

# Caught in Sin!

Micah 7:18-19

Isaiah 1:18

John 8:2-11

Rom 2:1-9

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The stories that we have been studying during this Epiphany season have been *dramatic*. There has been a *sensational aspect* to each one.

- † The *mysterious foreigners* follow a *miraculous star* hundreds of miles to worship Christ and give their *exotic* gifts!
- † The Holy Trinity makes their only *public appearance* at the Baptism of Jesus!
- † Jesus *charges into cosmic combat* with Satan on our behalf in the wilderness!
- † Jesus suddenly *works a miracle* in front of His disciples --- at a wedding of all places!
- † Jesus *announces to His hometown synagogue in Nazareth* that He is the long awaited Messiah of the Old Testament! His preaching and miracles set captives free!
- † Jesus *feeds thousands of people* with a only a handful of bread and two fish!

The stories of Epiphany are *sensational!* They have a *dramatic flair* to them as they stand out and reveal to us who Jesus is and what He's done for us. Today's story has that *same excitement* to it; *the woman caught in adultery* is *high drama*.

The Pharisees drag a woman from her bedroom and throw her before Jesus, hoping to use her to entangle Jesus in complicated Jewish law. The Pharisees have humiliated this woman, they have embarrassed her, and they have disrobed her of her dignity. She is simply a pawn in their scheme to trap Jesus; they could care less about her.

They throw her at Jesus feet, all the while looking around for baseball sized stones to hurl at her. They are certain that Jesus will condemn her, and fall into their trap. They want to accuse Jesus of being unloving and unkind.

How many times has your conscience done same thing to you that those Pharisees did to that woman? **Doesn't your own conscience drag you before Jesus and accuse you of sin?**

- ✓ Maybe, like this woman, you are guilty of some form of sexual sin
- ✓ Perhaps your conscience accuses you of rebellion against authority
- ✓ Maybe you are guilty of hurting, harming or hating your neighbor
- ✓ Maybe you are a thief, secretly stealing things that you know are not yours
- ✓ Maybe you are a gossip: you slander or speak evil of others
- ✓ Maybe you have let evil thoughts invade your heart and you are full of covet, greed, lust or envy.
- ✓ Maybe you are a hypocrite, like the men in this story, and you are quick to condemn other people for their sin

Your conscience is the Pharisee in your life that drags you before God and condemns you in your sin. Your conscience sees, and knows, your sin. **You are caught red handed, just like the woman in John 8.**

The Pharisees think they have trapped Jesus, each have a rock in their hand and are ready to throw it at the woman. They are **eager to punish** this woman for her sins.

*The reality is that the Pharisees have brought this woman to the safest place on the face of the earth.*

**SHE IS AT THE FEET OF JESUS!**

*This woman has met her maker,  
and she will find mercy.*

As Jesus stoops down and writes on the ground; He convicts the Pharisees of their hypocrisy. They quickly scurry out of sight. They drop their rocks as they scatter. Jesus turns His full attention to the woman, who is left all alone. What happens next is one of the most tender, beautiful images of the Gospel in all of Scripture.

Jesus straightened up and asked her, "Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?" "No one, sir," she said. "Then neither do I condemn you," Jesus declared. "Go and sin no more."  
John 8:10-11

**"Then neither do I condemn you,"** *Jesus declared.*

Those are words of **justification**. Those are words of **righteousness**. The word "condemn" is the language of the courtroom and means "to give judgment, to pass sentence." Jesus is not going to judge her; nor is He going to pass sentence on her. **This is a wonderful picture of Justification by faith.** The way that we usually talk about this is that Jesus declared her "**NOT GUILTY**" of her sin. **He forgave her, and His words created faith in her hearts.** Jesus declares this woman "not guilty" of her sin. He does not condemn her!

### **Jesus does not condemn you either!**

Jesus declares you "not guilty" of your sin, even though your conscience screams that you are guilty. Like the woman in this story, you are not condemned in your sin because Jesus was condemned for you, in your place, on the cross. The stones were thrown at Jesus, *if you will*, when He died on the cross. He took the woman's sin, and He took your sin, upon Himself and He faced the condemnation that we all deserve. He was judged "guilty!" by God the Father. He was punished for every one of us and our sins. That is why He suffered and died.

In Christ you are **forgiven**.

In Christ, you are **justified**.

In Christ, you are **righteous**.

In Christ, you hear the words:

**"Neither do I condemn you".**

**We are all like that woman caught in adultery.** We have all sinned; we are all guilty; and we all deserve to be stoned to death for our sins. **BUT WE ARE NOT.**

**In faith, you are brought to the safest place on the face of the earth!** In faith, you are at the feet of Jesus. In faith, you have met your Maker and you have found mercy!

And now, as forgiven sinners, we *go and sin no more*.

This story teaches us that just as much as Jesus is **merciful**, He also hates sin. Take another look at what Jesus said to the woman:

Jesus straightened up and asked her, "Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?" "No one, sir," she said. "Then neither do I condemn you," Jesus declared. **"Go and sin no more."**  
John 8:10-11

This is repentance. *Go and sin no more.* *Jesus is merciful,* but He hates sin.

When God forgives your sins, you are to go out and live a holy life. **God does not forgive your sins so that you can continue in your sinful ways.** Repentance means to turnaround, to abandon your sin, to renounce the devil and all of his evil works in all of his wicked ways. Forgiveness in Christ changes you! It creates a desire for holiness; it creates a heart that wants to please God; it drives you hear and obey God's holy Word.

*“Go and sin no more”* is a call to sanctification.

In context of this story, *sexual sin is highlighted.* As God's holy people, you are not to be engaged in any form of sexual sin. In fact, you are to even guard your speech from sexual immorality. Note what Paul teaches the Ephesians:

But among you there must not be *even a hint* of sexual immorality, or of any kind of impurity, or of lust, because these are improper for God's holy people. *Nor should there be obscenity, foolish talk or coarse joking, which are out of place for God's holy people, but rather thanksgiving.* For of this you can be sure: No sexually immoral, impure or lustful person— such a person is an idolater— has **NO INHERITANCE** in the kingdom of Christ and of God. Ephesians 5:3-6

As God's holy people, you are not to be engaged in any form of sexual sin . . . *there must not even be a hint of it in your words!*

When God forgives your sins, He also sets you apart from sin; He sets you apart from the world and its ways. You are holy in God's sight; *you live and move and have your being* in the Kingdom of God, seeking His Will, honoring His Name, learning His Word!

*Jesus is merciful,* but He hates sin. Just like the woman caught in adultery, we hear Jesus' words: *“Go and sin no more”*

The story of the woman caught in adultery is *high drama*; it reveals Jesus as the Divine Judge who is merciful and forgiving. May you yourself believe in His mercy; and then go and SIN NO MORE.

AMEN!