

He Loved Me...

He Loves Me Lots

The Gospel of John

Text

John 8:1-11

Topic

Jesus foils the the plan of the Scribes
and Pharisees to discredit Him by
exploiting the woman caught in adultery

Title

***“You Don’t Stone Me,
I’m Not One of Your Little Ploys”***

Living on a sail boat docked in a private marina, having a pet alligator named Elvis, driving a Ferrari Daytona Spyder, packing a Bren Ten in a shoulder holster...All while wearing fashionable pastels.

Miami Vice made it seem so cool.

Vice is the arm of the police department concerned with immoral activities, e.g., sex crimes. I’m pretty certain being among that criminal element isn’t as Crockett & Tubbs as it is on film.

The Sex Crimes Task Force of the Scribes & Pharisees brought a woman to Jesus whom they had newly caught in the vice of adultery.

It reads like a sting operation. She was seized at the opportune moment for them to use her against their real target, Jesus.

The woman deserved stoning. Jesus seemed entrapped in a lose-lose situation.

Never go up against the Galilean when salvation is on the line.

I'll organize my comments around two points: **#1 Jesus Stooped To Save You**, and **#2 Jesus Is Sure To Sanctify You**.

#1 - Jesus Stooped To Save You (v1-9)

First things first. In your Bible, you most likely have a footnote that says something like, "The earliest and most reliable manuscripts do not have John 7:53-8:11." Should we therefore ignore them?

There is a long, but ultimately satisfying, answer for those of you who want to dig into how we got our Bible and the scholarly discipline of textual criticism. For our purposes today, two quotes will suffice.

- * One of the strongest advocates that these verses were *not* originally part of the Gospel of John is D.A. Carson. After he convincingly shows why they were not, he says, "On the other hand, there is little reason for doubting that the event here described occurred, even if in its written form it did not in the beginning belong to the canonical books."
- * R.C. Sproul likewise said, "The overwhelming consensus of textual critics is that it was not [originally] part of the Gospel of John. At the same time, the overwhelming consensus is that this account *is* authentic, it's apostolic, and it should be contained in any edition of the New Testament. I believe it is nothing less than the Word of God."

These verses were not in the original Gospel of John, but they are authentic and apostolic and belong in the Bible.

(Jacob Kelso will be in the Welcome Center to answer your questions. I'll be doing pastor pours in the Café).

Joh 8:1 But Jesus went to the Mount of Olives.

The annual Feast of Tabernacles ended. Jesus and His disciples were camping on the Mount of Olives.

The Mount of Olives, or Mount Olivet, has been a Jewish graveyard for the past three thousand years. One resource says that the remains of more than 150,000 are there.

A great deal of biblical action takes place on the Mount of Olives:

- It was there that He gave His talk on future events we call the Olivet Discourse.
- The Garden of Gethsemane is at the base of the Mount of Olives.
- Jesus ascended into Heaven from Olivet.
- The Mount of Olives is where Jesus will touch down in His Second Coming.

Charles Spurgeon reminds us, *“Possibly, in all Judaea, there was only that one houseless man! Certainly there was no other who was so voluntarily houseless as Himself. He had brought Himself down from the glories of His Father’s court, from the majesty of reigning with His Father in Heaven to become dependent upon the bounty of His own disciples for His daily bread.”*

Joh 8:2 Now early in the morning He came again into the temple, and all the people came to Him; and He sat down and taught them.

It was the custom for the teacher to sit and the disciples to stand. Jesus sat down, signaling that He was going to teach.

Joh 8:3 Then the scribes and Pharisees brought to Him a woman caught in adultery...

“Fornication” is consensual sexual intercourse between two people not married to each other.

When one or more of the partners having consensual sexual intercourse is married, it is “adultery.”

There are sexual sins.

We don’t need to list and describe them. In 1986 The Meese Report was published. It’s official title was the Final Report of the Attorney General’s Commission on Pornography. Prominent Christian leaders were on the commission. They watched hundreds of hours of porn in order to give informed opinions.

We need only refer to God’s standard for human sexuality. Here is a report in thirty-four words:

God's gift of sex is to be enjoyed in a biblical marriage between one biological man and one biological woman who are heterosexual and monogamous. Their marriage is a covenant of life-long companionship.

Anything not this...is sin.

"Caught in adultery" means she was caught in the act, or as one paraphrase has it, "caught in bed with." With who? The man deserved punishment.

This was a sting. They needed one adulterer in order to try to discredit the Lord. They most likely let the man go.

The exploitation of this woman was itself a heinous sin, compounded by the fact it was perpetrated by the religious authorities.

