

"Live as examples of Christ Jesus"

Devotions for Deacons

Be Sensitive Counselors to the

Title: Victims of Waste, Injustice and Selfishness

Scripture: John 8: 1-11

Text: Philippians 2:3-5

“ Love the person, build a relationship and leave all the judgemental stones on the ground where Jesus left them. ”

Jesus is in the temple courts once more. He is redeeming the space after clearing it of corruption. He is teaching about the Kingdom, but He is again interrupted by the teachers of the law. Again, they cut through the crowds. This is their space and they are ready to reclaim it. This time, they have the perfect plan. They drag their victim before Jesus, bruising her arm in their self-righteous grip. Finally they have a trap that is not just theoretical. This trap is flesh and blood. Here is a woman caught in violation of the law. This is their area of expertise and they are smug in their certain victory. They know Jesus has even eaten with prostitutes, So, if He convicts her, He condemns Himself with His hypocrisy. If He does not convict her, He is an enemy of the law. There is no way out for Him this time!

The teachers of the law do not care about the woman, of course. She is a victim of their selfishness. They do not need her to be physically present in order to question and trap Jesus. Her humiliation adds to their victory. They also do not care about justice. They have caught this woman committing adultery with a man, but they do not drag the man in front of Jesus. According to the law of Moses, both should be stoned (see Leviticus 20). They care about themselves, their smug self-righteousness, and making themselves look good by discrediting Jesus.

“Now what do you say?” they demand. But Jesus does not answer them. In fact, He ignores the question altogether. It is not a question of condemning or absolving the woman. It is not about the issue of adultery at all. The teachers of the law really want to accuse Jesus. So Jesus turns the tables on them. He makes them accuse themselves. They cannot say they are without sin. Their legalism condemns them. So they leave one by one. Until Jesus is left with the woman.

What does He have to say to her? He is the only one perfectly justified in throwing the “first stone” at her. But He does not. He does not accuse her, but tells her to go and leave her life of sin. Amazing! Jesus *does* insist on repentance but He goes straight for the root of the injustice against the woman, silences her accusers, and restores her.

So many people are judged. So many are mistreated. And so many are on the margins. As deacons, we must work for justice. This is Kingdom-building work. But it is not about homelessness or poverty, or disabilities or racial discrimination. If all you see are issues, you will never see the face of the people behind those issues. Do not give your neighbours a label; do not make assumptions about them. Get to know them, not only their situation or need. Love the person, build a relationship and leave all the judgemental stones on the ground where Jesus left them.