

- I. Pressuring people to agree with us, believe like us, behave like us
  - A. John 8:1-11 . . . (John 7:53 . . . [Everyone went to his home.] But Jesus went to the Mount of Olives. [2] Early in the morning He came again into the temple, and all the people were coming to Him; and He sat down and began to teach them. [3] The scribes and the Pharisees brought a woman caught in adultery, and having set her in the center of the court, [4] they said to Him, "Teacher, this woman has been caught in adultery, in the very act. [5] Now in the Law Moses commanded us to stone such women; what then do You say?" [6] They were saying this, testing Him, so that they might have grounds for accusing Him. But Jesus stooped down and with His finger wrote on the ground. [7] But when they persisted in asking Him, He straightened up, and said to them, "He who is without sin among you, let him be the first to throw a stone at her." [8] Again He stooped down and wrote on the ground. [9] When they heard it, they began to go out one by one, beginning with the older ones, and He was left alone, and the woman, where she was, in the center of the court. [10] Straightening up, Jesus said to her, "Woman, where are they? Did no one condemn you?" [11] She said, "No one, Lord." And Jesus said, "I do not condemn you, either. Go. From now on sin no more.")
  - B. Prayer
- II. A famous story that may not have been written by John
  - A. John 8:1-2 . . . But Jesus went to the Mount of Olives. [2] Early in the morning He came again into the temple, and all the people were coming to Him; and He sat down and began to teach them.
    1. The Mount of Olives was a familiar area to Jesus.
      - a. On the west side of the mount was the Garden of Gethsemane – a place where Jesus went often enough that John points out its familiarity to Jesus and His disciples in John 18:1-2.
      - b. On the east side of the mount was the village where Mary, Martha, and Lazarus lived, and we know Jesus visited and even stayed with them on occasion.
    2. We don't know for sure where exactly on or around the Mount of Olives Jesus went on this occasion, but Luke tells us that when Jesus was in Jerusalem, teaching in the temple, He often spent the evening at the Mount of Olives. (Note Luke 21:37-38)

B. John 8:3-4 . . . The scribes and the Pharisees brought a woman caught in adultery, and having set her in the center of the court, [4] they said to Him, "Teacher, this woman has been caught in adultery, in the very act.

1. This story about the woman caught in the very act of adultery is one of the well known stories from the NT. And without question, many sermons, Bible Studies, and lessons have been taken from this story, including some that come up with intriguing speculations as to what Jesus wrote the two times He knelt down and with His finger wrote on the ground. Today, I want to confine our focus to four realities presented by this story for our consideration.
  - a. The first has to do with the role of men in the misuse and abuse of women and girls in our world.
  - b. The second has to do with the reason adultery is condemned by God.
  - c. The third will deal with judging verses not judging.
  - d. And the fourth will focus on Jesus' words, "Go. From now on sin no more."

C. The role of men in the misuse and abuse of women and girls.

1. This story tells us that it was the scribes and Pharisees who brought the adulterous woman to Jesus. And it tells us they caught this woman in the very act of intercourse.
  - a. The first thing to see here is that there was more than one witness, which was required by Jewish law. You had to have at least two and preferably three who could give honest testimony to the facts of a case. So the fact that there were more than two witnesses to the crime means these scribes and Pharisees met that requirement.
  - b. The second thing to notice here is that the scribes and Pharisees were men. There was not one woman among them. They were all men. Now if they caught a woman in the very act of adultery, there had to be a man participating just as actively as she was. And yet, they only brought the woman.
2. There is no question but that both men and women have been promiscuous, and hence both involved in adultery. But neither is there any question that – dare I say most – most men think about and view sexual activity in a significantly different way than most or at least the majority of women.

