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October 6, 2013

The Woman Caught in Adultery

John 8:1-11

Prayer: *Father God, I do thank you and praise you for your church, I just thank you for what an incredible gift and blessing it is. I thank you that we are able to meet freely still. I thank you that we are able to corporately gather to offer worship to you, who alone is worthy. I pray especially, Lord, for the ability to think on what it is you've done for us this day. I pray for your Holy Spirit's presence, that as we open your book and look into what it is you've done for us on the cross, that we would understand in a deeper, more full way what gifts, what precious treasure we have, and I pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.*

Well, as you know, it's the first Sunday of the month and this is the day that we remember Jesus Christ and his cross. And Jesus on the night before he died, he met with his disciples, and there for the very last time he celebrated a Passover supper with them. Matthew 26 describes it. It says this: *Now as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and after blessing it broke it and gave it to the disciples, and said, "Take, eat; this is my body." And he took a*

cup, and when he had given thanks he gave it to them, saying, "Drink of it, all of you, for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins. I tell you I will not drink again of this fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom." Jesus took bread and wine and he offered them up as symbols of his flesh and his blood and then he asked his disciples to eat the bread and drink the cup in order to symbolically eat his flesh and drink his blood. And then he asked them to repeat the remembrance of this sacrifice on a regular basis, and this is what we call "the Lord's table." We celebrate it once a month. And we celebrate it by meditating on what the Lord Jesus Christ did for us on the cross, by examining ourselves, asking God's Holy Spirit to point out areas in our lives where he's convicting us of sin, by confessing our sins and then by participating in the elements. *John 6:53* says: *So Jesus said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you."*

Now, we have been following the life of Jesus and we've worked our way up to the eighth chapter of the Gospel of John, and you might remember where we were last time. Jesus has made this amazing offer to the crowd on the last day of the Feast of Tabernacles. Jews from all over Israel have gathered, and the priest is there in

the center and he's pouring out water onto the ground in order to symbolize the thirst that the Jews had in the desert, and Jesus suddenly cries out to the crowd in *John 7:37*: "*If anyone thirsts, let him come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, 'Out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.'*"

I pointed out the last time the impossibility of anyone in that crowd understanding what Jesus was saying without God first opening up their eyes and their ears. You know, in the middle of this feast, everyone is gathered, the priest is doing his thing and Jesus just suddenly announces to the crowds that he is the answer to all of their thirst. I mean, here is a man claiming to take care of their thirst issues forever. How could those in the crowd possibly know even what kind of thirst Jesus was addressing? You see, only those who understood that the thirst that Jesus was addressing himself to was the thirst for God, only they could respond to this offer. I said last time that that thirst itself is a gift that God bestows. And without that thirst, there is simply no desire for living water. It is God who supplies the desire. Now, God did that for some, he did not do that for most. And when Jesus said, "*If anyone thirsts, let him come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water,*" he first pointed out their

thirst and then he said I alone am the one who can satisfy it. But all the religious leaders could see in that offer was an insult to their own vaulted sense of their own self-righteousness, and they deeply resented it. In fact, we're at the end of the chapter 7, and at this stage of John's Gospel, they have reached a point where they're actively trying to secure his arrest. In *John 7:44*, it says: *Some of them wanted to arrest him, but no one laid hands on him. The officers then came to the chief priests and Pharisees, who said to them, "Why did you not bring him?" The officers answered, "No one ever spoke like this man!"* I pointed out last time what I love about this response is how clearly it illustrates that God is not a respecter of persons. This is not a Pharisee, this is not a scribe, this is not a priest, this isn't even an ordinary rank and file member of the crowd who has obviously had his eyes opened or their eyes opened. It is a group that's even more shocking and surprising than tax collectors and prostitutes. It is the members of the Temple Guard, the very people who were sent to arrest him. They come back to the Pharisees and the Pharisees are absolutely furious that they've come back empty-handed and they demand an explanation. In verse 46: *The officers answered, "No one ever spoke like this man!"* These are folks who have had their ears opened, and because of that, the Pharisees are enraged and we saw the last time they break their own laws when they insist that Jesus be rejected summarily without any hearing

whatsoever. And so when one of their own, Nicodemus, challenges them, they end up attacking him, chiding him for not knowing that the Messiah would never come from Galilee. This is what they said in *John 7:50*, they said: *Nicodemus, who had gone to him before, and who was one of them, said to them, "Does our law judge a man without first giving him a hearing and learning what he does?" They replied, "Are you from Galilee too? Search and see that no prophet arises from Galilee." They went each to his own house.* You know, they didn't even realize that Jesus, he may have lived in Galilee but he was born in Bethlehem, the very town that the Messiah said -- that the prophet said the Messiah would come from. So chapter 7 ends with these religion leaders all just kind of shrinking away to their own home.

