

Love Suffers Long (2)

Scripture Reading — 1 Cor. 13:4a; John 8:1-11

"Neither do I condemn you," Jesus declared. "Go now and leave your life of sin." — John 8:11

According to the law of Moses, said the religious leaders, the woman caught in adultery should be stoned to death. But Moses' law really said, "If a man commits adultery with another man's wife ... both the adulterer and the adulteress must be put to death" (Leviticus 20:10). These religious leaders acted unjustly; they brought only the woman to Jesus.

But the leaders had another reason for bringing her. The Jews were a colonized people of the Roman Empire. Only the Roman government could administer the death penalty. If Jesus authorized death by stoning, he would get into trouble with Rome. But if he refused, he would get into trouble with the Jewish religious leaders.

Jesus avoided this clever trap by challenging whoever was sinless to throw the first stone. All declined and walked away; they knew that no one could say, "I have kept my heart pure; I am clean and without sin" (Proverbs 20:9). By challenging his enemies to face the truth about themselves, the Lord here showed another side of God's love that is patient, that suffers long.

Jesus did not condemn the woman, but neither did he condone her sin. Love that suffers long is forgiving, but it also challenges people to repent, to turn back to the living God for a new life of inexpressible joy. We are to imitate Jesus' way of suffering long with sinners.

Prayer

Thank you, Jesus, for forgiveness and the challenge to leave our life of sin. Holy Spirit, help us to suffer long; work through us to bring others to repentance. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Devotion topics: [Christianity](#), [Discipleship](#)

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Printed on June 24, 2019

