

Contradictions & Flawed Theology

The Bible is full of what many people might consider contradictions. Some people even argue that it contains mistakes. For example, even though it's a guide to life, among other things, and for righteous living at that, it doesn't condemn people for their transgressions. Instead it encourages all of us to re-consider them, to talk them over with the Lord, to overcome them, and to let go of anything that would hinder our faith (Christ-centered) walk.

One of my favorite stories in this regard is the one about the woman caught-up in adultery. The laws of her society back then required that anyone caught-up in this be "stoned". It was basically a death sentence (how interesting though that they didn't bring the man in the equation forward for the same punishment). But it seems to me that what the "accusers" really wanted, even more than bringing this woman to their version of justice (which was beyond hypocritical), was to trick Jesus into not being able to remain Holy while simultaneously resolving the moral issue. But, like always whenever they tried to trick Him, they failed miserably.

So then Jesus, after careful contemplation (after sizing-up the situation and realizing what the accusers' true objectives were), gave them an ultimatum: "...let he who is without sin cast the first stone". That's my favorite part, and it applies to all sorts of scandals & scenarios! See the thing is that even though they may have known the rules (the "black-letter" stuff), they were sooo devoid of any understanding about the Spirit of it all that their application was unbelievably and seriously flawed, and that's just like it is with many, dare I say most, people of today (So many of us think we're so qualified to judge others, when at the same time we're condemning them, and in the very next breath we're gossiping & slandering and trying our level best to discredit others for whom we have absolutely no understanding or insight into their thinking or into their reasons for doing the things they do).

And another thing I think Jesus was [a]ffectively (in a heart-felt way) trying to illustrate was that no one sin is either greater or lesser than another. They all result in the exact same fate, the ultimate death & eternal loss of the unrepentant sinner (the saving grace is that it's the acts that result in the Spiritual death-sentence, not the thoughts). But here's the thing, and people really tend to exaggerate this: not one of us is Divinely qualified to judge another person's eternal value or worthiness. What we all need to be working on is our own sanctification, as well as helping those we truly care about, and have been Divinely guided to, work out theirs, but this has to be done through loving, not through condemning, hearts.

Now some people, maybe even many people, seem to think this means that each of us should "mind our own business" where sinfulness is concerned, but, having a quasi-mature "feel" for the Spirit of God's Word, I don't think that's what it means at all. In fact, I think the Lord wants His mature believers, his true "followers", to get out here and to get involved with the world's views & choices so that we can help lead people to life as it's meant to be lived-out, Divinely inspired life at its best! I think this whole concept, though, is wildly misunderstood, just like a plethora of biblical principles (this phenomenon is also extremely common with legal principles, even among our brethren attorneys, the so-called experts, right).

I love the story of the woman caught-up in adultery, especially the wind-up part (the Bible intentionally does not give her a name, I think because she could theoretically be any one of us, men or women, and I think the story has applicability as a parable for all of us). I know one thing, I have been that person, not just regarding adultery, that too, but for other "Commandment" breaches as well. And the Lord didn't condemn me. If He had, I know I wouldn't even be here today. So I wisely repented, I learned from every mistake &

transgression, and I know that the Lord kept my losses to a minimum, and He gave me back my future.

Like most any truly loving parent, He gives us chance-after-chance to get our sanctification walk straightened out, and that is one of the most awesome things about the whole process. But we cannot do it alone (we need His help), and we cannot take it lightly.

I hope you have such an amazing day!

- Jack

John 8:1-20 (MSG)

Note: This isn't the whole chapter, but it covers the topic for today :-)

¹ Jesus went across to Mount Olives, ² but he was soon back in the Temple again. Swarms of people came to him. He sat down and taught them. ³ The religion scholars and Pharisees led in a woman who had been caught in an act of adultery. They stood her in plain sight of everyone ⁴ and said, "Teacher, this woman was caught red-handed in the act of adultery. ⁵ Moses, in the Law, gives orders to stone such persons. What do you say?" ⁶ They were trying to trap him into saying something incriminating so they could bring charges against him. ⁷ They kept at him, badgering him. He straightened up and said, "The sinless one among you, go first: Throw the stone." ⁸ Bending down again, he wrote some more in the dirt. ⁹ Hearing that, they walked away, one after another, beginning with the oldest. The woman was left alone. ¹⁰ Jesus stood up and spoke to her. "Woman, where are they? Does no one condemn you?" ¹¹ "No one, Master." "Neither do I," said Jesus. "Go on your way. From now on, don't sin." You're Missing God in All This ¹² Jesus once again addressed them: "I am the world's Light. No one who follows me stumbles around in the darkness. I provide plenty of light to live in." ¹³ The Pharisees objected, "All we have is your word on this. We need more than this to go on." ¹⁴ Jesus replied, "You're right that you only have my word. But you can depend on it being true. I know where I've come from and where I go next. You don't know where I'm from or where I'm headed. ¹⁵ You decide according to what you can see and touch. I don't make judgments like that. ¹⁶ But even if I did, my judgment would be true because I wouldn't make it out of the narrowness of my experience but in the largeness of the One who sent me, the Father. ¹⁷ That fulfills the conditions set down in God's Law: that you can count on the testimony of two witnesses. ¹⁸ And that is what you have: You have my word and you have the word of the Father who sent me." ¹⁹ They said, "Where is this so-called Father of yours?" Jesus said, "You're looking right at me and you don't see me. How do you expect to see the Father? If you knew me, you would at the same time know the Father." ²⁰ He gave this speech in the Treasury while teaching in the Temple. No one arrested him because his time wasn't yet up.