And now we are at chapter 8 which opens up with Jesus, the very next day, he's back at the temple and he's teaching. Let me pick it up in *John 8:1-11*. It says this: *But Jesus went to the Mount of Olives. Early in the morning he came again to the temple. All the people came to him, and he sat down and taught them. The scribes and the Pharisees brought a woman who had been caught in adultery, and placing her in the midst, they said to him, "Teacher, this woman has been caught in the act of adultery. Now in the law Moses commanded us to stone such women. So what do you say?" 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. 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." And once more he bent down and wrote on the ground. 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. Jesus stood up and said to her, "Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?" She said, "No one, Lord." And Jesus said, "Neither do I condemn you; go, and from now on sin no more." You know, the Pharisees had to be delighted in what they thought they had accomplished. You see, they thought that they had Jesus firmly stuck on the horns of a dilemma. They thought that they would force Jesus to choose between justice and mercy. Justice demanded that the penalty for adultery be assessed and that penalty was stoning. If Jesus had insisted on justice, the woman would have died. And Jesus would have been accused of violating Roman law which does not allow for executions without their permission. On the other hand, if Jesus had insisted on mercy, his holiness and righteousness would have come into question. After all, how could someone who so blatantly violated the sixth commandment, someone who was caught in the very act, how could she be allowed to go scot-free? I mean, it would put Jesus in the position of having to wink at sin. So the Pharisees had to be delighted in any decision that Jesus made because they

understood that it was going to serve one side at the expense of the other. Either justice or mercy would be shortchanged.

You know, in essence, Jesus faced a microcosm of what the world sees Christianity as even today. You have on the one hand strict self-righteous legalism that measures a person's faith by how well they keep the rules, and we know the Pharisees excelled at this. Jesus repeatedly showed them what he thought of their rules. In *Matthew 15:7*, he said this: *"You hypocrites! Well did Isaiah prophesy of you, when he said: 'This people honors me with their lips, but their heart is far from me; in vain do they worship me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.'"* These are the folks who caught this woman in the very act, something that smacks either of a very lucky break for them or a cynical setup that they had designed to trap Jesus. But they didn't realize, they didn't realize for a moment that they were the ones who were truly depraved. They were the ones whose jealousy, pride, and envy drove them to think that putting this woman on display even if it meant killing her was worth it if they could expose Jesus. The woman meant nothing more than an opportunity to them. Verse 4 it says: *They said to him, "Teacher, this woman has been caught in the act of adultery. Now in the Law Moses commanded us to stone such women. So what do you say?" This they said to test him, that they might have some charge to bring against him. Say "yes" to her*

execution and not only has Jesus defied Rome but justice has now been satisfied at the price of mercy. On the other hand, if Jesus does nothing, to do nothing is to allow mercy itself to trump justice. After all, it was Jesus himself who said to the rich young ruler in *Luke 18*: "*You know the commandments: Do not commit adultery.*" You see, the Pharisees had played their cards very well by placing right before Jesus someone who was caught in the act because God's word says in *Deuteronomy 22*: "*If a man is found lying with the wife of another man, both of them shall die, the man who lay with the woman, and the woman. So you shall purge the evil from Israel.*"

So what's Jesus to do? Is he going to say God was only kidding? Is he going to say this is an exception? You know, is Jesus now going to be pressed into the mold that mirrors our contemporary evangelical liberalism, a mold that says that Jesus is seen more as a cosmic butler sent to clean up our messes rather than a king sent to redeem his ransomed people? It says, you know, we do the sinning and he does the forgiving. I'm washed in the blood. My debt is paid, so let's party like there's no tomorrow. *Romans 6:1* says: *What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin that grace may abound? By no means! How can we who died to sin still live in it?*

