

Last week....

Condemnation is the enemy's currency. He will play your "caught" moment over and over again, hoping to catch you again. Not necessary in the same sin but the web of shame, fear and hopelessness. He will drag your past out and threaten to expose you, throw you under the bus, condemn you (and here's the real threat) **even if you are the only one that believes the accusations.**

For (too) many years I believed the lie that I was damaged goods...that I was beyond being loved. It whispered in my spirit every time I got close to someone. It said I was dangerous, not to be trusted and too far gone to know what love was truly about.

It took a miracle to set me free from those lies and it took a miracle to save the woman caught in adultery in the book of John. (Set up story)

Let's pick up the story again in John 8:10

Jesus stood up and said to her, "Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?"

The courtyard is empty and Jesus asks...where are your accusers? Is there anyone left to condemn you? Jesus has just performed spiritual circumcision on the hearts of the Pharisees and Scribes, teaching them a lesson on Jewish law and on God's mercy ... and now He seems surprised that they didn't hang around... What is Jesus up to here? I believe He has one more heart to try to reach.

"Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?"

She scans the courtyard, maybe lifting her eyes for the first time since she was dragged by the crowd and thrown before Jesus. She sees that Jesus is the only one left... How will she respond His questions? Will she trust that there was **TRULY no one** left that would pass judgment on her?

Jesus was the only one in the crowd that day who could, in perfect righteousness, pass judgment and order her death. And He was the only one who could, in perfect righteousness, pardon her. I think her response reveals her heart...she sees something in Jesus that was not in the heart of her accusers.

Verse 11

She said, "No one, Lord." And Jesus said, "Neither do I condemn you; go, and from now on sin no more."

This is a pivotal point in this woman's life. She called him **Lord (supreme authority)** a title used for God...she knew He was the only one who could condemn her, who could pass judgment...**and understood He wasn't there to condemn her...He was there to free her!**

Did you get that? I think sometimes some of us are still expecting Jesus to condemn us...and in some ways, we want Him to. After all (we think) we deserve it, just look at what we've done, how we have messed up and how bad we are. We start to hand out rocks to our adversary and prepared for a stoning...after all, we get what we deserve...right?

To look at Jesus as someone to cast the first stone is to have a warped idea of who God is. To believe that God is good/merciful/kind/faithful to everyone else but me, is accepting a lie, and it's also lining up before our enemy as target practice...and handing him the stones to throw.

Here is a huge question...what do you see when the accusations fly? Or more importantly... Who do you see?

Jesus response is clear...my death and resurrection has cleared courtyard of accusations...I do not condemn you...and I can hear Him following up with...why do you condemn yourself? Why do you believe a lie about me...about yourself?

Scripture describes Satan in three ways:

He is the tempter (Matt 4:3)

He is the accuser of the brethren (Rev 12:10)

He is the father of lies (John 8:44)

If I were to tempt you, you would know it. If I were to accuse you, you would know it. But if I were to deceive you, you wouldn't know it. The power of the enemy is in the lie. If you remove the lie you remove his power."

I believe if we see Jesus clearly, if we believe and trust in who He says He is... we can take powerful steps to leave sin and the effects of sin in the dust. This is the crossroads of freedom or captivity...whose words will we believe are true?

What does Jesus mean by to "go and sin no more?"

What is He supposed to say? 'Go your way and sin some more?' So when He commands her to "Go and sin no more." Why would He say this if it were impossible to stop sinning?

He did not say to her, "Go and sin no more, and if you don't sin, I will not condemn you." In that case, who could ever live up to that requirement?

Nor did He say, "Just go your merry way, and the next time you mess up, I just hope I'm there to bail you out again."

Of course not...He's calling her to a higher standard! He is not expecting that this woman is going to leave her sinful flesh at the door and never be tempted again...but **He knows she can be victorious over sin**. Jesus proclaimed something eternal in nature, something long lasting over her and us as well.

To "go and sin no more" is a call to become someone greater...an invitation to become His disciples, His sons and daughters ...into a deeper relationship with God.

"Neither do I condemn you. Now, as recognition of that, because I have freed you, go and sin no more."

Jesus is saying the same to us. It doesn't mean we have to be perfect, because no one is. It doesn't mean we need to be sinless. ***But it should mean we will sin less.*** Our goal is no longer to please ourselves but

to live a life pleasing to God. To leave our sins in the dust and walk in newness of life and a freedom that leaves the words of our accuser in the dust as well.

We need to remove the lie!

2 Corinthians 5:17

"Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new"

This Scripture reminds us that our identity should not be in what we were but who we are in Christ!

This is the key to beat back the accuser...to know who we are in Christ and respond the same way the woman did...Lord, there is no one left to accuse us!