- a. We see the truth of this in the fact that women are so rarely the aggressors and perpetrators of rape, incest, sexual abuse of any kind, and adultery, that when such evils are mentioned we assume it was a man who was the aggressor or who committed the deed.
  - b. History bears a long record of soldiers raping the conquered women and girls, men of power taking advantage of younger women and girls, fathers taking advantage of their daughters, brothers taking advantage of their sisters, and men visiting female prostitutes.
  - c. My point here is that we men think about and view sexual activity in a way that is far more selfish and pleasure focused than woman, far less concerned about faithfulness, and almost unconcerned about the immediate and long-term damaging effects our misuse and abuse of women and girls has on them.
  - d. And added to all this is a view or belief popularized by the males of the middle east who claim that if they feel sexual excitement toward a female, it is her fault because he cannot help himself or prevent himself from such feelings, but she can stop herself from exciting him.
3. So where am I going with all this? These men who brought this woman to Jesus but did not bring the man she was with were acting like typical men – and that is sad. It is additionally sad that even within the religious community men too often act like the unbelieving men of the world – just as these scribes and Pharisees did.
- a. And so I want to remind each of us men here today, none of us will get away with misusing or abusing any woman or girl, for God’s word tells us that God will judge us for our immorality and mistreatment of women.
  - b. For example, we read in Proverbs 6:32-33, “The one who commits adultery with a woman is lacking sense; he who would destroy himself [is the one who commits adultery]. [33] Wounds and disgrace he will find, and his reproach will not be blotted out.”
  - c. And we read in Hebrews 13:4, “ Marriage is to be held in honor among all, and the marriage bed is to be undefiled; for fornicators and adulterers God will judge.”
- D. John 8:5-6 . . . Now in the Law Moses commanded us to stone such women; what then do You say?" [6] They were saying this, testing Him, so that they might have grounds for accusing Him. But Jesus stooped down and with His finger wrote on the ground.

1. Why would God require adulterers to be stoned? That seems like an excessively harsh sentence.
2. Let me begin by reading from Deuteronomy 22:22-27, “If a man (*notice that God starts with the male, not the female*) is found lying with a married woman, then both of them shall die, the man who lay with the woman, and the woman; thus you shall purge the evil from Israel (*looking out for the greater good*) [23] If there is a girl who is a virgin engaged to a man, and another man finds her in the city and lies with her, [24] then you shall bring them both out to the gate of that city and you shall stone them to death; the girl, because she did not cry out in the city, and the man, because he has violated his neighbor's wife. Thus you shall purge the evil from among you. [25] But if in the field the man finds the girl who is engaged, and the man forces her (*God's view of what men are like*) and lies with her, then only the man who lies with her shall die. [26] But you shall do nothing to the girl (*God assumes she did not want to participate in this activity, which is often the case even today*); there is no sin in the girl worthy of death, for just as a man rises against his neighbor and murders him, so is this case. [27] When he found her in the field, the engaged girl cried out (*God's view of the natural/normal female response to unwanted sexual activity*), but there was no one to save her.
  - a. I believe that God's choice to start with one male and one female indicates that it has been His choice all along for one male and one female to be joined together in marriage and become one flesh through intercourse.
  - b. I believe that since God only died for us humans and not for the sinful angels also, our relationship to God is like human marriage in that it is intended to be sacred and both sides are to remain faithful to the other. This is supported by the fact that God talks about the sinfulness of His children as adultery like unto adultery in marriage.
3. My point here is that the tolerance of adultery as if it is okay or nothing to get too upset about opens the door for the decline and demise of marriage between a man and a woman, and the marriage that takes place between God and those who repent and come to faith in Jesus. And this decline or demise is ultimately so destructive to the well-being of both kinds of marriage and both realms – the human realm and the heavenly or eternal realm, that forbidding adultery and resisting it in any amount is essential for life to be as good as God intends it to be.

4. Therefore, God condemns adultery in the strongest terms, and so should we. And yet, God did not have David put to death for his adultery, and we see in this story that Jesus did not have this woman put to death for her adultery. Which means, we are left to walk a path of hating and resisting – in ourselves, in our home, and in our culture the evil of adultery while being compassionate and merciful to those who commit such sin.
- E. There is one more point to make from vs 5-6, and this point deals with John's words that the scribes and Pharisees were doing this to test Jesus.
1. This test was a well-calculated test in that it put Jesus in a no-win situation.
  2. If He said the woman should not be stoned, He would be guilty of breaking the Law of Moses and subject to the legal ramifications of doing so.
  3. If He said the woman should be stoned, He would be guilty of treason against Rome for publicly declaring that His followers should rebel against Rome's laws that forbid their subjects to judicially kill anyone. The death penalty was to be in Rome's hands alone, which is why the religious leaders needed Pilate's approval to kill Jesus.
- F. John 8:7 . . . But when they persisted in asking Him, He straightened up, and said to them, "He who is without sin among you, let him be the first to throw a stone at her."
1. The third thing I want to talk about in relation to this story deals with judging others. It is not uncommon for this story to be used as proof that judging each other is wrong, or as if we must be sinless to judge. However, neither conclusion is true. Let me explain.
  2. There are several identifying marks of the kind of judging God is against. Here are just three.
    - a. One mark of ungodly judging is judging that is driven by the hatred of a particular sin in someone else while not having that same kind of hatred for some particular sin in yourself. This kind of judging strongly condemns the wrong in others while overlooking and justifying what is wrong in ourselves.
    - b. A second mark of ungodly judging is condemning and seeking to remove the small wrong in someone else while allowing some far greater wrong to continue unchallenged in yourself.
    - c. And a third sign of ungodly judging happens when the more mature Christians look down on the less mature Christians with

arrogance, and in pride try to change them. Or it happens when the less mature Christians look on the more mature with contempt as if the more rigid and stringent forms of religious practiced by the less mature are more godly than the freer forms of religion practice by the more mature.

