

REFLECTIONS

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"Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?"

"No one, sir," she said.

"Then neither do I condemn you," Jesus declared. "Go now and leave your life of sin."

John 8:10-11

Repentance

An angry crowd had formed. A woman had been discovered in the act of a capital offense and the crowd, justified in their own self-righteousness, could not wait to test how Jesus would respond to such a sinner. Surely He would agree that she should be put to death on the spot as the law required for adulterous women. But Jesus was not to be trapped so easily. He cast her sin not in the light of the law alone, but in the light of other sins and sinners as well. The crowd disbursed and thus dropped their charges.

No high profile attorney in our day could have done a better job in her defense; but in so doing, Jesus did not justify her act. When the crowd had gone He said, **"Go now and leave your life of sin."**

The woman had been forgiven of a capital offense. The sole penalty for her crime was the command to change her ways. The Bible does not tell us for sure, but it seems likely she did. Yet I wonder if she would have done so today. I wonder if she would have searched for a reason to justify her lifestyle instead of being repentant of it.

Repentance is a sermon message often preached by John the Baptist. And even in more recent times, pulpits once abounded with appeals for repentance. But the repentance sermon is not preached as much anymore, and even less often is the message heeded.

In today's world angry crowds might be just as likely to convict as they did in Jesus' day; but the convicted are not so likely to repent. Today's movement is much more likely to seek justification for misbehavior than to repent and change the ways. Yet, changes are readily made to become more attractive, to gain more wealth, or to achieve public acclaim. But when caught in transgressions—well, the popular choice is to place blame on someone else, or on circumstances, or even on genetic makeup. But regardless of the cause, sins are not justifiable to God.

Jesus loves us and forgives us, but His forgiveness of sins does not justify them. We express love for Him with repentance. And with it, we bring glory to His name.

"You are the light of the world,"

Richard +

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