Exploring the Bible—Gospel of John (9)

The Need of Those under the Bondage of Sin

**Scripture Reading:**

1 But Jesus went to the Mount of Olives. 2 And early in the morning He came again into the temple, and all the people came to Him, and He sat down and taught them. 3 And the scribes and Pharisees brought a woman caught in adultery, and having set her in the midst, 4 They said to Him, Teacher, this woman has been caught committing adultery, in the very act. 5 Now in the law, Moses commanded us to stone such women. What then do You say? 6 But they said this to tempt Him, so that they might have reason to accuse Him. But Jesus stooped down and wrote with His finger on the ground. 7 But when they persisted in questioning Him, He stood up and said to them, He who is without sin among you, let him be the first to throw a stone at her. 8 And again He stooped down and wrote on the ground. 9 And when they heard that, they went out one by one, beginning with the older ones. And Jesus was left alone, and the woman stood where she was, in the midst. 10 And Jesus stood up and said to her, Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you? 11 And she said, No one, Lord. And Jesus said, Neither do I condemn you; go, and from now on sin no more. 12 Again therefore Jesus spoke to them, saying, I am the light of the world; he who follows Me shall by no means walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life. (John 8:1-12)

**Ministry Reading:**

ONLY THE LORD JESUS BEING SINLESS YET NOT CONDEMNING MAN

Only the Lord Jesus is sinless and qualified to condemn man, yet He did not condemn the woman. The Lord Jesus asked the crowd who opposed Him, “Which of you convicts Me of sin?” (v. 46). Here we see a stark contrast. A large crowd surrounded the Lord Jesus to ensnare Him. When He countered their question by asking who is without sin, they could not stand. They sensed their sinfulness and fled. Eventually, the Lord Jesus stood before the crowd and asked, “Which of you convicts Me of sin?” Dare we ask such a question? If we would ask such a question, I believe that all our acquaintances would testify against us. However, when the Lord Jesus confronted His opposers and faultfinders, no one could testify of any sin in Him. This proves that in the universe He alone is sinless.

Since the Lord Jesus is the only sinless One, only He is qualified to condemn others. The self-righteous scribes and Pharisees condemned others, but they too were sinful before God; they were not qualified to condemn others. In the universe only the Lord Jesus is without sin; therefore, only He is qualified to condemn us. Even though the Lord is qualified to condemn us, He said to the woman, “Neither do I condemn you” (v. 11). God did not send Him into the world to condemn the world but “that the world might be saved through Him” (3:17).

The scribes and Pharisees left one by one because their conscience was convicted. Only the sinful woman and the Lord Jesus were left. She probably thought, “I escaped the condemnation of one group of people, but I may not escape the condemnation of Jesus.” She might still have been in fear and trembling, waiting for judgment. In that quiet and tense atmosphere the Lord Jesus stood up and asked, “Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?” (8:10). The Lord Jesus seemed to say, “These people caught you in order to condemn you, but where are they now? Have they all gone away because of my question to them? No one remains to condemn you.” In response to the Lord’s question, “Has no one condemned you?” the woman answered, “No one, Lord” (v. 11). Her reply was short, but it is very meaningful. She did not call the Lord Jesus “Teacher,” like the scribes and the Pharisees (v. 4). She called the Lord Jesus “Lord.” She must have called Him Lord because she had observed that He was extraordinary. She saw that the scribes and the Pharisees, who were respected by all, could not stand up to just one question from Jesus. She saw how they came with a haughty and imposing air to question the Lord Jesus and sentence her to death. But they all left when He questioned them. She saw that the crowd wanted to deal with Him, but instead, they were dealt with by Him and lost their footing. Therefore, she must have thought that Jesus was an extraordinary man with authority over people. Hence, she called Him “Lord.” When she called Him “Lord,” she acknowledged that He is the Lord.

She might have thought that although those people did not condemn her, the Lord would. She must have been quite fearful, waiting for the Lord’s condemnation. To her surprise, however, the Lord Jesus said to her, “Neither do I condemn you.” Please pay attention to the word neither. The Lord Jesus seemed to be saying, “None of them condemned you, and neither do I condemn you. They did not condemn you, because they are sinful. They sinned and are sinful; therefore, they cannot condemn you. I am without sin, and I have never sinned. I could condemn you, but neither will I condemn you.” This must have given such comfort and release to that sinful woman who was in fear and trembling. It was the gospel, a tiding of great joy, to her.

What sweet words: “Neither do I condemn you”! What a loving voice! This is truly the gospel. The I in neither do I condemn you is the God of heaven. He became a man, came to the earth, stood in front of a great sinner, and said to her, “Neither do I condemn you.” No one in the human race is qualified to condemn man but the Lord Jesus. However, neither does He condemn us. This is the gospel! Although He is able to condemn, He does not condemn. Do you sense that you are sinful? Are you grieved and sorrowful over your sins? Does your conscience convict you? Please listen to the words of the Lord Jesus: “Neither do I condemn you.”

Question for Discussion: What should we do when we realize that we are under the bondage of sin?

Reference: *Changing Death into Life,* Ch. 7.