

“Case Dismissed”

John 8:1-11

Introduction

The answers on multiple-choice tests are typically A, B, C or D. Sometimes, however, the true answer lies outside the list of the options offered. When Jesus faced a test in John 8, He knew the truth was not found in either of the options presented to Him by the Scribes and Pharisees. They attempted to trick Jesus by bringing before Him a court case against a woman caught in adultery. They offered Jesus two choices: condemn the woman or release her. If Jesus chose to release her, they would accuse Him of disobeying the Mosaic Law. However, if Jesus decided to condemn her, He would disobey Rome by calling for capital punishment, a punishment that Jews were not permitted to practice under Roman rule. It seemed that the Scribes and Pharisees had Jesus in a no-win situation. Likewise, Satan tries to put God’s truth—and thus God’s people—in no-win situations by creating contradictory scenarios.

Jesus revealed the contradiction in the case and corrected the misapplication of the Law. According to the Mosaic Law, both parties should have been brought forward for judgment. However, the Scribes and Pharisees brought only the woman and not the man, exposing their lack of sincerity in their alleged pursuit of justice. Jesus then revealed Himself to be the author of the Law by writing on the ground, visually referencing the creation of man out of the dirt and when God wrote the Ten Commandments for the Israelites. God designed the Law to reveal man’s fallen state and thus lead them to turn away from their sin. Sinful men cannot outsmart God regarding His own Law. Instead, Jesus comes to the defense of those who others have condemned through the misuse of God’s Word.

The answer to this case is not condemnation but compassion. Jesus removed the woman’s accusers by reminding them of their own sin and canceling their consequences. He showed her great compassion and mercy, but He also charged her to sin no more. When we receive God’s compassion and mercy, our response should be to stop doing what caused us to sin in the first place. Mercy is not an encouragement to sin even more; it is a reason to live righteously for God’s kingdom! We should never abuse the mercy of God by continuing in the things for which He has forgiven us. Show God how grateful you are for His mercy by living a life characterized by forgiveness, compassion and freedom from sin.

Getting Started

1. Have you ever been in or witnessed a no-win situation? How did you or the other person solve the problem?
2. What is the difference between compassion and mercy? What are ways that people can show mercy?

Let’s Get Personal

1. How have you personally experienced God’s compassion and mercy? Have you fully embraced God’s compassion, or do you find it hard to believe that He can be so merciful to you?
 2. How would others describe you? Would they say that your life is marked by compassion, mercy and forgiveness? Why or why not?
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3. What sins have you overcome? What sins do you still go back to even though God's Word has told you to sin no more?

Take the Next Step

1. Do you know someone who needs compassion? How can you demonstrate God's compassion to them this week?
2. What sins are still a trap for you? Develop a plan with your accountability partner this week for how you can loosen the stronghold that sin has in your life.
3. How should you demonstrate your gratitude to God for His compassion daily?
4. Want to go deeper? Take time to look at the following passages: Exodus 31:18; 34:1; Leviticus 20:10; Deuteronomy 22:22; Jeremiah 3:24-25; Matthew 7:1-6; John 10:10; Romans 6:1-7; 8:1, 32-34.

Renew Your Mind

*"Straightening up, Jesus said to her, 'Woman, where are they? Did no one condemn you?'
She said, 'No one, Lord.' And Jesus said, 'I do not condemn you, either.
Go. From now on sin no more.'"*

John 8:10-11
