

John 2021 #17 (8.15.21) #21067

John 8:1-11

Caught and Released

**I. A famous, but disputed, passage.**

- A. Not found in some of the earliest Greek manuscripts.
- B. Found in different places in later manuscripts.
- C. Viewed by most scholars as an authentic account that was simply placed here because this location is plausible. (Feast of Tabernacles 6 months before the last Passover)
- D. Remember that Jesus did many things that were not written in the texts. Jn.21:25

**II. Jesus's ministry occurred in a context of deadly tension. Jn.8:1-11.**

A. He is teaching in the Jerusalem temple courtyard. 1-2

- 1. A normal thing for him to do in Jerusalem. In the city it was the most likely place for a sizable gathering.

B. He is violently interrupted by scribes and Pharisees.3

- 1. What a scene! Dragging this woman in front of this crowd, in the temple.
- 2. Where was the man? This is a setup, a trap for Jesus.

C. He is presented with what they think is an unsolvable dilemma. 4-5

- 1. In the Mosaic Law adultery is a capital offence for both participants. (Lev.20:10; Deut.22:22).
  - a) Prohibition of Adultery is the 7<sup>th</sup> Commandment (Ex.20:14)
  - b) Adultery is sex with a person that's married to somebody else.
  - c) Fornication is sex outside of marriage. Adultery is a form of fornication.

2. Jesus was famous for healing and forgiving sins (Mk.2:5)

- a) The conflict between Law and Grace.
- b) The conflict between justice and mercy.

3. *The religious leaders are not interested in either justice or mercy—they are interested in getting rid of Jesus “legally.”*

D. He turns the tables on the accusers. 6-9

1. First by breaking eye-contact and saying nothing.

- a) He squats or kneels down and starts writing in the dirt with his finger.
- b) Interesting: God wrote the decalogue with his finger. (Ex.31:18; Deut.9:10)
- c) What did Jesus write? Nobody knows.

2. Until they keep pestering him (7).

- a) The crowd is expectant, the tension rises.

3. Then He stands up and *commands* the stoning.

- a) A 3<sup>rd</sup> person command looks like simple permission to us, but it is a forceful command.
- b) But he commands only one type of person to carry out the sentence—the sinless person.
- c) *Note: He does not blow off the adultery or disagree with the Law of Moses. He does not say she doesn't deserve to be stoned.*

(1) But the question is about who has the moral authority to execute the judgment. Legally they had the right (after a fashion) but morally they did not. He focuses on the morality of the issue.

4. *Only a truly perfect person has the ultimate authority to condemn—and that person is God in Christ.*

E. He releases the woman. 10-11

- 1. Go and sin no more = *leave your lifestyle of sin.* (NIV)
  - a) He is pointing her toward repentant faith.

### III. From the accusers we learn...Religion is not always about God.

#### A. Sometimes it's about power, pride, and prestige.

1. *About winning the arguments and preserving our pride.*
2. *Does my religion really have anything to do with God's own heart?*

#### B. Sometimes it is about actually avoiding God.

1. Rationalistic excuses for not repenting and believing in Jesus?
  - a) Some people use this very account to rationalize their immorality. Jesus will not condemn me...
2. Legalistic excuses for not repenting and believing in Jesus?
  - a) Being so "good" and "biblical" that you don't need to repent.
  - b) So you don't throw yourself on the mercy of Christ.

### IV. From the Lord we learn...Grace is available only in Him.

#### A. This woman is a picture of humanity. Rom.3:23 (Lk.13:1-5)

1. We have been caught in the act of adultery/idolatry.
2. Idolatry is symbolized in the Bible by adultery/fornication.
  - a) The whole book of Hosea is based on this.

#### B. Which means that Justice and Mercy are still the eternal dilemma. Rom.3:23-28

1. How can mercy and justice both be served properly, eternally?
2. The World has no legal or philosophical answer to this. Its either one or the other.

#### C. Which means the gospel is absolutely the only answer. Rom.8:1-3

1. He makes no excuses for her, but he releases her from the curse of the Law--
2. *He knows that in 6 months he will become the curse she deserves... Gal.3:10-14.*

***V. We do not know how this woman responded to the grace of Christ. The question hangs in the air...will we repent and throw ourselves on his mercy?***