



THE EXHORTER

“And with many other words did he testify and exhort, saying, Save yourselves from this untoward generation.” Acts 2:40

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Jump Start # 1991

John 8:11 "She said, 'No one, Lord.' And Jesus said, 'I do not condemn you, either. Go. From now on sin no more!'"

Our verse today ends the conversation that Jesus had with the adulterous woman. The day began early for Jesus in the temple teaching. For this woman, the day began in the arms of someone she was not married to. Scandalous, brazen and wrong, lustful passions pushed passed God's simple command of, "Thou shalt not commit adultery." Thoughts of exciting pleasure suddenly change when men burst in and grabbed her. I doubt that they waited for her to get dressed, do her hair and put on her makeup. Hopefully she had a sheet around her, pulled through the streets of Jerusalem where all could see her. Fear, shame and regret now fill the heart of this woman. She is being used by the Pharisees as a puppet to get to Jesus. They care little about her. They want Jesus. She is taken, unclean as she is, directly into the temple and before Jesus. The threat of death now looms in the air. These condemning men want her to die. Her life has no value to them. They believe that the merciful Jesus will be forced to either ignore the law or allow her to be executed. Either way, Jesus doesn't come out looking good here.

This woman made a terrible choice. Now she was about to pay the consequences for it. But the brilliant Jesus, knew that all of this was a trap. Why bring a condemned woman to Jesus? He wasn't the legal authority. There were proper channels for that and it wasn't Jesus. Why bring her into the holy temple? That wasn't right. And, how did they happen to catch her in the very act? Were they watching? Were they enjoying what they saw? And, obviously, where was the man who also was committing adultery? All of this smells of a set up. This was staged, planned and they used a person to sin to get to Jesus. This is why Jesus said, "He who is without sin among you, let him be the first to cast a stone at her."

Interesting, Jesus never said, "Do not stone her." In fact, his words are, do it. Do it, if you have no sin. Not any sin, because if that was the case no one could ever be punished with death. There were twenty-one offenses under the law in which a person could be put to death. However, if it required being sinless to cast a stone, then no one would ever be executed. The law would have no merit to it and no one would fear it. "Without sin," here means, throw the stone if your hands are clean in this. They weren't. There wasn't a clean hand, nor a clean heart among them. This set up was exposed by Jesus. The trap collapsed. They failed at what they believed was an fool proof plan. They all left.

Now, it was just Jesus and the guilty woman. She had been embarrassed and used as a pawn. She was guilty. She did wrong. And now, the Lord tells her that He does not condemn her, and to go and sin no more.

There are so many powerful lessons from this simple sentence between Jesus and this woman.

(OVER)

First, the pleasure of sin blinds us to the shameful consequences and the terrible problems that it creates. The word "adultery" is defined as more than sex outside of marriage. It is used to refer to at least one person who is married. Someone is breaking their vow. Someone is cheating. Maybe both, but at least one. Word spreads. People talk. How would she recover from this is hard. What would her family think? How could she walk down the streets to the market place knowing that some of these very men who burst into that room and pulled her out are standing there looking at her. Sin blinds us to these thoughts. It doesn't show the ugliness of stealing from your own family to feed an addiction. It doesn't show the brokenness of a spouse who demands that you leave because of an affair. It doesn't show the confusion in the eyes of children who wonder why daddy isn't staying here tonight. Sin is a pretty package, but once opened it's full of trouble, rottenness and pain.

Second, Jesus' words, "go and sin no more," must be understood in context of the rest of the New Testament. John would say, in his first letter, that if we say that we have no sin, we are deceiving ourselves. Would it be possible for this adulterous woman to live out the rest of her life without sin? No. Jesus is talking about what brought her there. She was caught in adultery. Don't do that ever again. She was within an inch of dying. Do you think she would flirt with fate again? What if she ran into the man who she was with? Do you believe that she would try it again? Are you kidding? She would run from that sin. She learned a lesson. She was given grace and she did not want to go down that road again. Sin would try to make one forget the guilt, shame and fear that came from it. But faith will see through the fog of sin, to what it really is and what it really does.

Third, what a contrast, the perfect and holy Jesus talking to this guilty and dirty woman. Opposites in many ways. Jesus started the day in the temple. She started the day in sin. Jesus was pleasing His Father. She was disappointing her same Father, God. Jesus was pointing people to the law. She was ignoring and breaking the law. Jesus was doing good. She was doing wrong. The woman doesn't say much. As the Pharisees are arguing with Jesus, the woman remains silent. She doesn't name names. She doesn't blame others. She doesn't come up with an excuse. She is silent. Guilty, but silent. Later, Jesus would be silent before His accusers. Unlike this woman, Jesus was innocent but He also was silent.

Fourth, Jesus did not destroy this woman. He did not heap on more guilt and shame. He did not throw her out of the temple. He did not walk away in disgust. He was certainly disappointed in her choices, but He came to seek and to save what was lost. She was certainly lost.

In many ways, this woman is us. Our sin may not be adultery, but it may be. Caught. Guilty. And, now before Jesus. We broke His laws. We did exactly what we were not supposed to. We disappointed Him. We hurt Him. And, there we are at His feet. Don't find an excuse. Don't point fingers to your family, your job, or your church. It's just you and Jesus. We deserve Hell and yet He's offering Heaven. We deserve a stone, and yet He offers His hand. We deserve to be tossed out, and yet, He welcomes us. The merciful God, who loves us, and never gives up on us. Always wanting the best. Always believing in us. Always hoping for a new chapter in our lives. Go and sin no more, are His words. Not just to an adulterous woman, but to a sinful world.

John eight is more than a plan that backfired. It's grace demonstrated. It's love in action. It's wrong being given a second chance. It shows us that God doesn't give up on us. Wrong. Dirty. Caught. Without excuse. Hope destroyed. Faith not used. The Gospel ignored. God still wants us.

I feel that some believe that God's love runs out on them. We feel that if God really knew us, He wouldn't like us. So we keep distant from God. We don't get too close. If we do, He'll toss us out. John 8 reminds us that at our worst moments, God is there. He knows. And most amazingly, He still loves us. He already knows. There are no secrets with God. He knows you and still wants to be with you. He wants you to go and sin no more. He wants you to do right. He wants you to feel good about yourself and that will happen when you please the Lord and walk in righteousness.

In many ways, John 8 is a mirror of us. Just as I am, is not how we remain. Just as I am, is not what I will be. The name of this woman is not revealed. This protects her. I wonder if she became one of the first Christians. She had a past, but don't we all. She also had a future, and don't we all!

God has been good to us!