This is the dilemma. But before we can answer how the gospel applies to an adulterer who is caught in the act, we first need to understand how the gospel worked in the life of Christ. You see, there was only one way for Christ to be perfectly righteous and perfectly merciful at the same time. There was only one way for a perfectly holy, righteous Jesus Christ, the way for him to say to a fallen, wicked sinner caught in the sin of adultery, what Jesus said to her after her accusers that all shrunk away. Again verse 10: *Jesus stood up and said to her, "Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?" She said, "No one, Lord." And Jesus said, "Neither do I condemn you; go, and from now on sin no more."*

So Jesus offers mercy. But what about justice? You see, the condemnation that justice demanded to be placed on her head had to be placed somewhere. Now, some might say well, if God is all powerful, why is that so? Why can't God simply announce that her sin is forgiven? It's a problem that we face over and over again. Tim Keller does a nice job of comparing the debt of justice to a monetary debt. This is what he says. He says, imagine that you're the guest of somebody and you accidentally break his lamp. He says, Now you could offer to pay for the cost of replacing the lamp or he could simply forgive you, but if he does, then he has to pay the cost of replacing the lamp. You see, when the lamp is broken, either way, somebody has to pay, and if nobody pays, you're going

to sit in the dark. In essence, sin is the broken lamp. And either you or God is going to pay. Put it another way. If you just happened to be the faithful, loyal husband of the woman who had been taken in adultery, do you think that her debt could have been resolved simply by God announcing it as an accomplished fact? You know, God may have the raw power to overlook sin, but if he did, that God would no longer be perfectly just. To be perfectly just is to perfectly balance the wrong with the redress of that wrong. And her sin and for that matter her partner's sin created a debt like all sin creates, and someone has to replace the broken lamp. That's why God says in *Romans 6:23*: *For the wages of sin is death.* But that's followed by this glorious "but" clause: *But... but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.* You see, there's only one way that a perfectly just Christ could tell the woman she was now free from condemnation. In Christ, perfect justice would condemn and execute her sin of adultery and in Christ, perfect mercy would stand in her place and absorb it. The Pharisees desperately wanted Christ to pit perfect justice against perfect mercy so that regardless of his choice, he would lose. They never imagined that he could satisfy both perfectly. *Psalm 85, verse 9* says: *Surely his salvation is near to those who fear Him, that glory may dwell in our land. Mercy and truth have met together; righteousness and peace have kissed.* You see, it was because Christ himself would so identify with her that her sin

would become his sin and he would take that sin to the cross. 2
Corinthians 5:21 says: *For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.*

As the elders come forward to distribute the bread, I would like us to consider the privilege we have. Every one of us have been caught in the act. Every one of us has been condemned. But he who knew no sin became sin for us. Consider also this warning that God gives in *1 Corinthians 11:28*, it says this: *But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of the bread and drink of the cup. For he who eats and drinks in an unworthy manner eats and drink judgment to himself, not discerning the Lord's body. For this reason, many are weak and sick among you, and many sleep. For if we would judge ourselves, we would not be judged. But when we are judged, we are chastened by the Lord, that we may not be condemned with the world.* I say this each month. I say communion is extremely serious business, and to enter into it in an unworthy manner is to literally court disaster. I further warn you, I say if you are not absolutely confident that you are a child of the King, just pass these elements by as they come along. Nobody's going to look at you, nobody's going to think, "Oh what's with him" or "What's with her." I often say if anything, they're going to think you're wise. On the other hand, I've often said as well that we can make the mistake of thinking that unless we're spotlessly

perfect, we are unworthy to receive communion, and that too is a mistake the devil would love you to make. You see, being a child of the King does not mean that we don't sin and that we never fail. It means that when we do fail, we are aware of the fact that we have sinned because we have God's spirit living inside us, convicting us of that sin. And so we grieve and we grieve as children who know that we have a Father who longs to forgive us and cleanse us. God says in *1 John 1:9*: *If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.* So being a child of the King does the not mean that you are without sin. It means that when we sin, we have an advocate with our Father. *1 John 2:1* says: *My dear children, I write this to you so that you will not sin. But if anybody does sin, we have an advocate with the Father -- Jesus Christ, the righteous one.* And because we have Jesus' righteousness and not our own, we are now free to eat from his table. So if you -- if you love the Lord, don't deny yourself the privilege that Jesus has purchased for you. We are condemned, all of us, but our condemnation has been taken by Jesus. Consider that for a moment.

