

The text is John 8:3-11 as we consider the phrase, “Go and sin no more.”

(John 8:3) And the scribes and Pharisees brought unto him a woman taken in adultery; and when they had set her in the midst, (4) They say unto him, Master, this woman was taken in adultery, in the very act. (5) Now Moses in the law commanded us, that such should be stoned: but what sayest thou? (6) This they said, tempting him, that they might have to accuse him. But Jesus stooped down, and with his finger wrote on the ground, as though he heard them not. (7) So when they continued asking him, he lifted up himself, and said unto them, He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her. (8) And again he stooped down, and wrote on the ground. (9) And they which heard it, being convicted by their own conscience, went out one by one, beginning at the eldest, even unto the last: and Jesus was left alone, and the woman standing in the midst. (10) When Jesus had lifted up himself, and saw none but the woman, he said unto her, Woman, where are those thine accusers? hath no man condemned thee? (11) She said, No man, Lord. And Jesus said unto her, Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more.

Here we have a woman caught in a sinful act and was standing before the Lord. We learn from the text that those that brought her there did not do so out of genuine concern but rather as an attempt to ensnare Jesus. They were trying to get him to say something that would give them cause to accuse him. Regardless of motive, here we find the woman before the Lord blotted with sin and guilty of breaking the law. She was probably wishing she wasn't there. I can only imagine she is standing there with her head hung low in shame. She was guilty of adultery.

Adultery is wrong and sinful and will not go before God unpunished. There are a number of places where scripture tells of the condemnation of adultery. Under the Law of Moses, adultery was punishable by death. *Lev 20:10 And the man that committeth adultery with another man's wife, even he that committeth adultery with his*

neighbour's wife, the adulterer and the adulteress shall surely be put to death. Notice that both the adulterer and adulteress were put to death. In our text, a couple was caught in the act of adultery, but where is the guilty man? Why wasn't he too brought before Jesus? This is simply another illustration how the Jewish leaders had distorted the old law and consider the woman inferior. I wonder too how it was they caught them in the very act of adultery. Were they spying on the woman and waited until just the right moment to rush into her house? Was the man part of them and this was a setup? We'll never know those answers but we do know that they brought only the woman before Jesus in an attempt to ensnare him (v6).

Adultery is also wrong under the law of Christ and is punishable by eternal death. For 1 Cor 6:9-10 clearly tells us that adulterers will not inherit the kingdom of God. Then we are told in Gal 5:19 ff. that adultery is a work of the flesh and will not inherit the kingdom of God. Adultery was and still is wrong and the Lord in this story by no sense condones or authorizes or says it's okay to commit adultery.

There are times we all have found ourselves in positions that we did not want to be. Maybe there have been times when we say with confidence, *"That will never happen to me. I will never find myself in that place or in that circumstance."* A word of caution. The scripture tells us that ***we all sin and fall short of the glory of God (Rom 3:23)***. And since we sin and fall short of the mark, we will at times find ourselves in less than ideal situations. We will find ourselves in bad circumstances. We might even say, *"I don't want to be here. This is not how I want to deal with things."* Well that's all well and good. You might not want to be there, but you are. I think the woman wished she was not an adulteress, but she was and here she is. Now she had to deal with the situation from where she was. She can't change her circumstance.

You know Paul warns us about being overconfident in ***(1 Cor 10:12) Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall.*** Let's be real careful about what we say in the sense, *"That will never happen to me or I will never find myself in that circumstance."* Although we might never want to be, we might find ourselves there.

There are situations and times in life that you just have to deal with. Some of them have nothing to do with sin. For instance: a young mother who loses her husband to death probably never thought about being a single parent raising her children alone. An employee is caught up in a reduction in force and finds himself unemployed with bills continuing. A marriage of many years you think is as solid as a rock all of a sudden crumbles around you. There are times we find ourselves in undesirable circumstances, not wanting to be there, but that's where we are.

