

Lessons Learned from the Pharisees
"A Heart That Delights in Mercy"
John 8:1-11

Introduction:

1. Do you know who in the Bible is given the title of "*the accuser of our brethren?*" It is none other than Satan himself (**Revelation 12:10**). He is said to accuse them "*before our God day and night.*"
 - Satan is all about accusing and condemning. He delights in these two things.
2. Jesus told the Pharisees in **John 8:44**, "*Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do.*" Therefore it is no great surprise that we see the Pharisees constantly in the "accuse and condemn" mode. **Mark 3:1-6; Luke 11:53-54, 23:2, 14**
3. **John 8:1-11** is another example of this. The Pharisees bring a woman to Christ who supposedly has been taken in adultery. They are not only eager to accuse and condemn her, but are hopeful that they can use the occasion to accuse and condemn Christ also.
4. The Pharisees were a miserable bunch. They were the religious gestapo of Israel during the time of Christ. Their lives were consumed with accusing and condemning people.
5. Unfortunately, many Christians live this way today. They are ever watchful to find a flaw in others, a crack in their armor, some sin or inconsistency. And then they are eager to pounce on it, and condemn them, being the judge and jury all in one.
6. Many Christians are very caustic towards the lost. They seem to have the attitude, "I hope they get what is coming to them." They seem eager to have them judged and condemned by God. This is the Pharisee coming out.
7. There is another way to live life. Instead of delighting in accusation and condemnation (like Satan and the Pharisees), we delight in mercy (like God). **Micah 7:18**
8. There is a valuable lesson we can learn from the Pharisees here in this text. We must learn to delight in mercy. Why is this so crucial?

First, because it delivers us from hypocrisy

1. It is interesting that the Pharisees bring this woman to Jesus and act as if it is because they are very zealous to keep Moses' law. vs. 1-5
 - What did Moses' law say about this issue? **Leviticus 20:10; Deuteronomy 22:22**
 - What was missing here? - The guilty man.
 - Could it be that it was a set up? Could it be that they let the man go because he might have had some dirty laundry on them?
2. Jesus brings to the surface their hypocrisy as the story continues. vs. 7-9
 - They were all guilty of breaking Moses' law. They were all guilty of death. Not a one of them was innocent. All they did was hang their heads and leave the room.
3. Paul hit the nail on the head in **Romans 2:17-23**. We love mercy when it comes to our sin, but judgment and condemnation for others. This is sheer hypocrisy.

4. If **you** want mercy, you must allow it for all. We can't accept mercy and forgiveness for our sins and then desire condemnation for other people's sins. This is very inconsistent and hypocritical.
5. To me, one of the greatest examples in the Bible of a man who delighted in mercy was Barnabas. He exhibited this attitude with Paul (**Acts 9:26-27**), with the Gentile converts in Antioch (**Acts 11:23**), and with John Mark (**Acts 15:36-39**).

Second, because it reflects the character of our Father

1. Earlier in **Micah 7:18** we read that God "*delighteth in mercy.*"
 - The word "delighteth" means that God is inclined towards it and is pleased with it.
 - What picture do you have of God? He is in heaven, angry and mad, with a frown all the time. He loves hurling darts at bad people. When somebody does turn in faith to Him, He reluctantly and begrudgingly forgives them.
2. This is so wrong. The Bible pictures God as a God who is grieved by sin, but absolutely delights in being able to show mercy and give forgiveness to people. He is eager and ready and pleased to show mercy. **Exodus 34:6; Psalm 103:8; Luke 6:36; Romans 11:32**
3. Paul pictures God as rich in mercy towards those who are lost in sin. **Ephesians 2:2-5**
4. Did you know that we are to reflect the character of our Father? **Ephesians 4:32**
5. How do I learn to delight in mercy towards others? **Titus 3:1-5** has the answer. I remember the mercy God has shown me. God didn't save me based on any merit on my part. There was nothing good or noble in me to set me apart. It was sheer mercy.
6. What a shame when believers give the image of being angry people that desire God's judgment on the wicked and lost. They want God to bring judgment **now**. They want to see justice done and see God get even.
 - This isn't the Day of Judgment; this is the day of salvation and grace. This isn't the Day of Judgment for sinners; this is the day of grace offered to sinners.
7. Christians can get very cynical and forget where we came from. We can sit around loathing the fact that the world is wicked and evil. What we should be doing is marveling at the mercy of God who allows it to continue.
 - Every day that judgment is delayed is another opportunity for a sinner to turn to Christ and be saved.
8. Remember Jonah? He didn't want to go to Nineveh - the bunch of pagan, wicked reprobates. Even after they turned in faith to God, he still wasn't happy. In fact, he reveals that this was precisely the reason he didn't want to go. **Jonah 4:2**
9. Jonah was not reflecting the character of his God in heaven. I'm afraid many times we are like Jonah. We forget the heart and passion of our Father. **2 Peter 3:9**
 - Pharisees don't mind "good people" getting saved, but the thought of murderers, rapists, child molesters, prostitutes, terrorists getting saved doesn't sit well with the Pharisee.
 - But God will have all men to be saved. **1 Timothy 2:4**

Third, because it changes the lives of others

1. Jesus talks to this woman personally after everybody else leaves. He takes a personal interest in her. He could have just gotten up and left also. But He frees her. He sets her free from bondage and she left a different person. vs. 9-11
2. Jesus said, "*For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved.*" **John 3:17**
3. As you examine the life of Christ, one thing stands out clearly. He was so merciful. He was merciful to people that nobody else cared about. As a result, Christ saw so many lives touched and changed.
4. Think about Paul. He was Saul of Tarsus - a blaspheming, violent, abusive man that imprisoned, beat, and killed believers. But Paul said, "*I obtained mercy.*" His life was forever changed.
5. As we demonstrate the mercy of our Father and Savior, God can use us in mighty ways to impact souls and lives. But when our lives are like the Pharisee and we delight in accusation and condemnation, we alienate everybody around us.
6. May we decide tonight that we, by God's grace, will delight in mercy!