would each drop large stones on the  
 victims and if that didn't finish the job, those in attendance would throw stones at them  
 So what would Jesus, the Son of God do?

**8:6** tells us, *'Jesus bent down and wrote with His finger on the ground.'*

Still the merciless religious leaders were aggressively trying to spring the trap, so Jesus *"said to them, 'Let him who is without sin among you be the first to throw a stone at her.'"* **8:7**  
 Then He bent down again, writing something with His finger, what it is we are not told  
 Certainly it is connected with what He had just said about anyone without sin throw a stone  
 Might He have written specific sins on that ground, and the living Word of God, whether written  
 on parchment or stone ignited the consciences of those arrogant, shameful men?  
 Interestingly, the older among them reacted first, as they *'went away one by one, beginning with the older ones, and Jesus was left alone with the woman standing before Him.'* **8:9**

But what of that adulterous woman, who was utterly uncared for by the scribes and Pharisees?  
 She is sprawled there, humiliated, shamed, exposed, and terrified, because Jesus now turns to her  
 He *"stood up and said to her, 'Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?'"* **8:10**  
 She answered, *"No one, Lord."* And Jesus said, *'Neither do I condemn you, and from now on sin no more.'* **8:11**

Friends, let these words sink into your own soul...the only One who was *'without sin'* would not  
 condemn her, did not despise her, utterly unlike the pastors and teachers of Israel  
 Yet, God will not, cannot just arbitrarily overlook a person's sins like a politician who is getting  
 kickbacks so lets a company slide on pollution laws  
 He would be utterly unjust if He demanded you keep the law but let me slide  
 Someone had to be punished for her crime, someone had to be put to death

I once saw a T-Shirt that had a picture of the Buddha nailed to the cross, captioned, *'What's wrong with this picture?'*

Do you hear of Allah crucified, or Muhammed his prophet dying for salvation, or any of the  
 millions of Hindu gods nailed to a cross to save worshipers?

The only way that Jesus could not condemn this young adulterous woman, was to die in her  
 place and take the just punishment for her sins on Himself

This is grace...*God's willing favor to take away our sins and guilt by the death of His Son*

The religious rulers put her in disgrace, her own adultery brought herself disgrace, separation  
 from grace, like a disjointed shoulder is a separated shoulder, out of joint

And what did she possibly do to merit, deserve, or earn the grace of Jesus Christ?

Nothing...yet He gave it to her, and I will tell you why He did, and Psalm 85:10 declares it  
 It is in Jesus that *"Steadfast love and faithfulness meet; righteousness and peace kiss each other."* **Psalm 85:10**

She sinned, she separated herself from God, justice must be done and justice was done

Jesus looked at her, extended the favor of His grace, and she would be 1 of millions whose sin,  
her sin of adultery, would be poured out on Him on that gloomy, dark Friday noon  
It would, for that moment, be as if He was the one thrown on the ground, caught in the act of  
adultery, and because of His saving grace, it would be as if she was the only one in the  
world who was without sin

For the first time in her life, the grace of God had set her truly free

Friends, God is gracious, His love so great for sinners that He is willing to die in our place so our  
sin and guilt could be taken away, that we may live free

Amen?

Pray