3. On the other hand, God does ask us to judge ourselves and other believers. This kind of judging is intended to protect and promote the purity of the church, the spiritual health of individual believers, the good of the home, and the welfare of the community. For example:
    - a. Galatians 6:1 . . . Brethren, even if anyone is caught in any trespass, you who are spiritual, restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness; each one looking to yourself, so that you too will not be tempted.
    - b. 1 Corinthians 5:9-13 . . . I wrote you in my letter not to associate with immoral people; [10] I did not at all mean with the immoral people of this world, or with the covetous and swindlers, or with idolaters, for then you would have to go out of the world. [11] But actually, I wrote to you not to associate with any so-called brother if he is an immoral person, or covetous, or an idolater, or a reviler, or a drunkard, or a swindler—not even to eat with such a one. [12] For what have I to do with judging outsiders? Do you not judge those who are within the church? [13] But those who are outside, God judges. Remove the wicked man from among yourselves.
  4. The truth I hope we can see is that God forbids the wrong kind of judging, but encourages and commends the right kind of judging.
- G. John 8:8-11 . . . Again He stooped down and wrote on the ground. [9] When they heard it (*probably someone read out loud what Jesus wrote*), they began to go out one by one, beginning with the older ones, and He was left alone, and the woman, where she was, in the center of the court. [10] Straightening up, Jesus said to her, "Woman, where are they? Did no one condemn you?" [11] She said, "No one, Lord." And Jesus said, "I do not condemn you, either. Go. From now on sin no more."]
1. What did Jesus write with His finger on the ground? Why did the older ones leave first and the younger ones last? I don't know, and the best I can do is speculate. But I won't.
  2. Instead, I want to talk about Jesus' words, "Go. From now on sin no more." This is the second time Jesus is recorded as saying "sin no more" to someone. The first time appears in John 5:14, when He

reconnected with the lame man He had healed by the pool of Bethesda. In addition, only John's gospel includes these words, which should not surprise us since he includes similar words in his epistles –

- a. 1 John 2:1 . . . I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin.
  - b. 1 John 3:3-6 . . . And everyone who has this hope fixed on Him purifies himself, just as He is pure. [4] Everyone who practices sin also practices lawlessness; and sin is lawlessness. [5] You know that He appeared in order to take away sins; and in Him there is no sin. [6] No one who abides in Him sins; no one who sins has seen Him or knows Him.
3. It is my experience that we try to humanize sin by proclaiming – over and over – that no one is sinless, which is used to imply that therefore we should not take sinning too seriously.
  4. Well, the truth is, no one ever has or ever will live a sinless life except Jesus Christ. However, that does not change the fact that sin is a big deal. It's affect on us and those around us has present and eternal consequences that add to and bring about the destruction of all that is good and godly and promotes all that damages and destroys. This is a big deal!! And for this reason alone we ought to war against sin in ourselves, first and foremost, and in our world.
    - a. I believe the Bible makes it clear that we ought to put a stop to all the sin we know we are committing, and especially those sins we are committing over and over again.
    - b. It ought to be our purposed intention to grow in godliness to that place where we are conformed to the likeness of Jesus Christ, where we are holy in all our behavior just as He is holy, and to where we love and please God as we ought as Christ-ones.
  5. Might we still sin along the way? Yes, but it ought never be an intentional, deliberate, or pre-planned sin. For example, to commit adultery, we must find a partner, get into a setting where we can participate in such activity, remove our clothing, or a sufficient amount, and then proceed. All this takes time, which gives us ample time to stop, walk away, repent, and return to doing what we know is right and good in the eyes of God.
  6. Will we sin? Most likely. Is it less sinful if we sin carelessly or thoughtlessly? No! But it ought to be our intention, day by day, to live godly, resist sinning so that we don't intentionally sin, and if we do sin, repent and return as quickly as possible to living Godly.