



Metro Calvary – Roseville CA
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May 9, 2010

The Gospel of John

The Woman Caught in Adultery – Part 2

JOHN 7:53-8:11

Related Topics: Inspiration of Scripture; Transmission of Scripture; Translation of Scripture; Application of Scripture; Jerome; Augustine; Scribes; Pharisees; Attempting To Trap Jesus; Adultery; Law of Moses; Destructiveness of Adultery; Punishment for Adultery; The Wisdom of Jesus; The Tenderness of Jesus; The Basis of Forgiveness; Jesus the Friend of Sinners;

REVIEW

This morning we are going to finish our study of the first 11 verses of John 8 — which give to us the record of a Woman caught in the act of adultery and brought before Jesus. This account actually had it's beginning back in **Chapter 7, verse 53.**

In the first 2 verses of Chapter 8 we find Jesus going to the temple early in the morning and *All the people came to him, and he sat down and taught them.* Suddenly there was a disturbance — the Scribes and Pharisees show up dragging a woman right through the crowd.

³.... and placing her in the midst ⁴they said to him, "Teacher, this woman has been caught in the act of adultery. ⁵Now in the Law Moses commanded us to stone such women. So what do you say?" ⁶This 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. ⁷And 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." ⁸And once more he bent down and wrote on the ground. ⁹But 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. ¹⁰Jesus stood up and said to her, "Woman, where are they? Has no one

condemned you?”¹¹ She said, “No one, Lord.” And Jesus said, “Neither do I condemn you; go, and from now on sin no more.”

In order for us to get the full impact of what was going on in all of this, we spent the major part of our time together last week setting the HISTORICAL, THEOLOGICAL, and CULTURAL CONTEXT in regards to the subject of Adultery. In the Old Testament adultery was a **capital offense**. The crowd in John 8 understood that in the eyes of God **adultery** is as grievous as **premeditated murder!**

WHAT WAS THE PLOT IN ALL OF THIS? WHY are these men bringing this woman before Jesus?

REMEMBER the events of **Chapter 7**. Jesus had disrupted the last day, the great day of the Feats of Booths.

John 7:37-38; 40-41 On the last day of the feast, the great day, Jesus stood up and cried out, “If anyone thirsts, let him come to me and drink.³⁸ Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, ‘Out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.’”⁴⁰ When they heard these words, some of the people said, “This really is the Prophet.”⁴¹ Others said, “This is the Christ.”

The Scribes and Pharisees had sent the temple police to take him and to incarcerate him.

***John 7:45-49** The officers then came to the chief priests and Pharisees, who said to them, “Why did you not bring him?”⁴⁶ The officers answered, “No one ever spoke like this man!”⁴⁷ The Pharisees answered them, “Have you also been deceived?⁴⁸ Have any of the authorities or the Pharisees believed in him?⁴⁹ But this crowd that does not know the law is accursed.”*

So the religious leaders are going out of their minds! They go home and come back the next day with a fresh plan to trap Jesus — one they thought — and surely appeared to be inescapable!

They catch this woman in the very act of adultery. They bring her to Jesus and what they ask Jesus what to do with her. They believe they have got him locked on the horns of three-fold dilemma.

1.) The people revered Moses. He was their great prophet and law-giver. The people revered the law of God — and so had Jesus. Jesus said, *"I'm not come to destroy the law, but to fulfill the law."* If Jesus says, *"Don't stone her,"* (by the way, they had rocks in hand) they would've said, *"This guy is not of God, for He defies Moses' law, and we all know that God gave Moses the law."*

2.) If Jesus says — *You're right, that's what the law says, stone her!* — Jesus will destroy His reputation as the prophet from Galilee who is the friend of tax collectors and sinners. The Gospels tell us that the common people heard him gladly. He ate with prostitutes and sinners — they were comfortable in His presence. He had told the people that His Father had sent Him into the world — not to condemn the world, but that the world might be saved through Him.

3.) More than that — Rome had taken from Israel the right to exercise the death sentence. In **John 18** these same men are going to bring Jesus to Pilate.

