

No Condemnation—Now, Sin No More!

John 8:1-11

Thought for the Day: Through the Lord Jesus Christ, God offers His mercy and forgiveness to us. "There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus" (Romans 8:1). Our grateful response should be to turn away and put away sin from our lives.

"This story, though probably authentic, is omitted in many manuscripts and may not have been originally a part of this Gospel." (*Ryrie Study Bible, footnote on John 7:53-8:11, p. 1615*)

"This disputed passage is probably a true apostolic tradition introduced by some later editor of the Gospel, but it is so characterized by 'the wisdom, holiness, and goodness of Him to whom it is attributed [the Lord Jesus Christ], that it could no more have been invented than any other feature in the inimitable Life of Christ.'" (*Charles Erdman, John, p. 79*)

I believe that John 8:1-11 is an accurate account of an actual event that occurred in the life and ministry of Jesus that was handed down by oral tradition for some time before finally being recorded and inserted into the biblical text. It is a beautiful picture of God's grace and mercy, His love and forgiveness, extended to us. It is therefore worthy of our consideration.

53 [[They went each to his own house, 1 but Jesus went to the Mount of Olives.

- The Feast of Tabernacles was over (chapter 7); the crowds of people and the religious leaders returned to their own homes.
- "Some had met the Savior face to face and trusted in Him. But the majority had rejected Him, and the leaders of the Jewish people were now more determined than ever to do away with Him. They considered Him a threat to their religion and way of life."
(*MacDonald, p. 2130*)
- Jesus went to the Mount of Olives, just across the Kidron Valley from the city of Jerusalem, to spend the night.

2 Early in the morning he came again to the temple. All the people came to him, and he sat down and taught them.

- Sitting was the normal posture of teachers at that time.

3 The scribes and the Pharisees brought a woman who had been caught in adultery, and placing her in the midst 4 they said to him, "Teacher, this woman has been caught in the act of adultery.

- The scribes copied and taught the Scriptures; they were experts in the interpretation of the Mosaic Law.
- The Pharisees were the largest group of religious leaders in Israel. They were known for their strict adherence to the Mosaic Law and the oral traditions. They were the dominant religious influence among the Jewish people.
- The requirements for a charge of adultery were very strict: 1) There had to be at least two witnesses; 2) The people had to be caught in the very act.
- "The incident was staged to trap Jesus...and provision had been made for the man to escape." (*NIV Study Bible, p. 1611*)
- It was unnecessary for these men to bring this woman before the Lord. They could have held her in custody, simply presented the facts of the case to Jesus, and asked for His opinion. They wanted to humiliate Jesus as much as they were humiliating the woman.

5 Now in the Law Moses commanded us to stone such women. So what do you say?"

- The Law of Moses prescribed stoning of women in two instances: 1) Single women who were engaged to be married (the situation with the Virgin Mary – Mt. 1:18-22); 2) Married women who were guilty of adultery; the man was to be stoned, as well (Leviticus 20:10).
- The religious leaders were not motivated by love for God, zeal for righteousness, nor a passion for purity and holiness; they were trying to trap Jesus on the horns of a dilemma.
 - If He prescribed leniency for the woman, He would be breaking the Mosaic Law.
 - If He recommended stoning, He would be breaking Roman law.

6a This they said to test him, that they might have some charge to bring against him.

- "The Pharisees' motive was obvious: they were merely using the woman in an attempt to trap Jesus. There was something far more important to them than seeing justice done; they were testing Him, so that they might have grounds for accusing Him. As was so often the case, they were trying to force Jesus to say something that they could use to destroy Him." (*MacArthur New Testament Commentary*)

6b Jesus bent down and wrote with his finger on the ground.

- There is a lot of speculation about what Jesus wrote; we simply don't know!

7 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." 8 And once more he bent down and wrote on the ground.

- "The Lord's reply was simple, yet profound. It upheld the Law, since He did not deny the woman's guilt, and broadened the Law's power by exposing the sins of the accusers. It also avoided the charge of instigating an execution in violation of Roman authority, since the Lord put the responsibility back on the accusers. And it mercifully spared the woman from being stoned for her sin." (*MacArthur New Testament Commentary*)
- "How are we to apply Jesus' statement about only sinless persons rendering judgment? Jesus was not saying that only perfect, sinless people can make accurate accusations, pass judgment, or exact a death penalty. Nor was he excusing adultery or any other sin by saying that everyone sins. This event illustrates that wise judgment flows out of honest motives. Jesus resolved an injustice about to be committed by exposing the hypocrisy of the witnesses against the woman. By making the accusers examine themselves, he exposed their real motives." (*MacArthur New Testament Commentary*)

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. 10 Jesus stood up and said to her, "Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?"

- The woman's accusers were convicted by their own guilty conscience! "Those who came to put Jesus to shame left ashamed; those who came to condemn the woman went away condemned." (*MacArthur*)

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

- The Lord's forgiveness does not imply license to sin. Jesus did not condemn her, but He did command her to abandon her sinful lifestyle.