***Shiloh United Methodist Church***

John 8:1-11 Rev. Tyler Amundson January 19, 2020

***Forgiving Yourself***

# John 8:1-11 Common English Bible (CEB)

**8 1**And Jesus went to the Mount of Olives. **2**Early in the morning he returned to the temple. All the people gathered around him, and he sat down and taught them. **3**The legal experts and Pharisees brought a woman caught in adultery. Placing her in the center of the group,**4**they said to Jesus, “Teacher, this woman was caught in the act of committing adultery. **5**In the Law, Moses commanded us to stone women like this. What do you say?” **6**They said this to test him, because they wanted a reason to bring an accusation against him. Jesus bent down and wrote on the ground with his finger.

**7**They continued to question him, so he stood up and replied, “Whoever hasn’t sinned should throw the first stone.” **8**Bending down again, he wrote on the ground. **9**Those who heard him went away, one by one, beginning with the elders. Finally, only Jesus and the woman were left in the middle of the crowd.

**10**Jesus stood up and said to her, “Woman, where are they? Is there no one to condemn you?”

**11**She said, “No one, sir.”

Jesus said, “Neither do I condemn you. Go, and from now on, don’t sin anymore.”

Over January we are exploring forgiveness. We are taking a whole month to dive into this for 2 reasons: 1. We are entering a contentious year for us as a nation and church. I believe as your pastor that it is my job to root myself and this congregation in deeply rooted Christian principles. Forgiveness is one of those practices that goes back to the teachings of Jesus. 2. This is one of the most important life skills we can learn to stay centered in the love of God, Jesus taught it and we serve ourselves and the world better by learning a skill that benefits us in so many ways.

And a reminder of where to find where this scripture is rooted in our daily practice…

The Lord’s Prayer. “Forgives us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us.” There is something powerful in that prayer about first recognizing God’s greatness, allowing God to shape us, give us enough, and then recognizing that we have to be forgiven and forgive to live into this. Forgiveness is an ancient part of what it means to be transformed in the life, death and resurrection of Christ.

You have all heard this story, and if you haven’t heard it you have seen it in one of the emails that says if you don’t love Jesus enough you won’t forward it…

One night I dreamed a dream.  
As I was walking along the beach with my Lord.  
Across the dark sky flashed scenes from my life.  
For each scene, I noticed two sets of footprints in the sand,  
One belonging to me and one to my Lord.

After the last scene of my life flashed before me,  
I looked back at the footprints in the sand.  
I noticed that at many times along the path of my life,  
especially at the very lowest and saddest times,  
there was only one set of footprints.

This really troubled me, so I asked the Lord about it.  
"Lord, you said once I decided to follow you,  
You'd walk with me all the way.  
But I noticed that during the saddest and most troublesome times of my life,  
there was only one set of footprints.  
I don't understand why, when I needed You the most, You would leave me."

He whispered, "My precious child, I love you and will never leave you  
Never, ever, during your trials and testings.  
When you saw only one set of footprints,  
It was then that I carried you."

Butt prints in the sand…

Forgiveness is a deeply held Christian belief, but I think for many of us we have picked up a lot of knowledge about forgiveness from popular culture. I think the primary thing we have picked up is that forgiveness is somehow earned, that to receive forgiveness even from God we have to pay a debt in some ledger that even God is keeping.

Jesus doesn’t emphasize a debt paid, instead he insists on the relationship God has with us…ongoing…and available despite anything that separates us from God and life, in the Bible the word sin is placed here.

I want to take a moment and define sin, and one that I hold in my ministry and practice as a Christian. It is anything that separates us from relationship with God or others.

The other thing we need to remember is forgiveness is not just an individual act…it is community driven too. Forgiveness our ability to forgive others and the need for us to forgive ourselves directly relates to the health of our community.

If we can forgive others…conflict is constructive. We learn how we have hurt others and we grow from it, hopefully inviting others to move with us the second time if we have hurt them in the past and in forgiving others we can see opportunities to work together, when at other times we may not have been able to.

Sinking in the sand…[[1]](#footnote-1)

The boy

Girl

Being pulled out…

Dropping Stones…retelling of this story and context in John, movability of this scripture

-Law of Moses

-Deuteronomy 22:22

-Submit to Jesus…sobering moment

- -Forgiving herself in the end,

-between sections in John where Jesus is describing the depth of scripture to people based in law, and the law they believe God has sent. Jesus is showing and sharing that he is Christ and has been connected to God since the beginning and invites them to know God’s true character is one not of eternal record keeping, but instead of eternal life. If we know ourselves we know we identify with the woman most of all.

Record playing in our heads…sinking in the sand

The conversation that went wrong, the thing you didn’t get to, or couldn’t do. The time you let someone down, or blamed yourself for something really out of your control. The reality that you are not perfect, you are human and you make mistakes.

Ryan Video – describe Free, describe addiction

Self-reliant section of prayer we said two weeks ago…bring it back up…selfish to punish ourselves over and over.[[2]](#footnote-2)

We don’t do this alone either….Ryan

The reality is Ryan…without forgiving himself would not be helping so many others now. He would have never found recovery and he would not have heard the call from God to continue the work to share it with others.

Prayer at the end.

I am forgiven,

I can forgive,

God is with us.

1. Cheng, J. (2019). *See you in the cosmos*. Waterville, ME: Thorndike Press. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. <https://youtu.be/jVD_8d0a4Vs> [↑](#footnote-ref-2)