John 18:31 Pilate said to them, "Take him yourselves and judge him by your own law." The Jews said to him, "It is not lawful for us to put anyone to death."

These men know that. They don't care about any of that. By the end of the chapter (**v.59**) these same Pharisees and Scribes want to stone the Messiah.

It would appear that they have Jesus coming and going!

THE RESPONSE OF JESUS

I love what Jesus does. The first thing Jesus does is IGNORE THEM! Which, by the way, is always a great place to begin with legalists. He ignores them and begins to write in the dirt! As far as I can recall it's the **only thing** we're told that Jesus **ever wrote** — and we're not told what He wrote! There's been tons of speculation on what He wrote. There is a Biblical reference that can help us here.

Deuteronomy 9:10 And the Lord gave me the two tablets of stone written with the finger of God,

I believe we have the same thing going on here.

John 8:6Jesus bent down and wrote with his finger on the ground.

I believe that Jesus is doing as God the Father did — He is writing the law in the ground. Perhaps Jesus wrote the first line of the Tenth Commandment, *Exodus 20:17* “.....*you shall not covet your neighbor’s wife*. After all — If you have a bunch of heterosexual guys looking through a window, watching a naked woman have sex, there are going to be lust issues. Perhaps Jesus wrote with His finger the Seventh Commandment, *Exodus 20:14* “*You shall not commit adultery*

7And 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.”

He stands up and tells them — *okay, fine, we will impose Old Testament law and we will put her to death*. According to the Old Testament someone needed to step forward to cast the first stone. The Old Testament mandated that that the accuser had to be the first one to impose the penalty (**Deuteronomy 17:7**). So if you wanted someone put to death you brought the accusation and you had to throw the first stone. But you had to be very careful because if your accusation was proven false they impose upon you the same penalty you had sought against them (**Deuteronomy 19:19**). So you didn’t mess around with this.

“Let him who is without sin among you be the first to throw a stone at her.”

Jesus is not saying that you must be perfect to bring judgment upon people for their sin. In **1 Corinthians 5** Paul tells us that we should judge those who are in the household of God. Jesus had just said in the last chapter *Do not judge by appearances, but judge with right judgment (John 7:24)*. In order to judge rightly Jesus said that we should be taking care of the things that render us incapable of rightly dealing with sin in anyone else’s life.

Matthew 7:3-5 Why do you see the speck that is in your brother’s eye, but do not notice the log that is in your own eye? ⁴Or how can you say to your brother, ‘Let me take the speck out of your eye,’ when there is the log in your own eye? ⁵You hypocrite, first take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take the speck out of your brother’s eye.

So Jesus is not saying you must be perfect to point out sin in the life of another person. Otherwise no one would be able to point out sin in anyone’s life because

no one is perfect. He is saying that these men were the quintessential hypocrites. They are judging this woman for a sin they had at least committed in their heart, or had been guilty of the very act. Jesus may have known that these men were unfaithful to their own wives and were self-righteous hypocrites. It is very possible that since this woman was living a life of sexual sin (v.11) that she may have been a woman that most of these men have been with themselves. In a way, Jesus is saying, — *well if you want to put her to death, how many of you have slept with her? How many of you have been unfaithful to your wives? And how many of you were looking through the window seeing her in the very act of adultery didn't at least commit adultery with her in your own heart?*

A GLARING ABSENCE

Have you noticed something missing in all of this? Where is the guy involved in this act of adultery? *Hey Jesus, we caught this woman committing adultery **all by herself**— and we would like you to punish her.* By definition adultery requires someone else to be there. The question is where is the guy? We have no guy — which leads us to believe that this was a set up from the get-go. In all likelihood they knew that this was a promiscuous woman. So they found a guy who would be willing to cheat on his wife with the understanding that they would not drag him before Jesus.

8And once more he bent down and wrote on the ground. 9But 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.

THE ONLY MAN LEFT WITH THE WOMAN

Now there is only one man that is remaining with this convicted woman — Jesus.

