

Summary

This sermon explores the story of the woman caught in adultery from John 8, focusing on the theme of deserving condemnation but receiving mercy instead. Pastor Mark shares a personal story about lying on a car title and receiving grace instead of the lecture he deserved, setting up the central message. The sermon examines how Jesus responds to the woman's shame and condemnation with mercy, demonstrating God's character of withholding deserved punishment and showing compassion instead. The message addresses the destructive nature of shame, distinguishing between godly guilt that leads to repentance and evil shame that destroys freedom. Jesus sees beyond our guilt and shame, offering mercy that leads to redemption and a new way of living.

Intro Prayer

Heavenly Father, we come before You today with open hearts, ready to receive what You want to teach us through Your Word. We acknowledge that we all fall short and have been caught in sin, yet we know You are a God of mercy and grace. Help us to be vulnerable and honest as we gather together in this small group. Open our minds to understand Your truth and our hearts to receive Your love. Show us how to apply what we learn to our daily lives. We ask that You would speak to each person here in the way they need to hear from You today. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Ice Breaker

What's the most embarrassing thing you've ever been 'caught' doing - whether as a child or adult? (Keep it light and fun!)

Key Verses

1. John 8:2-11
2. Romans 8:1
3. 2 Corinthians 5:19
4. Psalm 103:8
5. Romans 2:4

Questions

1. How do you think the woman felt when she was dragged before the crowd? Can you relate to feeling exposed or ashamed in front of others?
2. Why do you think the religious leaders only brought the woman and not the man who was also involved in adultery? What does this reveal about their motives?
3. What's the difference between guilt and shame as described in the sermon? Can you think of

examples of each in your own life?

4. Jesus wrote on the ground twice during this encounter. What do you think He might have been writing, and why was this action significant?
5. 'shame grows best in the dark.' How have you seen this to be true, and what does it mean to bring shame into the light?
6. When Jesus said 'Neither do I condemn you,' how do you think this changed the woman's understanding of herself and her future?
7. What does it mean to 'go and leave your life of sin'? Is this about behavior modification or something deeper?
8. How can we as a church community be more like Jesus in showing mercy rather than condemnation to those who are struggling with sin?

Life Application

This week, identify one area of shame in your life that you've been keeping in the dark. Take the three steps mentioned in the sermon: 1) Name the shame internally, 2) Talk about it with someone you trust, and 3) Consider how God might use your story to help others. If you're not ready for all three steps, start with step one - simply naming and acknowledging the shame before God in prayer.

Key Takeaways

1. We all deserve condemnation for our sin, but Jesus offers mercy instead
2. Shame attacks our God-given identity as sons and daughters, while guilt leads us to repentance
3. Jesus sees beyond our guilt and shame to who we truly are and who we can become
4. Shame grows in darkness but loses its power when brought into the light through naming it, talking about it, and eventually sharing our story
5. There is no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus - we are free to live a new life

Ending Prayer

Lord Jesus, thank You for the incredible mercy You showed the woman caught in adultery and the same mercy You show us every day. Help us to truly believe that there is no condemnation for those who are in You. Where shame has taken root in our lives, give us courage to bring it into the light. Help us to forgive ourselves as You have forgiven us, and to walk in the freedom You've provided. May we be people who extend mercy to others just as You have shown mercy to us. Transform our shame into testimonies of Your grace. We commit to leaving behind the old life of sin and walking in the new life You've given us. In Your precious name, Amen.