

# Kington Baptist Church

## MESSAGE BOARD – 90

*Do not judge, that you may not be judged. For the judgment you make will be the judgment you receive; the measure you give will be the measure you get. Why do you see the speck in your neighbour's eye, but think nothing of the log in your own eye? How can you say to your neighbour, 'Let me take the speck out of your eye,' with a log in your own eye? You hypocrite, take the log out of your own eye first, then you'll see to take the speck out of your neighbour's eye. (Matthew 7.1-5)*

**D**eeply embedded in fallen human nature is a hidden delight in gloating over the downfall and embarrassment of another human being. It was this ugly feature that drove the crowd to drag 'the woman caught in adultery' to Jesus, for him to condemn her. (John 8) It's often asked why they brought this poor woman to Jesus but not her male accomplice. It's suggested the crowd's animosity was directed only to the woman – simply because she was a woman. The man, being of no interest to the crowd, was ignored, simply because he was a man. In other words this whole episode is often presented as a matter of male superiority and abuse. But this ignores the fact that the crowd brought her to *Jesus*. Their intention was not only to expose the woman but to expose and condemn Jesus. They knew that, unlike themselves, he had no delight in gloating over the fall and destruction of another human being. The crowd considered his attitude as an affront to their understanding of the law of God – sin should be punished.

Of course the Lord Jesus insisted that sin should be punished. The reason he rejected the twisted mind of the crowd was that he knew that no one in the crowd was innocent. He knew none in the crowd were free from sin and so none in the crowd were in a position to inflict punishment on another. Indeed the challenge of Jesus to the crowd shows that he knew that no one in the crowd was free from the particular sin of this woman. Their sidling away was proof that they knew this too!

*Jesus stood up and said to them, 'Let the one among you without sin throw the first stone'. He stooped down again and wrote on the ground. Those who heard his challenge, convicted by their conscience, drifted away, one by one, beginning with the oldest through to the last. Jesus was left alone, with the woman standing in the centre. (John 8.7-9)*

It's offensive to see the grotesque headlines of newspapers when they are on a rampage of blame and accusation and vilification. It is especially disagreeable when their targets are the very people they encouraged their

readers to vote into high office. Their bigotry and hypocrisy and sheer nastiness is a thing to behold!

To avoid their web of self-righteous spleen it'd be good to remember that there is *'none righteous, no not one'*. (Romans 3.10); to remember that in the sight of God *'every mouth is stopped and all the world becomes guilty before God'*. (Romans 3.19)

William Shakespeare knew this well, and frequently reminds us:

*Use every man after his desert, and who should 'scape whipping?*  
(Hamlet)

*Wilt thou whip thine own faults in other men?* (Timon of Athens)

*... consider this, that, in the course of justice, none of us should see salvation: we do pray for mercy; and that same prayer doth teach us all to render the deeds of mercy.* (Merchant of Venice)