People are not commodities to be exploited. Churches employ professional fundraising organizations. They guarantee that if you follow their methods, you will raise the funds that you need. Trouble is, you have to begin looking at families as, and this is their description, "giving units," capable of giving more than they already are. It reduces people to commodities that can be tapped.

Joh 8:3 ... And when they had set her in the midst,

No need to over-dramatize this by saying she was naked. Disheveled, for sure.

Joh 8:4 they said to Him, "Teacher, this woman was caught in adultery, in the very act.

She was guilty and deserved the punishment prescribed by the Law. Notwithstanding that under Roman rule the Jews were powerless to execute.

Joh 8:5 Now Moses, in the law, commanded us that such should be stoned. But what do You say?"

Stoning is the biblically prescribed punishment for a betrothed virgin who is sexually unfaithful to her fiancé, a punishment to be meted out upon both transgressors (Deuteronomy 22:23-24). Death is prescribed for unfaithful wives and their lovers, but no method is specified (Deuteronomy 22:22).

"What do you say" Jesus? One commentator writes,

"If Jesus disavowed the law of Moses, His credibility would be instantly undermined. If He upheld the law of Moses, He would be supporting a position which would have been hard to square with His well-known compassion."

Joh 8:6 This they said, testing Him, that they might have *something* of which to accuse Him...

What must it have been like in meetings these religious authorities attended trying to come up with ways to undermine the Lord? Give them props for creativity, but they are a lot like cartoon villains whose plans always go awry, e.g., Wile E. Coyote, or Dr. Heinz Doofenshmirtz.

Joh 8:6 ... but Jesus stooped down and wrote on the ground with *His* finger, as though He did not hear.

Every commentator starts by correctly pointing out that we cannot know what Jesus "wrote on the ground with His finger." They then spend page-after-page presenting theories and guesses.

Consider the setting. This takes place in the Temple - meaning they are standing on stone flooring, not dirt. Whatever Jesus "wrote," He wrote *in dirt or dust on stone*.

Some suggest Jesus wrote the names of the accusers and, next to their names, their sins.

Others say He wrote out the Ten Commandments as the "finger of God."

Have you ever tried to write in dust? "Wash Me" takes up about two feet of space.

It is always best to let the Bible comment upon itself. In the Book of Jeremiah we read:

Jer 17:13 O LORD, the hope of Israel, All who forsake You shall be ashamed. "Those who depart from Me Shall be **written in the earth**, Because they have forsaken the LORD, The **fountain of living waters.**"

- The day before, Jesus had given a talk about rivers (fountains?) of living water.
- The religious leaders were forsaking Him; "No living water for you!"
- He was writing.

Jesus didn't need to write in the dust in any intelligible way. In fact, the word can be translated *drawing*. His mere doodling would send them to the passage that predicted "writing in the Earth." **They were fulfilling its sad prediction.**

Joh 8:7 So when they continued asking Him, He raised Himself up and said to them, "He who is without sin among you, let him throw a stone at her first."

Whether she deserved to be stoned or not, Jesus altered the no-win scenario. Go ahead and stone her, but anyone who picked-up a stone was thereby declaring that they were without sin.

Joh 8:8 And again He stooped down and wrote on the ground.

Jesus was "seated." It would seem that He bent down while seated. I am struck by His "stooping."

This was body language. He was stooped low before His Father, in the humbling bow of a servant, handling this situation as commanded.

His doodling is so weird to us that we try to suggest what Jesus wrote in order to make Jesus' response less odd. God uses the foolish to confound the wise. We are the foolish, and He calls upon us to do things that are foolish. Almost every character in the Bible was tasked to do something that seemed foolish. Just ask Isaiah, whom for three years God had deliver His message naked (Isaiah 20:1-2).

You should be able to think of a time God asked you to do something like doodling in the dirt.

Joh 8:9 Then those who heard *it*, being convicted by *their* conscience, went out one by one, beginning with the oldest *even* to the last. And Jesus was left alone, and the woman standing in the midst.

The *Forerunner Bible Commentary* says, "Conscience acts as a moral governor." The apostle Paul writes that even people who are not yet called by God are still equipped with conscience as a moral guide (Romans 2:14-15). Over time your conscience can become violated, seared, or defiled by ignoring it. It must be biblically trained.

Murderous though they were, the Scribes and Pharisees still had a conscience.

No one would declare that they were altogether sinless. Righteous, yes, but not sinless. Jesus was the only one who did not need to leave. Only He could have picked up a stone.

In verse nine, "one by one" meant these Scribes & Pharisees left in order of rank. They couldn't go so far as declaring themselves sinless, but they were ranking themselves according to their standard of righteousness.

Two things to point out:

1. Jesus became the woman's advocate.
2. Jesus was without sin.

An advocate represents his client before the judge or judges. Jesus argued her case by suggesting all of them deserved some sort of punishment for sin. Four fingers were pointing back at them.

