

A summary of John 8:1-11

In John 8:1-11, a special situation of sin is exposed. How did Jesus deal with this situation, how did others deal with it, and how can we deal with it in our church life?

- 1. We are sinners who need to be saved by the Lord Jesus through His mercy and grace:** In each of the first seven chapters of John, Jesus reveals Himself as the Savior of sinners. In 1:29, He is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. In 2:19, He would die for us and be resurrected in three days in order to save whoever would believe in Him. In 3:3, all sinners need to be born again in order to see the kingdom of God. In 3:14-15, Jesus would be lifted up in the likeness of the serpent in the wilderness to die for our sin. Then in chapter 4, we see a sinful Samaritan woman, living in fornication (4:17-18), saved by Jesus, and then testifying concerning Jesus (4:28-29). In John 4:32, we see that the salvation of sinners was food to Jesus. In John 5:13-14, Jesus healed a man who was paralysed for 38 years because of sin. In 6:54, Jesus offered His flesh and His blood as food and drink for believers, signifying His death and resurrection for whoever would believe in Him to receive His eternal life. Then in 7:37-39, we see again that Jesus would die and resurrect, that whoever (sinners) would believe in Him would receive Him as the Spirit. Who are we? Only sinners saved by grace. What a salvation we have received!
- 2. Jesus did not condemn the sinful woman.** The Greek word for “condemn” in 8:11 is the same word that is used in Matthew 7:1 where it is translated as “judge.” In John 3:17, Jesus says that He did not come into the world to condemn the world, but that the world might be saved through Him. We can see Jesus’ living out of His word in His interaction with the Samaritan woman in chapter 4, and the paralysed man in chapter 5. In both cases, He did not condemn either individual, even in private. In both cases, His intention was to save them. This was His manner of life, to give life. What is our manner of life? Do we take the way of knowledge (the tree of knowledge of good and evil) to detect and point out faults of saints and try to correct them, or do we take the way of life? Practically, how can we avoid condemnation, or a condemning tone or attitude in the church life?
- 3. Testify Christ rather than try to explain the Bible and tell people what to do.** In our speaking and fellowship with brothers and sisters, we should focus more on testifying the Christ who has spoken to us, touched us, and had mercy on us. How much do we testify Christ in our experience? We need to testify the positive experiences of Christ, and avoid negative speaking that criticizes others or groups of people, or even the world. Our testimony is more necessary than our teaching. For example, we may want to criticize religious people, and even call them hypocrites, or we may criticize people who do not believe in Jesus, or who are in the world. We must be careful. We were exactly like the ones we criticize, and we may still be! Amazingly, even Jesus, in 8:1-11, did not criticize the scribes and Pharisees who were trying to “tempt” Him. Surely He knew their intentions. He should have exposed them and publicly humiliated them. Rather, He did not say anything to them or concerning them, except to ask whoever was without sin to throw the first stone, and then to ask the woman if anyone had accused her. What a tender humanity. Such an attitude and living touched all concerned in this story. The woman was convicted and saved. The scribes and Pharisees were touched in their conscience and left, one by one, from the oldest to the youngest, without any

condemnation. This shows that we need to trust the Lord in every situation where we may be tempted to criticize or expose some kind of bad behavior. We must be in fear and trembling. Anything negative we say may cause someone to stumble.

- 4. Go to saints individually to know them, rather than condemn them.** As we have seen, Jesus went to the Samaritan woman and the paralysed man in private. Even in private, He did not condemn them. The woman in chapter 8 was brought to Him in public. Jesus did not talk to her in public but waited till everyone had left, then talked to her. Do we go to saints individually, to know them and testify to them of who Christ is to us? Or do we condemn them for not “seeing the light,” and then try to correct them? To have this kind of attitude, we need to deny ourselves and carry our cross, to live a crucified life (John 7:39). Otherwise, we may think that we are right and others are wrong, or in the world, or in the flesh. We may think that the rivers of living water are flowing out of us as we speak and correct people. We need the mercy of the Lord again and again to die to ourselves, and attach ourselves to the saints so that we would know them, and not condemn them.
- 5. Do not abide in sin (8:11). Otherwise the Lord may discipline us.** Jesus told the woman to sin no more. He did not overlook or condone the sin. Yes, He died on the cross for our sins to forgive us and cleanse us once for all. But our living must please Him. If we continue to abide in sin, the church life will become lawless and chaotic. The Lord will discipline us. Discipline is quite different from condemnation. Condemnation is done out of anger and self-righteousness. Discipline is done out of love, for perfecting. Just as parents discipline their children out of love, the Lord will discipline us out of love. Peter was disciplined many times by the Lord. The goal is that we would know the Lord and know who we are. We are only sinners. We should never run away from discipline. If we abide in sin, or depart from the Lord’s heart’s desire, we must realize that the Lord will not let us go. He will discipline us because He loves us, so we can be perfected.
- 6. How do we fellowship certain portions of the Bible, especially the Old Testament, with new believers and gospel friends?** The scribes and Pharisees, in 8:5, quoted Moses’ injunction to stone an adulterous person. This is a hard scripture to understand. There are several such portions of the Old Testament which seem hard to take and understand, and might even be frightening to new believers. How do we fellowship such portions? We need to follow Jesus’ way, to bring people to Jesus Christ as grace and reality (John 1:14). We are living in the age of grace. Such a grace is available to us in Jesus. The Lord’s mercy and forgiveness is always ready to flow to us. We need wisdom and also intimacy with the gospel friends to be able to fellowship in this way. We need to preach the gospel and know the gospel friends so we can have a word of love and a word of grace. Otherwise, when we fellowship, and we do not know people, our words may stumble others and not give life. May the Lord have mercy on us to draw us and speak to us to contact people, be with them and know them. May we testify the Christ who is living and real to us, so that others may be drawn to Him, His word, and the saints.