Isn't this really where this adulterous woman is? She's in a bad spot. She had committed sin and was caught in that sin. If she were standing before us, we could turn our back on her and have nothing to do with her saying "*she will defile our number.*" We could scorn her and some might even make fun of her or we could reach out and try to help her where she is. As loving Christians we ought to reach out to others where they are.

Wouldn't it be nice if every person that we ever came in contact with grew up in Christian families and had Christian values, but that's not the way it is. I am going to have to deal with life where I am.

Let's leave this story for just a moment and consider two of Jesus disciples to illustrate what we're talking about. **First is Peter.** In Matt 26 we find Peter being very bold and very confident. When Jesus tells his disciples that they will stumble because of him Peter boldly says, (*Mat 26:33*) ***Though all men shall be offended because of thee, yet will I never be offended.*** Peter was already in trouble when he said "*will I never.*" He has already set himself up for that big fall. Even if all you're other followers stumble, not me. It won't happen to me.

Well, we remember what the Lord said to him don't we? (*Mat 26:34*) ***Verily I say unto thee, That this night, before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice.*** But Peter's not going to take the word of the Lord. He says even if I have to die with you Lord, I will not deny you.

So that's where Peter was. Isn't that just like the person that says I'll never be found in that situation. It want happen to me. That'll never happen to one of my children; I'll never be in that place, etc. because those things don't happen to me. Peter says even if I have to die; I will give my all before I deny you.

But we know how the story goes. His over confidence led him into disastrous failure. We find toward the end of Matt 26 (74) that he began to curse and to swear, saying, I know not the man. And immediately the cock crew and he went out, and wept bitterly. In Luke's account we learn that the Lord turned and looked at Peter. Don't you know at that moment, Peter would love to have been someplace else, to be out from under the gaze of the Lord. Before the roster crowd, Peter found himself in a circumstance that he said he would never be. Oh how the mighty had fallen.

Now let us consider another one of the twelve that made his mistakes along the way. We find in *(Luke 22:47) ... he that was called Judas, one of the twelve, went before them, and drew near unto Jesus to kiss him. (48) But Jesus said unto him, Judas, betrayest thou the Son of man with a kiss?*

It doesn't seem that Judas was as bold and impetuous as Peter, but after his betrayal and hearing what was going to happen, I expect Judas found himself in a place that he didn't want to be. But his failure would be the end of him. We are told in *(Mat 27:3) Then Judas, which had betrayed him, when he saw that he was condemned, repented himself, and brought again the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders, (4) Saying, I have sinned in that I have betrayed the innocent blood. And they said, What is that to us? see thou to that. (5) And he cast down the pieces of silver in the temple, and departed, and went and hanged himself.*

Who was Judas? He was the man in a very bad circumstance but did NOTHING but wallows in his guilt and killed himself. Was he remorseful? Yes. He found himself in a miserable place, couldn't deal it, so he killed himself. By doing so, what did he accomplish? He accomplished the same thing that someone today that finds himself in a

bad situation and wallows in the mire of guilt with a “woe is me attitude” and often takes their own life. They accomplish nothing because they haven’t dealt with life where they are. They try to run from their problems or they let life overwhelm them and that doesn’t work. Judas did not face up to the reality of life.

Now back to Peter. Peter was in just about as bad a condition as was Judas. He had denied the Lord openly. He had boasted of his strength and commitment and it had failed him. He was pretty low and went out of the courtyard and wept. But this weeping didn’t really accomplish anything. Peter could have wallowed in his guilt as well, but he didn’t.

What did Peter do? He recognized who and where he was. I am the one that denied the Son of God and with a heavy heart, Peter reaffirmed his love with Christ. We find in John 21 of Peter’s claims to such love. The Lord had already asked Peter twice if he loved him and Peter said he did. Then (*John 21:17 KJV*) ***He saith unto him the third time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? Peter was grieved because he said unto him the third time, Lovest thou me?*** Don’t you know those words “before the roster crows” were echoing in his mind? ***And he said unto him, Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee. Jesus saith unto him, Feed my sheep.***

Perhaps Peter would never be so bold to say that he would stand and defend the Lord before all again. Just like Paul carried the mental scar with him always of how he persecuted the church, I would think Peter would be reminded often of that day he denied Jesus three times before the roster crow. It grieved him the third time the Lord asked, “***do you love me?***” Jesus told him to go and feed my sheep.

