

# the ESSENTIALS

why truth matters

## OPENING UP



Share a time when you got away with something or when someone let you off the hook for a wrong you committed. How did it feel?

## TEXT

### I Believe in the Forgiveness of Sins | John 8:2-11

<sup>2</sup> Early in the morning he came again to the temple. All the people came to him, and he sat down and taught them. <sup>3</sup> The scribes and the Pharisees brought a woman who had been caught in adultery, and placing her in the midst <sup>4</sup> they said to him, “Teacher, this woman has been caught in the act of adultery. <sup>5</sup> Now in the Law, Moses commanded us to stone such women. So what do you say?” <sup>6</sup> This they said to test him, that they might have some charge to bring against him. Jesus bent down and wrote with his finger on the ground. <sup>7</sup> And as they continued to ask him, he stood up and said to them, “Let him who is without sin among you be the first to throw a stone at her.” <sup>8</sup> And once more he bent down and wrote on the ground. <sup>9</sup> But when they heard it, they went away one by one, beginning with the older ones, and Jesus was left alone with the woman standing before him. <sup>10</sup> Jesus stood up and said to her, “Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?” <sup>11</sup> She said, “No one, Lord.” And Jesus said, “Neither do I condemn you; go, and from now on sin no more.”

## MESSAGE OUTLINE

**Big Idea:** Jesus forgives sins!

**Key Question:** What does forgiveness look like?

**Apostles' Creed Statement:** “I believe in...the forgiveness of sins”

1. Forgiveness Requires the Awareness of Guilt (vv. 2-6)
2. Forgiveness Removes All Condemnation (vv. 7-11a)
3. Forgiveness Renews a Dead Life (v. 11b)

## DISCUSSION



- Our message this week was all about forgiveness. How would you define forgiveness? What does real forgiveness look like?
- In John 8 the woman caught in adultery was guilty of sin, but so was everyone in the crowd around Jesus. What is the difference between guilt and shame? In what ways can acknowledging our guilt drive us toward Jesus (see 1 John 1:8-9). In what ways can shame make us hide from Jesus?
- Jesus did not dismiss the woman's sin, but he did not condemn her either (vv. 10-11). In the same way Jesus forgives us without condemnation. What keeps you from breaking free of condemnation? It is NOT Jesus that is condemning you, so where does the condemnation stem from (think about your family or church of origin, cultural norms and expectations, personality tendencies, etc.)?
- Jesus knew that he was going to die to take the punishment for this woman's sins, and all sin, including our own (see John 3:17). Have you asked Jesus to remove your sin? Forgiveness removes all condemnation. How does this gospel truth show up in the way that you live, think, and relate to others?
- Jesus first forgives the woman, then tells her to "go, and from now on sin no more" (v. 11b). Explain how being forgiven produces the motivation to "sin no more." Why does forgiveness from Jesus move us toward a renewed life of holiness? Consider Ephesians 2:4-10 in your discussion.

## LIFE CHALLENGE



Jesus' message to the woman caught in adultery was forgiveness and freedom. Is that our message to our friends and neighbors who don't know Jesus? Only the Holy Spirit can convict people of their sin (see John 16:8-9)—that's not our job. But we can express the compassion that Jesus demonstrated in John 8 and extend his message of forgiveness and freedom.

Take turns sharing the name of one friend who hasn't experienced forgiveness from Jesus (to the best of your knowledge) and one way that you can point this person to the freedom you have in Jesus this week. For example:

- When can you share your own story of being forgiven?
- Do you need to forgive that person, without shaming or blaming, for something they have done to you?
- How can you demonstrate compassion toward them when the world might bring judgment instead?

## CLOSING PRAYER



Jesus, thank you for your incredible mercy and compassion for us. Thank you for dying on the cross to break the power of sin over us and to forgive us. Please help us to know the difference between guilt and shame in our lives. May we acknowledge our guilt and move toward you for complete forgiveness. Please break the power of shame in our hearts and minds that keeps us from you. Help us to believe that you do not condemn us! Let us experience the freedom of canceled sin and be bold to share this good news in Jesus with others. Amen.