

## Grace and Truth (subtitle: The Woman in the Temple)

John 8:1-11 New American Standard Bible (NASB)

*But Jesus went to the Mount of Olives. <sup>2</sup> And early in the morning He came again into the temple area, and all the people were coming to Him; and He sat down and began teaching them. <sup>3</sup> Now the scribes and the Pharisees \*brought a woman caught in the act of adultery, and after placing her in the center of **the courtyard**, <sup>4</sup> they \*said to Him, “Teacher, this woman has been caught **in the very act** of committing adultery. <sup>5</sup> Now in **the Law**, Moses commanded us to stone such women; what then do You say?” <sup>6</sup> Now they were saying this to test Him, so that they might have grounds for accusing Him. But Jesus stooped down and with His finger wrote on the ground. <sup>7</sup> 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.” <sup>8</sup> And again He stooped down and wrote on the ground. <sup>9</sup> Now when they heard this, they began leaving, one by one, beginning with the older ones, and He was left alone, and the woman where she was, in the center of the courtyard. <sup>10</sup> And straightening up, Jesus said to her, “Woman, where are they? Did no one condemn you?” <sup>11</sup> She said, “No one, Lord.” And Jesus said, “**I do not condemn you, either. Go. From now on do not sin any longer.**”*

### Introduction

Our walk with Jesus continues. Today, we are still in Jerusalem. In the Temple of God, to be exact. It's early in the morning. Jesus the Teacher is seated in the Temple court and all others are listening as they stand around Him. He is teaching the Word of God. His teaching is disrupted, however, when a group of men, the scribes and the Pharisees, dragged a woman in front of Jesus. Everything stops. Everyone's eyes are fixed on the woman. An instant court is set up: Jesus as the Judge. The case: the scribes and Pharisees vs. a woman. The charge? Adultery. That's where we are now.

### Content

v. 3-4: <sup>3</sup> Now the scribes and the Pharisees \***brought** a woman caught in the act of adultery, and after placing her in the center of **the courtyard**, <sup>4</sup> they \*said to Him, “Teacher, this woman has been caught **in the very act** of committing adultery.

*This woman has been caught in committing adultery!* One man shouted to Jesus. *Red handed!* Another man cried out pointing his finger at her. She has no defender with her.

This is how the devil brings charges against us in the heavenly court. Toward us, the devil shouts, *S/he is guilty. Caught in the very act!* Like the woman, we too stand before God helpless and speechless.

v. 5:<sup>5</sup> Now in **the Law**, Moses commanded us to stone such women; **what then do You say?"**

**The Law:** Torah. Guess what? The accusers use the very Law of God against the woman. *Stone her!* They shout. *Keep God's Law!* They demand. They are referring to Leviticus 20:10: *'If there is a man who commits adultery with another man's wife, one who commits adultery with his friend's wife, **the adulterer and the adulteress** shall surely be put to death.* Wait a minute! The Law says, **both**, doesn't it? Observation: where is the man, the other adulterer? Why only the woman here?

Our enemy Satan makes such a scolding and merciless accusation against us in front of God the Judge, crying out, *"S/he broke the Law! S/he deserves to die and be punished!"* We stand guilty as charged.

**What then do You say?** It is a trap question. If Jesus said, *"Yes, go ahead and stone her,"* then they would have stoned her to death, also accused Jesus of no mercy or grace. If He said, *"No, don't,"* then they would've accused Him of not keeping the Law of Moses. Therefore, they would argue, *He is not from God.* A Catch-22! What do you do?

v. 6:<sup>6</sup> Now they **were saying** this to test Him, so that they might have grounds for accusing Him. But Jesus stooped down and with His finger **wrote on the ground.**

They **were saying** this: in Greek grammar—imperfect tense—repeated action. They kept asking Jesus, *what then do you say? Hello, we are waiting!* But Jesus wouldn't say a word while He is writing something on the ground with His finger.

**Wrote on the ground:** We don't exactly know what He was writing. Some believe that it might have been the Ten commandments. Others think that He was writing down some specific sins of the very accusers. Perhaps, He was writing down how God understands adultery. Matthew 5:27-28. <sup>27</sup> *"You have heard that it was said, 'YOU SHALL NOT COMMIT ADULTERY';* <sup>28</sup> *but I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman with lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart."* Ouch! I bet all those accusers were guilty of that!