1 Corinthians, the 11th chapter, 23rd verse says this: *For I received from the Lord what I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it, and said, "This is my body which is for*

you. Do this in remembrance of me." Take and eat.

As the elders come forward to begin distributing the cup, I would like to focus for a minute or two on the woman in this story. You know, for some people, the best day of their life and the worst day of their life are one in the same, and such was the case for this woman who was taken in the act of adultery. Whether or not she was simply a pawn in a setup designed to trap Jesus or whether she was just unfortunate enough to be caught, we don't know. We do know that her shame and her guilt would propel her to the center of a huge crowd where her sin would be on display for all to see. Now, I mentioned before that truly depraved sinners here, at least judging by Jesus' reaction, was not the woman herself, it was her accusers who felt justified enough in their own righteousness to demand a "justice" that would only apply to her. In fact, the fact that her equally guilty male partner was missing was of little consequence to them. The fact that hers was a sin of the flesh while theirs was an attempt on their part to entrap and eventually execute the very son of God was something that had escaped them. Again in verse 4 it says: *They said to him, "Teacher, this woman has been caught in the act of adultery. Now in the Law Moses commanded us to stone such women. So what do you say?" 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. 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." You'll notice that Jesus was completely unfazed by the questions. He just stooped down and he started writing. You know, I imagine the religious leaders were downright giddy at what they thought was their good fortune. You see, they found in this poor woman the perfect opportunity to publicly place Jesus in a no-win situation. Now, scripture doesn't tell us what Jesus wrote as he bent down and scribbled on the ground, but we can deduce that he simply ignored them as he went about writing what he wrote. And some speculate that perhaps he was writing the sins of the Pharisees out, some also suggest that perhaps he was writing the names of the women that they had committed adultery with. We don't know what he wrote. Verse 7 says: *They continued to ask him.* You see, they pressed their case because they sensed they had the upper hand and they were honing in for the kill. Jesus exposes their sin, dismisses their case and rescues the woman by uttering just three sentences.*

First, he exposed their sin. Verse 7, it says: *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."*

Second, he dismissed their case. Verse 9: *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. And thirdly, he rescued the woman: Jesus stood up and said to her, "Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?" She said, "No one, Lord." And Jesus said, "Neither do I condemn you; go and from now on sin no more." Now, if Jesus' rescue of this woman was only physical, well then its significance ended over 2,000 years ago when she reached the end of her physical life and she was just a chance encounter in Jesus' life. But nothing happens by chance with Jesus. She received a pardon from condemnation directly from the only one who was capable of giving it. But here's what jumps out at me in this text: Jesus never evangelized. You know, Jesus told her no more than the fact that she was no longer under condemnation. He didn't give her the four spiritual laws, he didn't give her the Roman road, he didn't tell her anything about his willingness to die for the sin that she was accused of. You know, on the surface, you might say that Jesus wasn't very good at personal evangelism. He certainly didn't spend a lot of time explaining himself or the gospel. But that's how Jesus was.

You know, last week Matt Wolfe taught us from the parable of the sower and the soils and we heard about these huge crowds that gathered to hear Jesus preach and they're all assembled there, Jesus has to be in a boat because the crowd is so huge and what does Jesus do? He delivers a very short monologue about sowing

seed in four different kinds of soil and then he's done. No explanation, no spiritual application, just the statement in *Matthew 13:9*: "*He who has ears, let him hear.*" You know, we understand what Jesus was saying and we understand it because we have the benefit of 2,000 years and we have the scripture in which Jesus explained what it meant, but they didn't hear that. The vast majority of those in Jesus' audience had no idea what Jesus was talking about, and we know that because his own disciples took him aside and said in the very next verse in *Matthew 13:10*, they said: "*Why do you speak to them in parables?*" And he answered them, "*To you it has been given to know the secrets of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been given.*" You see, the woman taken in adultery was likewise given no hint of who she was talking to other than Jesus' statement that he wouldn't condemn her, and mind you, this happened right after the -- right after the feast of Tabernacles in which Jesus' gospel proclamation to the entire crowd consisted of him telling them in *John 7:37*: "*If anyone thirsts, let him come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as the scripture has said, 'Out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.'*" Again, no explanation about the fall of Adam, nothing about the sin of man and the righteousness of Christ, a righteousness that we now know is ours by faith when we trust in what Christ did for us on the cross. The crowd at the feast couldn't possibly know that from what Jesus said. Like I said, by