HUGE QUESTION: Could Jesus have put her to death? Does Jesus **have a right** to put her to death? He does. Jesus hasn't committed sexual sin. Jesus is in fact without sin. If anyone could ever invoke capital punishment it would be Jesus. He is the sinless Son of God, God incarnate. It is His glory that has been robbed by her sin. It is His law that she has broken. But Jesus doesn't carry out the death penalty. We will get to that in a moment.

THE ONLY MAN WHO DIDN'T TAKE ADVANTAGE OF HER

DON'T MISS THIS — Jesus is the only man in the story that does not take advantage of, or abuse this woman. Men had used her for sex. The religious leaders used her as a piece of evidence in their attempt to take down Jesus. EVERY OTHER MAN involved is seeking to rob this woman of her dignity and use her for selfish gain. Jesus is the only exception.

DON'T MISS THIS — Jesus is a young man — in His early 30's — standing there with a half-naked woman who is morally loose, willing to do anything to get out of her predicament. Any other man would use that leverage for his own selfish ends. But Jesus is not just any other man. He is the PERFECT man! He doesn't think — *how can I use this woman to my own advantage?*

SHE WAS NOT A VICTIM

Having said all of that — we can't make this woman out to be a complete victim. You can't. She was set up, but she went willingly. Jesus is going to tell her to stop living the way she had been living. Adultery was pattern of conduct for this woman. She was a woman who loved to destroy marriages. This was a woman who loved to degrade wives and to rob children of their father. This is a woman who had devastated a multitude of homes. And now she's simply been caught in doing it. Again — The reason she is in this scene is because they knew that they could catch her in adultery. She's a sexually promiscuous, adulterous woman. We can't look at her and say — *oh poor lady, she's a victim, Jesus is just giving a victim a break* — and **THAT** is the big lesson here!

¹⁰Jesus stood up and said to her, “Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?” ¹¹She said, “No one, Lord.” And Jesus said, “Neither do I condemn you; go, and from now on sin no more.”]

WHAT REALLY HAPPENED

DON'T MISS THIS — Jesus looks upon her with compassion. Jesus forgives her for her sin. But it is here that MANY misunderstand what Jesus really did and why Jesus could do it. Jesus does not merely let her off the hook.

In this moment we find the answer to the great theological dilemma of many a man and woman — *How does God harmonize His justice with His mercy? If God is a*

God of righteousness and a God of justice and a God of judgment by His holy nature, she must die. If God is a God of love and of grace and of kindness and of mercy and forgiveness, she must live.

How could Jesus let her go on her way and not invoke the Old Testament penalty of death? How could Jesus let her go without violating Old Testament law? The answer is this — The penalty of death will be exacted! Paul tells us that *the wage of sin is death*. Death is the consequence of sin. There is spiritual death — Cessation of life with God; there is physical death — Cessation of biological life. Jesus can forgive this woman because Jesus is going to DIE in her place for her sin.

Hebrews 2:9 But we see him who for a little while was made lower than the angels, namely Jesus, crowned with glory and honor because of the suffering of death, so that by the grace of God he might taste death for everyone.

From this moment forward Jesus will continue to live a sinless life to the glory and honor of the Father, and then He will be nailed to a cross. The apostle Paul tells us what happened on that cross.

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

There was a great exchange that transpired on the cross. You have heard it said — *Jesus died for your sin*. That is not cliché. That means that every time you have told a lie, every time you have had sex outside of marriage, every time you have lusted in your heart, every time you have been greedy or covetous or gluttonous, every time you have done anything that is an offense and a transgression against God — Jesus paid the penalty in your place.

DON'T MISS THIS — As Jesus hangs on the cross suffering, beaten, broken, bleeding and dying, it's because that woman went to bed with that man. That's why Jesus was there on the cross. And Jesus will pay in His own body and with His own blood for her sin. And so the Old Testament will be upheld. Her sin will be punished with death — But not her own death. Jesus is punished in her place — Like the innocent lamb being sacrificed in the Old Testament.