Perhaps, Jesus was writing down other types of sins such as murder: Once again, let's listen to Jesus: *But I say to you that everyone who is angry with his brother shall be guilty*

before the court; and whoever says to his brother, 'You good-for-nothing,' shall be guilty before the supreme court; and whoever says, 'You fool,' shall be guilty enough to go into the fiery hell (Matthew 5:22). God's Word also says, Everyone who **hates** his brother is a murderer (1 John 3:15).

To those folks who might have escaped all the charges above, Jesus still says in Mark 7:20-22: *That which proceeds out of the man, that is what defiles the man.* <sup>21</sup> For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed the evil thoughts, fornications, thefts, murders, adulteries, <sup>22</sup> deeds of coveting and wickedness, as well as deceit, sensuality, envy, slander, pride and foolishness. Are you still not guilty of any of these sins?

One way or another, we find ourselves sinners. This is what the Bible says about us humans: Romans 3:23: for **all have sinned** and fall short of the glory of God. We all are sinners. No exception. The accusers in today's story are sinners too, yet, they seem unaware of this truth and keep pressing on Jesus. "What do you say?"

v. 7-8: <sup>7</sup> 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.**" <sup>8</sup> And again He stooped down and wrote on the ground.

Here's the killer statement: *Whosoever is without sin, let him be the first to throw a stone at her!* Only Jesus can come up with such a statement.

v. 9: <sup>9</sup> Now when they heard this, they began leaving, one by one, beginning with the older ones, and He was left alone, and the woman where she was, in the center of the courtyard.

The accusers, convicted in their hearts of their sins, sheepishly disappeared one by one, beginning with the older ones, until only Jesus and the woman were left. That's what God will do with us in the heavenly court. *We must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may be recompensed for his deeds in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad* (2 Corinthians 5:10). All the wrongs we have done will be presented against us and we will be found guilty as charged. However, at that very moment, Jesus will come up with the clincher: Father, let them go, for I have paid the wages of their sins once and for all. Hallelujah! Amen. *For those who are in Christ Jesus, there is no condemnation* (Romans 8:1).

v. 10-11: <sup>10</sup> *And straightening up, Jesus said to her, “Woman, where are they? Did no one condemn you?”* <sup>11</sup> *She said, “No one, Lord.” And Jesus said, “**I do not condemn you, either. Go. From now on do not sin any longer.**”*

No one should condemn each other. That’s God’s verdict. God gives no authority to anyone but Christ to condemn. Although Jesus could’ve condemned her, He chose not to. Likewise, God lavished on us His mercy so that we don’t receive what we deserve and find instead forgiveness in Christ (Ephesians 1:7-8). Thanks be to God!

Two Lessons: All Have Sinned, Sin No More.

**All Have Sinned:** The problem in today’s world: too many people play God. They are too quick to judge and condemn others. That’s what Jesus detests. No one should condemn anyone else. Why? Because only the sinless can judge the sinners. Since we all have sinned, we are automatically disqualified to condemn others. God is the only One who can judge and condemn any soul. No humans. Period. Listen one more time: *for **all have sinned** and fall short of the glory of God* (Romans 3:23). Christ alone can judge.

**Go. From now on, sin no more:** The best part of the story. This is what made me fall in love with the Lord Jesus Christ! *Go in peace. I do not condemn you, either. Sin no more.* Grace is offered, YET truth is not compromised. I see the divine balance here. Grace is offered to the sinner, yet sin is not condoned, either. Forgiveness is granted with no compromise of truth. Remember: Jesus is merciful, yet He doesn’t condone sin. Jesus is full of grace, yet He doesn’t annul God’s Law. Grace and Truth are inseparable.

The lesson? We ought to practice the same with each other. Offer God’s love, grace, and mercy to the guilty, yet at no expense to truth. Truth without grace is harsh and judgmental. It creates a rebellious child. Grace without truth is not love. It is cheap and uncaring. It creates a spoiled child.

## Conclusion

Recap: God alone can judge or condemn people. No humans should. All have sinned. We all need the Redeemer. Also, remember the two sides of a coin: grace and truth. Mercy and justice always go together. *His mercy is everlasting, And His truth endures to all generations* (Psalm 100:5). Practice love in truth and uphold truth in love. That’s how God did with us: He upheld the truth that the wages of our sin must be paid through death, so He sent Christ the sinless to the cross on our behalf. Because of His sacrifice, God forgives us our sins and offers salvation through His grace and love. The same Christ says to all this

morning: Go, your sins are pardoned, but sin no more. That's the core of the Gospel/Good News/Christianity/ and our beliefs. Amen.