Jesus exclusively represents guilty sinners deserving of punishment. Because He is a man and sinless, He can do more than advocate. He can take the place of sinners. He can die in your place, substituting Himself for you, in order to satisfy the penalty you deserve for sin.

God thereby remains just for judging sin by His prescribed penalty of death, but He is able to forgive sinners because their debt has been paid in full.

God is both *just* and the *justifier* of sinners who believe in Jesus.

#2 - Jesus Is Sure To Sanctify You (v10-11)

Do you believe that "He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ"?(Philippians 1:6). Hold your answer in mind. We will, as they say, "circle back" to it.

Joh 8:10 When Jesus had raised Himself up and saw no one but the woman, He said to her, "Woman, where are those accusers of yours? Has no one condemned you?"

One-on-one. Notwithstanding the value of stadium evangelism and calling sinners forward, one-on-one is how you and I are commissioned to reach the world for the

Lord. Polls show that the people who come to stadiums or churches do so because they were personally invited.

Something is wrong on Earth. The apostle Paul put it this way:

"[Humans are] filled with all unrighteousness, sexual immorality, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, evil-mindedness; they are whisperers, backbiters, haters of God, violent, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, undiscerning, untrustworthy, unloving, unforgiving, unmerciful... (Romans 1:29-32).

Sin is what is wrong.

We must reintroduce "sin" as a concept people understand. It needs to once again become a powerful descriptor of human behavior.

Dr Karl Menninger, called the Freud of America, wrote a book in 1973 that shocked his secular colleagues. It was titled, *Whatever Became of Sin?*

The book was in response to dealing with patients whose mental problems were the direct result of sin. He addressed the idea that we rationalize and glaze over what we used to call sin. The book professes to offer new hope for real emotional health through moral values.

One way to talk about sin is to emphasize God's absolute holiness. Jesus raised the standard of righteousness to absolute perfection in deed and in thought. That is, of course, impossible for us. It is why we need saving.

Joh 8:11 She said, "No one, Lord." And Jesus said to her, "Neither do I condemn you; go and sin no more."

There are a few translations that say, "No **man**, Lord." No mere "man" condemns sinners. We are sinners because we fall short of the glory of our thrice-holy God. It is in that fallen condition, that hellish, hopeless state, that you are drawn to "the Lord." He is a man, like you, but more than a man. He is God in human flesh. He is the unique God-man. He did not come to condemn you, but to save you.

While we are marveling at how much the Bible can say in so few words, we read, "Go, and sin no more."

- Jesus telling her to stop sinning indicates what she had done was sin. Biblical marriage remains in effect regardless what our surrounding culture collapses into.
- Telling her to stop sinning was a call for her to repent.
- She could turn *to* God *from* sin and find in her relationship with Jesus the freedom from continuing in sin.

Think about that. Jesus told her she could be free from sin. She could overcome sexual sin. He told her this before God the Holy Spirit was given to indwell us. *How much more can we experience freedom from sin with God the Holy Spirit in us.*

Her ordeal was far from over. Forgiven by God, severe consequences awaited her:

- Betrothed or married, she would face the possibility of divorce.
- She would be shunned in her community.
- On top of that, she would be persecuted for believing Jesus.

Hey there, lonely girl, is how we must take our leave of her. Notwithstanding that there is a typically false Roman Catholic tradition that she was none other than Mary Magdalene, **we know nothing about her after she met Jesus and went to sin no more.**

I asked the question, "Do you believe that 'He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ' "?

The answer is, "Yes," and that means we can confidently say **the woman caught in adultery was saved.**

If that doesn't convince you, consider this. Would Jesus tell a nonbeliever, "Go and sin no more?" No.

Our friends at gotquestions.org go so far as to say the following: "It goes without saying that the woman caught in adultery did not return to her infidelity. She had met Jesus. She would not be perfect. No one is. But she was forever changed."

Go, and sin no more," is a good summary of what we call *sanctification*. Salvation is a three-step promise:

1. When you believe Jesus, you are saved.

2. Everyday thereafter God is working in you to conform you into the image of Jesus. This is your sanctification.
3. The process is completed when you are resurrected or raptured, which is called being glorified. You will have a heavenly body incapable of sin.

"Go, and sin no more," is your daily word from the Lord, along with the enabling to obey it that comes from yielding to the indwelling God the Holy Spirit.

You won't be *sinless* until you are glorified. But you can *sin less* in obedience to the Spirit. Bonhoeffer said, "Being a Christian is less about cautiously avoiding sin than about courageously and actively doing God's will."

One final question: Are you caught in some sin?

- If not a believer, come to Jesus, then "Go, and sin no more."
- If a believer, "Go, and sin no more."