THAT is why Jesus can forgive her. THAT is why Jesus can give her the opportunity to leave her life of sin and live in the newness of a redeemed life.

¹⁰Jesus stood up and said to her, “Woman.....”

I love how Jesus refers to her. He does not call her a whore. He does not call her a slut. He does not call her a prostitute. He does not call her a home wrecker. He calls her *Woman*. It is a term of respect. THAT is the very same term that he used in **John 2** to refer to his own mother. He would use it again speaking from the cross in **John 19**. Don't you love that? He speaks to her with dignity. He speaks to her with honor and grace and love because He saw her as no man could. He knew her as no man ever knew her. She didn't come out of the womb with long eye lashes and black eye makeup and lipstick and all of the perfumes. She was a little girl. She was somebody's little girl. In our cultural terms — there was a time in her life when she got her first dress and her first pair of patent leather shoes. There was a time when she loved grilled cheese sandwiches and PB and Js. There was a time when her mom let her wear lipstick for the first time in her life. And there was a time through one experience or another when her heart began to harden (We all have our own story). And she was used by someone who walked away and it made it easier the second time — but it made her a little harder so she wouldn't feel the pain. And she became accustomed to giving herself away and discovered how to put all the walls up. She was a woman that so badly needed a Savior! And Jesus knew that. And I can't even begin to imagine the tone of His voice when He said, *“Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?”* This may have been the first time in a great number of years that any man has spoken to her in a tone of love with dignity and with affection, not seeking to manipulate her in order to use her body. Tremendous dignity. But Jesus does not wink at her sin. He addresses it.

¹¹ And Jesus said, “Neither do I condemn you; go, and from now on sin no more.”

Look carefully at this. He didn't say — *go and sin no more and I won't condemn you*. That is legalism — not grace.

Jesus said — *Neither do I condemn you; go and be continuing in sin as a lifestyle no longer*. Those are the tenses. *I don't condemn —so now leave your life of sin and go live like a woman, like a dignified, forgiven, cleansed woman. Go live that life*.

Every man and woman who has ever known what it is to look with the eye of faith into the eyes of Jesus and hear with your heart the tone of His voice saying — *I'm not going to bring judgment on you, I'm not going to condemn you, don't live this*

way anymore — they have walked away empowered and changed. You're no longer spending your time on trying to sin and not get caught. Your spending your time trying to live for Jesus!

Did she cry? Did she fall at his feet? I love the Depiction of her in The Passion of the Christ.

I love what one author said — *The tears would come, but they would come later, years afterwards as she watched her husband go out the door to work, as she looked in the face of her children, as over and over again she heard his voice, neither do I condemn you. Don't live this way anymore.*

CLOSING

As we take time to respond to the Word — I think of how Jesus changes the lives of ALL who would come to Him. I think of the great forgiveness He extends to us. I think of the great forgiveness Jesus has extended to me. I would have never met Valerie, our lives would have never crossed paths, if Jesus hadn't saved us. I would have never looked in the face of any of my kids if Jesus hadn't said to me — *Neither do I condemn thee.* I would have never known any of the guys on staff here. ALL of that is given as a gift because of Jesus Christ.

As we take time to respond to the Word — If you have been judgmental and casting stones, get things in perspective.

As we take time to respond to the Word — If you've been living in sexual sin, pornography, look, those are serious issues. The Lord doesn't remove the seriousness of them, but He upholds before us the emblems of the vicarious power of His redemption.

For those who don't know Jesus — The Bible holds in front of us the fact that through Jesus Christ you can be forgiven. It doesn't matter what you've done today. Adultery was a capital crime. Jesus said — *I don't condemn you, but don't live this way anymore.* You can come to him today.

If you don't know Jesus — you have to understand that religious organizations are never going to do anything for you. It is Jesus who forgives — and he forgives so powerfully and so thoroughly that religious organizations — self-righteous people — stumble at it. No strings attached. If your heart is genuine He forgives.