

242 Grace and truth

For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. ^[John 1:17]

I wonder if you were as shocked as I was (in retrospect) to see that I had written: *I have therefore come to the conclusion that too unbending a view of ‘what the Bible teaches’ is unhelpful?!^[239]*

In a number of recent discussions, I have quoted Jesus’ response to the woman caught in adultery, ^[Jn 8:1-13] and I’ve mentioned it in several articles, I think. [Ah, yes, seven actually, sorry!] Well, here we are again, but only because a friend has just shared another aspect.

First though, to be fair to the Pharisees, they were absolutely right: adultery is a serious sin – betraying relationships – and the law does prescribe death by stoning. So they were doing their best to keep God’s law, and Jesus did say ‘Go and sin no more’.

But my friend writes: *There are two important lessons in that story, I think – the one that we always notice, that we are all sinners and therefore shouldn’t judge one another (which you link to Romans 1-2 – good insight!). But the other lesson, which I noticed more recently, is that Jesus didn’t speak to the woman until everyone else had gone, and then he could tell her to ‘sin no more’ (so he acknowledged that her behaviour had been sinful, and told her to repent / make a change). Sometimes we (Christians, the church) need to get out of the way, not just because we are also sinners, but so that Jesus can deal directly with someone – and then it’s up to Jesus to say if that person has or hasn’t been sinful, and what they may or may not need to change.*

Let’s as individuals and as a church continue to strongly promote the beautiful ideal of the unique and tender life-bond of a man and a woman, but let’s also recognise that we’re all damaged goods, many of us come from badly broken families, and let’s have the grace to allow one another to live our broken lives as best we can, starting from where we are now, today.

So please let’s show grace and truth (Jesus) to Adam and Brian, to Clare and Diane, ^[231] and then let Jesus show them how best to spend the rest of their lives in Christ, so that we can all, together, live the rest of our lives demonstrating the grace and truth that came to us through Jesus Christ.

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