our present day standards, Christ must have been a lousy personal evangelist. And you know why? That's not what Jesus was called to be. Jesus didn't detail the good news because he was the good news. Jesus didn't explicitly point people to the way because he was the way, the truth, and the life, and no man would come to the Father except through him. You see, the fact is, the details of the gospel didn't become clear until after Christ had ascended and the Holy Spirit had descended. But there's another reason why Jesus didn't have to lay out much of the details of the gospel while he was here on earth. It's the reason why he could mystify the crowds with this parable of the sower and the soils or even repulse them by what he said in *John 6:53*. There he said this: *"Truly, truly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you."* Those words of Jesus prompted this response from his disciples in *John 6:60*, he said: *When many of his disciples heard it, they said, "This is a hard saying; who can listen to it?"* It's the same reason that he could announce to the assembled multitude that he was the living water that would forever cure their thirst when most had no idea what that thirst was. It's also the reason why he could say to the woman taken in adultery nothing more than, *"Go and sin no more."*

Jesus gave us the reason why he could be so obtuse. He gave us the reason why he could speak and people could not have a clue what he

was saying and he gives it to us in *John 10:27*. This is what he says, he says: *My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me. And I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand. My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch them out of My Father's hand. I and My Father are one.*" You see, we look at Jesus' encounter with the woman taken in adultery as something that happened by chance, but I contend that Jesus knew everything there was to know about this woman. *"My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me."* You see, only a few chapters back, we read about another "chance encounter" that Jesus had with another woman with a questionable reputation. Remember? It was the woman at the well. You know, Jesus sits down at a well in Sychar because he was hot, and he's thirsty, and he's tired, and she just happened to be there. And in the course of their conversation, Jesus reveals to her all these details of her past, the husbands that she's had and the man with whom she's living now even then who was not her husband, and remember what the woman said when she went into town to tell everybody about the meeting she had with Jesus? She said this in *John 4:39*. It says: *Many Samaritans from that town believed in him because of the woman's testimony, "He told me all that I ever did."* You see, she too had a good day bad day when she met Jesus. She too like the woman taken in adultery had her sins

exposed by a God who knew "everything she had ever done." You know, some of us have a very hard time imagining a God like that, a God who is willing to approach you even though he is fully aware of the depth of your sinfulness. Some of us still think that we can keep our sins secret not just from each other but also from God. We don't want to be exposed like that woman was, but eventually we all will. And that's not a threat; it's a promise. Listen to what Jesus said in *Luke 12:2*, he says: *"Nothing is covered up that will not be revealed, or hidden that will not be known. Therefore whatever you have said in the dark shall be heard in the light, and what you have whispered in private rooms shall be proclaimed on the housetops."* I want you to think for a minute of the deepest darkest sins you have within you, and I want you to realize once and for all that God not only sees them but he saw them in you before the foundations of the world were even laid. While he was hanging on the cross he saw them because he was paying for them. He saw the worst that you would ever be and that was not enough to stop him from pursuing you. *Romans 5:8* says: *But God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.* Jesus told the woman taken in adultery: *"Go and sin no more."* He acknowledged and accepted her just where she was but he had no intention of leaving her there. And Jesus wants your life as well, and he'll take it in whatever shape it's surrendered in but then he will enter your life and transform it. He will never

leave you where you arrived. So let us once again examine ourselves. Let us confess to him that which he already knows, remembering if we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness. Let's thank our glorious Lord that we don't have to clean up our acts and become respectable before we become worthy enough for him. We just have to hear him when he calls. *"My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me."* Hebrews 4:7: *Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts.* Take a moment to listen to God when he speaks in your heart right now.

1 Corinthians, the 11th chapter, 25th verse says: In the same manner He also took the cup after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood. This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me." Take and drink.