Note: So then, trying so desperately to help them understand, Jesus went on to deal with these guys' flawed theology head-on, but no matter how hard He tried to get them to understand they just couldn't "get it" b/c they were too caught-up in their own limited points of view, which, ironically, were grounded in their "black-letter" understanding of God's Word.

John 8:21-59 (MSG)

²¹ Then he went over the same ground again. "I'm leaving and you are going to look for me, but

you're missing God in this and are headed for a dead end. There is no way you can come with me." ²² The Jews said, "So, is he going to kill himself? Is that what he means by 'You can't come with me'?" ²³ Jesus said, "You're tied down to the mundane; I'm in touch with what is beyond your horizons. You live in terms of what you see and touch. I'm living on other terms." ²⁴ I told you that you were missing God in all this. You're at a dead end. If you won't believe I am who I say I am, you're at the dead end of sins. You're missing God in your lives." ²⁵ They said to him, "Just who are you anyway?" ²⁶ I have so many things to say that concern you, judgments to make that affect you, but if you don't accept the trustworthiness of the One who commanded my words and acts, none of it matters. That is who you are questioning - not me but the One who sent me." ²⁷ They still didn't get it, didn't realize that he was referring to the Father. ²⁸ So Jesus tried again. "When you raise up the Son of Man, then you will know who I am - that I'm not making this up, but speaking only what the Father taught me." ²⁹ The One who sent me stays with me. He doesn't abandon me. He sees how much joy I take in pleasing him." ³⁰ When he put it in these terms, many people decided to believe. ³¹ Then Jesus turned to the Jews who had claimed to believe in him. "If you stick with this, living out what I tell you, you are my disciples for sure." ³² Then you will experience for yourselves the truth, and the truth will free you." ³³ Surprised, they said, "But we're descendants of Abraham. We've never been slaves to anyone. How can you say, 'The truth will free you'?" ³⁴ Jesus said, "I tell you most solemnly that anyone who chooses a life of sin is trapped in a dead-end life and is, in fact, a slave." ³⁵ A slave is a transient, who can't come and go at will. The Son, though, has an established position, the run of the house. ³⁶ So if the Son sets you free, you are free through and through. ³⁷ I know you are Abraham's descendants. But I also know that you are trying to kill me because my message hasn't yet penetrated your thick skulls. ³⁸ I'm talking about things I have seen while keeping company with the Father, and you just go on doing what you have heard from your father." ³⁹ They were indignant. "Our father is Abraham!" ⁴⁰ And yet here you are trying to kill me, a man who has spoken to you the truth he got straight from God! Abraham never did that sort of thing. ⁴¹ You persist in repeating the works of your father." They said, "We're not bastards. We have a legitimate father: the one and only God." ⁴² "If God was your father," said Jesus, "you would love me, for I came from God and arrived here. I didn't come on my own. He sent me." ⁴³ Why can't you understand one word I say? Here's why: You can't handle it. ⁴⁴ You're from your father, the Devil, and all you want to do is please him. He was a killer from the very start. He couldn't stand the truth because there wasn't a shred of truth in him. When the Liar speaks, he makes it up out of his lying nature and fills the world with lies. ⁴⁵ I arrive on the scene, tell you the plain truth, and you refuse to have a thing to do with me. ⁴⁶ Can any one of you convict me of a single misleading word, a single sinful act? But if I'm telling the truth, why don't you believe me? ⁴⁷ Anyone on God's side listens to God's words. This is why you're not listening - because you're not on God's side." ⁴⁸ The Jews then said, "That clinches it. We were right all along when we called you a Samaritan and said you were crazy - demon-possessed!" ⁴⁹ Jesus said, "I'm not crazy. I simply honor my Father, while you dishonor me." ⁵⁰ I am not trying to get anything for myself. God intends something gloriously grand here and is making the decisions that will bring it about. ⁵¹ I say this with absolute confidence. If you practice what I'm telling you, you'll never have to look death in the face." ⁵² At this point the Jews said, "Now we know you're crazy. Abraham died. The prophets died. And you show up saying, 'If you practice what I'm telling you, you'll never have to face death, not even a taste.'" ⁵³ Are you greater than Abraham, who died? And the prophets died! Who do you think you are!" ⁵⁴ Jesus said, "If I turned the spotlight on myself, it wouldn't amount to anything. But my Father, the same One you say is your Father, put me here at this time and place of splendor." ⁵⁵ You haven't recognized him in this. But I have. If I, in false modesty, said I didn't know what was going on, I would be as much of a liar as you are. But I do know, and I am doing what he says. ⁵⁶ Abraham - your 'father' - with jubilant faith looked down the corridors of history and saw my day coming. He saw it and cheered." ⁵⁷ The Jews said, "You're not even fifty years old - and Abraham saw you?" ⁵⁸ "Believe me," said Jesus, "I

am who I am long before Abraham was anything." ⁵⁹ That did it - pushed them over the edge. They picked up rocks to throw at him. But Jesus slipped away, getting out of the Temple.