I don’t know because the Bible doesn’t tell us, but I would guess that Jesus would have done the same for Judas if he had come around for the mercy of the Lord.

Peter then took God’s word forward. He didn’t stay there as the one who denied the Lord. He never rose above that low place in his life. Peter could have been the man that denied Jesus and nothing more, but he took the work forward. We find him preaching the first recorded sermon in Acts 2. We find him boldly defending the word of

the Lord in the streets of Jerusalem in Acts 3 & 4. We find him taking the gospel to the Gentiles in Acts 10.

Peter had failed but Peter got up and reaffirmed his love to the Lord and went forward with the word of God. We know too that he was tested. He was given other chances to deny the Lord, but this time without making bold claims, he stood firm. Peter is not remembered as the one who denied and wept but rather as one that boldly preached and defended. Unlike Judas, Peter saw where he was and he did something about.

NOW BACK TO THE ADULTEROUS WOMAN IN JOHN CHAPTER 8.

She found herself in that terrible place of being caught in adultery. As much as she may have wanted to hide, run away or act like it had never happened; here she was guilty as charged. Here we also have the Lord. He could have said, woman you deserve to die because you violated the law, which was punishable by stoning. We deserve to loose our soul because we are sinners. But you remember what he said to the mob, you that are without sin cast the first stone.

Afterward, he asked her where her accusers were. Where were those who condemned her? She said no one Lord. And Jesus said neither do I condemn you. **Go and sin no more.**

Jesus did not say it's ok to be an adulterer so now go on. Jesus did not say be more careful next time and don't get caught again in your sins. Jesus said, I have mercy on you. I'll give you another chance-I'm not going to condemn you but you have got to change. Go and sin no more. Jesus offered a woman in a bad situation a chance to do something positive with her life.

We wear the name Christian and hopefully we do so proudly. Maybe we find people or even ourselves in bad situation that we thought would never happen. When that happens, let's remember the teaching in this story. Go and sin no more. You can't undo the past. Though Jesus could forgive this woman her sins, he couldn't make the fact of her adultery disappear. At times there are lasting consequences of sin. A child is

born to an unwed mother for instance. You have to deal with the circumstance that you are facing today. You may wish you had never gotten to that place, but you're there. Maybe you feel guilty and dirty. Maybe you are hurting. But that's where you are.

Maybe you exercised bad judgment once and got in trouble with the law. Now you have a criminal record that follows you around like a shadow. That's not how you want it to be, but that's where you are. How are you going to handle it? Are you going to be a Judas and give up or are you going to be a Peter and pick yourself up and make a life for yourself in spite of the past.

Where am I, and what am I going to do about it? I'm not talking about living perfectly and never making a mistake. I'm talking about picking yourself up and following the way of Jesus. Remember Jesus told Peter to *go and feed my sheep* and then told the woman to *go and sin no more*. In both cases, they were to go and obey.

You can decide to do that from wherever you are. It makes no difference whether you get up and find the way of the Lord and follow it. Go and sin no more.

There was another occasion when Peter was in a bad circumstance. In Matt 14 we read about Peter walking on the water. Soon his faith failed him and he became afraid of the storm and waves that surrounded him. He was in a place where he didn't want to be. In fear he cried out, ***Lord save me.*** That's the plea we should make today.

Where are you? If you are not a Christian, learn what the Bible says about becoming a Christian. Get with someone and let them teach you what it means to obey the gospel. If you are a Christian and are overburden with bad circumstances, reaffirm your love to the Lord and go forward. I hope to have shown that nothing is gained by staying where you are. Wherever we are, the Lord can save us. If we can assist you in a public way, please come as we stand together and sing.