This is the part that I call hands, hearts and feet. This is where we speak about practically applying what it means to remember Jesus Christ, and again we have a practical application that's taking place this afternoon. We have the Life Chain. And so I wanted to speak to you a bit about the Life Chain and the reason why I am going to the Life Chain this afternoon. The reason why is we've done as a church on the first Sunday of October every year for over 15 years is not because I think it's going to stop abortions. I

pray that it will. But the reason that I go to the Life Chain is to be a public witness for the defense, or should I say for the defenseless. You see, God's enemy, Satan, he is a coward. He is a coward and he is a defeated foe. He doesn't have the guts to face off directly against his Creator, so he chooses to focus on the Creator's image bearers instead. He goes after them like any coward will, when he thinks they're defenseless. Picture Al Qaeda just as such a cowardly organization that would never dare attack America itself, instead they chose to attack the image of America, and the World Trade Center was the perfect image for them. Well, Satan does likewise. Satan hates God but he also fears him. So he chooses to unleash his fury in particular at the image of God that we bear, and the most effective way for Satan to do that is to attack that image at its most vulnerable stage, at the one place where killing the image of God is now legal, and that's through abortion. You've all heard the statistics, in the United States, there are over 3700 abortions every day, well over 50 million since Roe versus Wade. And if you don't see this attack, this connection as demonic, if you don't see it as a very attack on the image of God, you won't see being pro-life as being that important. Perhaps you'll wonder if it's not just another cultural problem like the environment or hunger or poverty. Of course none of those matter if you're already dead. But again, we just have to look to scripture to find that from the beginning the enemy's most

effective tool against the image of God has been murder itself. Listen to what Jesus said in *John 8:44*. He said this, he said: "*You belong to your father, the devil, and you want to carry out your father's desire. He was a murderer from the beginning, not holding to the truth, for there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks his native language, for he is a liar and the father of lies.*" Now, if you want to see the premier venue that combines the lie with the murder, then look no further than the abortion industry. You know, the sexual liberation movement was supposed to liberate women. That too was a lie. And again as with so many other things that the enemy promises, it wound up doing the exact opposite. It did liberation all right, but it liberated men. It liberated men from personal responsibility and put women into the bondage of guilt, often for a lifetime. And now thanks to feminism, men simply rid themselves of their responsibility by writing a check and telling their women to go take care of it. And years later what seemed like such a simple solution continues to haunt and debilitate and sometimes destroy the women who fall prey to the enemy's lies. You see, Jesus said the devil was a murderer from the beginning. He also said he was a liar and the father of lies, and abortion combines the lie with the murder, and then it attempts to enslave the only remaining victim, and that is the mother. You see, many women victims of abortion instantly go from intense relief to even more intense guilt from the very same

enemy. And only the grace of God and the blood of Jesus Christ shed freely on the cross can purchase a new life and a new hope for a mom who is caught up in the horror of abortion. Jesus Christ alone is capable of doing that. This is what we spoke about this morning. You see, when he died on the cross, every one of our sins was 2,000 years in the future, including abortion. He saw them all without exception so none of them, not a one of them ever came as a surprise to him. What we have to offer to the victims of abortion, both men and women, is *Romans 5:6-8* which says this: *For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. For one will scarcely die for a righteous person -- though perhaps for a good person one would dare even to die -- but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.*

Now, I know folks who are involved in the pregnancy center who don't like the Life Chain, and the reason why they don't is because they fear that people are going to think, you know, all I have to do is stand on a street corner for an hour and a half once a year and I've done my duty, I can kind of wash my hands of my responsibility until next year. See, I don't think this is an "either or" situation. It's not either I support the center or I support the Life Chain. Hopefully it's a "both and." You see, we need to support the center with our prayer, with our time and with

our money, and we also need to take advantage of a public opportunity to do in a very small way what God charges us with in *Proverbs 24:11*. Listen to what God says here. He says: *Rescue those who are being taken away to death; hold back those who are stumbling to the slaughter. If you say, "Behold, we did not know this," does not he who weighs the heart perceive it? Does not he who keeps watch over your soul know it, and will he not repay man according to his work?* Consider those words as you consider what you're going to be doing this afternoon. Let's pray.

Father God, I do thank you that we have light and truth as opposed to darkness and lies. I thank you that you are the source of all truth and I thank you that we have your word which is that source. Father, I just pray today for all those moms who are suffering the horrendous guilt of abortion, I just pray that they would understand that nothing is a surprise to you, that you saw that sin before the foundation of the world were even laid and that you saw that sin while you were hanging on a cross and that you paid for that sin. I pray that any of the guilt that all of us feel, that condemnation that all of us feel, that you would just let us understand that you took that at the cross, that it is gone, that we are clean, that in you we are perfected. We stand before you washed in your blood. We praise you and we thank you for that incredible gift, and I pray that you would give us the ability to

fully realize it. I pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.