

Right Side Up in an Upside Down World

Connect Group Guide - 10.21.26

Opening Prayer

Key Scripture

• John 8:1-11

Message Recap

In this message, Pastor Mike explored how Jesus turns an upside down world right side up. Through the story of the woman caught in adultery, we see the danger of pride and accusation, the power of grace, and the call to a transformed life. The religious leaders used a broken person to trap Jesus, but He turned the examination back on their own hearts. Jesus did not excuse the woman's sin or define her by it. He offered forgiveness and called her forward into a new way of living.

Key Takeaways

- **Jesus turns the world right side up.** The world is upside down not because Jesus failed, but because sin distorted God's design. Jesus came to set things right.
- **Examine your own heart first.** It is easy to point the finger at culture, government, and media. The harder question is whether the same upside down spirit can operate inside the church.
- **Accountability should seek restoration.** The religious leaders in John 8 used the language of righteousness while operating with a corrupt motive. Accountability and humiliation are not the same thing.
- **Jesus does not define us by our sin.** He did not excuse the woman's sin, but He also did not define her by it. He extended grace and called her to transformation.
- **Grace meets us where we are.** But it never leaves us there. Jesus offers forgiveness and calls us to a transformed life.

Discussion Questions

Opening Questions

1. Pastor Mike opened the message with a reflection on how much the world has changed over the past 40 years. What is one change you have seen in culture - for better or for worse - that stands out to you most?

Going Deeper:

2. Isaiah 5:20 describes a world that calls evil good and good evil. Where do you see that most clearly in today's culture? Where do you see it showing up closer to home - in your community or even in the church?
3. The Pharisees brought the woman to Jesus not out of concern for righteousness, but to trap him. They used a broken person as a prop. Have you ever witnessed someone use another person's failure to advance their own agenda? How did it affect those involved?
4. Pastor Mike drew a distinction between exposing wrongdoing to protect people and exposing wrongdoing because you enjoy watching someone fall. How do you personally discern the difference in your own heart when you feel the urge to share something about someone else?
5. Jesus turned the examination back on the accusers by saying that the one without sin should throw the first stone. Romans 2:1 warns against judging others while practicing the same things ourselves. In what areas of life do you find it easiest to see someone else's failure clearly while overlooking your own?
6. Pastor Mike mentioned that many people say, "When I get some things cleaned up, then I can come to church." Have you ever felt that way, or have you heard someone express that? What does John 8 say to that kind of thinking?
7. Jesus told the woman that he did not condemn her, and then immediately told her to go and sin no more. Why are both parts of that statement necessary? What happens when a church only emphasizes one without the other?
8. Pastor Mike said, "You are not defined by what you did." Is there a past mistake or season of life that you have allowed to define your identity more than the grace of God? How does this passage speak to that?

9. Jesus showed the woman both truth and grace at the same time. Which one comes more naturally to you - speaking truth or extending grace? How can your group help each other grow in the area that is harder?
10. Pastor Mike challenged the group to think about the people sitting around them as divine appointments, not accidents. Who in your life right now might God be calling you to love first before you ever speak a word of correction or truth?

Practical Applications

Choose one or more of the following to practice before your group meets again.

- **For those who relate to the accusers.** Take an honest inventory this week. When you find yourself frustrated with someone else's failure or sin, pause and ask yourself: What is my motive right now? Am I seeking restoration or satisfaction? Write down what you discover and bring it to God in prayer.
- **For those who relate to the woman.** If there is a sin, a habit, or a past failure that you have been carrying as your identity, write it down on a piece of paper. Then write John 8:11 in your own words next to it as a reminder that Jesus both forgives and calls you forward. Consider sharing this with a trusted person in your group for accountability.
- **For the whole group.** Identify one person in your life who might feel too broken or too far gone to walk through the doors of a church. Commit to praying for that person by name every day this week. Then take one practical step - a phone call, a meal, a simple act of kindness - to show them the love of Christ before you say a single word about faith.

Prayer Requests & Closing

- Ask God to reveal any areas of pride or accusation in your own heart.
- Thank God for grace that meets us where we are and does not leave us there.
- Pray for the courage to extend the same grace to others that you have received from Christ.
- Ask for wisdom to know the difference between accountability that restores and humiliation that destroys.

John 8:11 - Reflect on Jesus telling the woman that he does not condemn her, and his call for her to go and no longer continue in sin. Carry both the forgiveness and the call to transformation with you through the week.