

Weekly Devotional by Pastor Ken Nabi

April 19, 2010

No Condemnation

"Has no one condemned you? 'No one, sir'. . . Then neither do I condemn you." John 8:10

This is one of the most colorful passages in the gospels about sin, grace, and the freedom Jesus offers to broken people. You have all heard this story at some point. It is about the woman "caught in adultery" and brought to Jesus by the Pharisees and they want to know what verdict he'll issue. They think they have him trapped. How pathetic that these religious leaders use this broken woman's sin for their political positioning. She is just a pawn in a much larger charade. They are trying to put Jesus and his message of grace out to pasture once and for all. Deep down, they think Jesus is a wimp.

In one of his most creative approaches, the text tells us that Jesus knelt down, wrote in the dirt, and then offered his absolutely riveting statement: "if any one of you is without sin, let him be the first to throw a stone at her (John 8:7)." I can hear the deafening silence as the collective gasp of the Pharisees who are now themselves in a double bind. Throw a stone and they are stating they are sin free which everyone knows is false. Drop their stone and confess that they too are sinners. The tension builds and ultimately everyone departs leaving Jesus with a pile of rocks and this woman—just the two of them.

Jesus could have thrown the stone. He was the only one in the crowd who was sin free. He could legitimately pass judgment on her and take all the previously held stones and begun to hurl them at her body. But, he does not do that at all. He asks a gentle and tender question that breaks the silence—"has no one condemned you?" All those who wanted her condemned for her sin became painfully aware of their own sin and could not pass judgment on her. Amazingly, no one was still there passing condemnation. Then, Jesus offers her grace—the message every broken sinner desperately wants to hear but thinks they do not deserve to hear. "Neither do I condemn you. Go and sin no more." Jesus pardons her. What powerful words of admonition.

She walks away having looked death in the eyes as a woman now having a second chance on life. She is free. This is what grace does. Grace gives life transformation a chance in unlikely candidates. Those of us who have tasted of this grace must never slip into the seat of judgment and become unaware of our own ongoing need for grace. Grace through faith changes you not just once for all eternity, but every day for the rest of your life. The Apostle Paul says in Romans 8:1 "...there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus."

I try to never forget what my life might be like without the grace of God poured out into my soul. He could condemn me a thousand times if he so chose. But when we draw near to Jesus in faith, He forgives us fresh and new cleansing us from the guilt of our own sin. I think grace is the reason why I love to help broken people. I am reminded of my own need for grace, love and forgiveness when I hear their tragedies.

What about you? Do you need to stand before Jesus caught in your own sin, deserving judgment and condemnation, only to hear the freeing words of our savior: "neither do I condemn you. Go

and sin no more.” Freshly visit the throne of grace today seeking a renewed cleansing from your junk in life. Now, go and sin no more.

Prayer: Father, I am so sorry for my sin. Please forgive me. Thank you for not condemning me for my sin and for extending grace to me that I do not deserve. Lord, help me to feel the power of your forgiveness and grace. Change and transform me today as I seek to walk in the simple admonition to live a changed life.

Your Partner in the Gospel – *Ken Nabi*