

Sermon: Finding Life in the Dust

Text: John 8:1-11

Discussion Questions:

Let's begin our discussion this morning by thinking in perhaps a little deeper way about **sin**—

- What are some of the various definitions of sin that you've heard through the years?
- What has shaped your understanding of sin? Has this changed at all throughout the years?
- How would you describe what sin is to a person who has absolutely no idea what the concept of sin is— has never heard of the Bible— and doesn't even have an understanding as to who God is?
- We've all heard the proverbial question: "If a tree falls in the forest and nobody hears it—does it make a sound?" Apply this to the question of sin: "Is something actually 'sinful' if nobody is around to see you do it...or nobody seems to get hurt by what you've done?"
- Is it possible to sin in such a way that nobody gets hurt?
- Do you think that some sins are worse than other sins? If not, why? If so, why?
- Jesus made it clear in Matthew 5-7 that sin isn't just something we DO—it's the way that we THINK ("You've heard it said not to commit adultery—but I tell you not to even think lustful thoughts"). What do you make of this? Why is something sinful when it's just a thought inside our heads that nobody even knows about?

Examination:

- Read **Deuteronomy 22:13-24**
 - How important was/is virginity in God's eyes?
 - How is virginity viewed in our current culture? How much has this changed over the past 10, 20, even 50 years?
 - What does your study bible say about the cloth (proof of virginity) in verse 17?
 - If there is no proof of her virginity (v. 20), the woman is to be stoned to death in the entrance to her father's house. How important is this proof of virginity?
 - How much incentive does all of this create for women to remain sexually pure prior to marriage?
 - How much incentive does all of this create for men to remain sexually pure prior to marriage? Does this seem fair or right?
 - The "price" that the man pays for lying (slandering) in this scenario is a hundred shekels of silver or 1.2 kilograms (v. 19)—which is equivalent to \$630 by today's Troy Ounce price. Adultery = Death; Slander = \$630 fine. Why do you think there's such a dramatic difference?
 - Do you think the fact that the man can't ever divorce the woman serves as a deterrent to slandering the chaste bride (v. 19)?
 - In order for a man to be found guilty of adultery, he must be caught in the act. Nonetheless—the man is to be put to death. What phrase appears in vv. 21, 22 & 24 that justifies this punishment?

- Why is the “in-town” virgin guilty in the scenario described in verses 23-24?
- Are we seeing any of these principles playing out in the current “#metoo movement” in America today?
- How important is it to rescue someone screaming for help (v. 27)?
- How often do you think it happens that people who are being sexually abused and violated—and who scream or cry out for help—go ignored? Why?
- Read **John 8:1-11**.
 - What do you think the teachers and Pharisees were trying to accomplish by bringing the woman to Jesus?
 - Check the one answer you think is best:
 - ___ 1. They wanted to uphold the Old Testament Law
 - ___ 2. They wanted to seek the woman’s forgiveness
 - ___ 3. They wanted to seek the woman’s death
 - ___ 4. They wanted to discredit Jesus and make him look bad
 - ___ 5. They wanted to impress the crowd concerning their own righteousness
 - Who do you think was foremost in the minds of these Pharisees while this entire scene was playing out?
 - Who was foremost in the mind of Jesus while this entire scene was playing out?
 - Based upon Deuteronomy 22:22, what should have happened in this scenario? Doesn’t it seem fishy that they would have even been able to “catch” this couple in the act of adultery? What are the chances that the man involved was one of their very own (meaning the woman, too, was caught in a trap)?
 - Verses 6 and 8 beg the age-old question: What do you think Jesus was writing? It’s your turn to venture your thoughts. What do you think and why?
 - How was this intended by the Pharisees to be a Catch 22 for Jesus?
 - How does Jesus spring the trap in verse 7? Why do you think the Pharisees and teachers leave rather than stone the woman? What would the woman guilty of adultery have felt?
 - What is the significance of Jesus’ question to the woman in verse 10? What was Jesus’ attitude toward her? Was He condoning the woman’s sin by not condemning her in verse 11?
 - What parallels are found in Jesus’ words to the man He healed in John 5:14 and the adulterous woman in John 8:11?
 - How does the way Jesus treated this woman help you face some of the sins you struggle with? Jesus loves and accepts us “as is.” Does that free you to change? Why?
 - What can we learn from Jesus about helping someone who has fallen?
 - What role does grace play in this entire account?

Application:

This story points us to the message of the whole New Testament: we are called to be holy as God is holy. God hates sin. But pursuing holiness without a profound experience of grace in our own lives produces hypocrisy and legalism. Jesus came into the world to provide that grace through His cross, and to establish holiness, righteousness, and justice on the foundation of our experience of His grace. Go to Jesus for grace today! And set your face to sin no more.