

Pleasant Valley
Church of Christ

3317 Amidon
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(316) 838-4195
www.letjesusleadus.org

Schedule of Services

Sunday

Classes 9:30 am
Worship 10:30 am
Evening 6:00 pm

Wednesday

Classes 7:30 pm

The Pleasant Valley Church of Christ is a non-denominational group of believers who are committed to following Jesus in our attitudes, our relationships, and our worship. If you want the same thing in your life, please contact us. We'd like to help.

Unless otherwise noted, all scripture quotations are from the New King James Version Bible, Thomas Nelson Publishers.

Wings



*"But those who wait on the Lord shall renew their strength;
they shall mount up with wings like eagles" (Isaiah 40:31)*

October 7, 2007

Casting stones

by David King

"Then the scribes and Pharisees brought to Him a woman caught in adultery. And when they had set her in the midst, they said to Him, 'Teacher, this woman was caught in adultery, in the very act. Now Moses, in the law, commanded us that such should be stoned. But what do You say?' . . . So when they continued asking Him, He raised Himself up and said to them, 'He who is without sin among you, let him throw a stone at her first'" (Jn. 8:3-5,7).

This story has been adopted as the poster child for our non-judgmental culture. None of us is perfect; thus, none of us has any right to criticize others for their behavior. We must be willing to tolerate whatever others choose to do; after all, who are we to judge?

The result, of course, is an amoral society that not only tolerates but openly embraces the most vile behavior as perfectly normal.

Is this what Jesus had in mind when He challenged his accusers to cast the first stone? To answer this question, let's take a closer look at the story.

First, consider the motives of Jesus' critics. These men were not concerned about public morality, or even the fate of the poor woman whose error was being put on public display. As John comments, "This they said, testing Him, that they might have something of which to accuse Him" (v. 6). The whole episode was an elaborately staged setup, designed to entrap Jesus in a no-win predicament. Whatever His response, He would either be in violation of Moses' law, or get in trouble with the Roman overlords. It was a perfect trap.

Of course, they didn't count on the response Jesus gave. His challenge to cast the first stone only if sinless forced them to adjudicate the woman's case in the light of their own behavior. In fact, some commentators argue that this is evidence that Jesus' critics may even have been complicit in setting up the adulterous affair to begin with.

In other words, Jesus was chiding them not to condemn others for the same sins they themselves were guilty of. He was rebuking hypocrisy, not prohibiting all judgment.

But more significantly, those who love to quote Jesus here fail to finish the quote. After disarming His critics, Jesus then addressed the woman: "Neither do I condemn you; go and sin no more" (v. 11). Jesus indeed forgave the woman, but He also admonished her to change her behavior. What she had done was (gasp!) a **sin**. Not comfortable with that term? Then let's try another: it was wrong, evil, bad, it transgressed God's law. Whatever you choose to call it, Jesus judged her behavior as unacceptable, and demanded that she stop it.

When studied as a whole, the story of the woman taken in adultery provides a perfect illustration of how the gospel works. It emphasizes all the key elements of the gospel: forgiveness ("neither do I condemn you"), repentance ("go and sin no more"), and charity ("he who is without sin among you, let him throw a stone at her first"). No doubt, we must be careful and kind when criticizing others; but we must also acknowledge the high standard of conduct to which all of us are accountable.