



As the Father has sent me, even so I am sending you.
~ Jesus (John 20:21)

Part 1: *Grace under Fire*

INTRODUCTION – Why Study A Non-Biblical Story?

Why this passage probably doesn't belong here...

- Earliest and best manuscripts don't have it. (Doesn't appear until 5th century.)
- Early church fathers never mention it in their commentaries.
- Style and vocabulary different to rest of John (14 words never used elsewhere).

Why this story is likely reliable history...

- Story is in keeping with the known history of Jesus and religious leaders.
- Oral tradition preceded and paralleled the writing of the Gospels.
- Persistent attempt to include it somewhere (elsewhere in John, as appendix to John, or in the Gospel of Luke, after 21:38) suggests that this was a known and respected oral tradition. ("A text looking for a context.")

Why would we still include it in our Sunday teaching?

- Trusting the Church to persist for a reason.
- Demonstrating in story what Jesus explicitly teaches elsewhere.
- **John 21:25**

DINE IN – Caught In the Act

Points of connection with valid Gospel narratives...

- 1) Religious leaders aggressively try to publically test/trap Jesus.
Matthew 19:1-7; 21:23-27; 22:15-36; Mark 3:1-6; 12:13-27; Luke 20:19-40
- 2) Jesus is known for his compassion toward sinners.
Matthew 9:9-13; 11:16-19; Luke 7:31-8:3
- 3) Jesus is known for his atypical interpretation and application of the Law.
Matthew 5:17-48; 12:1-8; 19:3-9; etc
- 4) Jesus honours women beyond the cultural norms of his day.
Luke 7:36-8:3; John 4:7-42;
- 5) Jesus offers *grace* as the best motivation for holiness.
John 3:16-17; 12:47

John 8:2-11

Background texts...

Leviticus 20:10; Deuteronomy 22:22-24 VS John 18:31

What did Jesus write?

- The 10th Commandment?
- The accusers' sins?
- Something to the woman?

The better question – WHY did Jesus write?

- Taking his time to react. (Not being rushed. Taking charge of the moment.)
- Giving time for his opponents to ponder.
- Playing God. (**Deuteronomy 9:10**)

TAKE OUT #1 – Bending the Rules for Love

From the earliest times, God wanted his people to use his LAW to get to know his HEART. When we legalistically apply the letter of the law and miss the Spirit behind it, we are out of step with Scripture, and missing the mark of grace.

(**Hosea 3:1; 2 Samuel 11; Matthew 12:3-4**)

TAKE OUT #2 – Letting God Be the Judge

When we judge sinners we play God (the sinless judge). Each of us IS a sinner, someone with a plank in our own eye. We live because we have received grace, and we ought to live each day thankful for another day to offer grace. We may "judge" other Christians as family earns the right to challenge each other in love, but our posture toward non-Christians should be one of ongoing grace and compassion.

John 7:24; James 2:8-11; 1 Corinthians 5:9-12; Matthew 7:1-5

TAKE OUT #3 – Modest Goals

Jesus could have responded to the challenge of the religious leaders by demonstrating his unparalleled authority over the law (e.g., "You have heard it said... but I tell you..."). Instead, in this situation, Jesus simply helps the religious zealots apply their own Scriptures with greater compassion. When engaging in discussions with people who don't follow Christ, sometimes it is best to aim for a modest goal.

CONCLUSION – A "Coincidental" Pattern?

As it stands now, John 8 begins with the attempted stoning of a sinner and ends with the attempted stoning of Jesus. He is drawing our fire. (**John 1:29**)

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HOME CHURCH QUESTIONS

Warming Up...

1. Review Sunday's message and notes. What most puzzles, bothers, or inspires you?
2. When you imagine the story of the adulterous woman, in what ways do you identify with a) the adulterous woman? b) the religious leaders?

Look to the Book...

3. On the topic of judging rightly and wrongly, read **1 Corinthians 5**, in multiple translations if time permits. A) Talk about what verse or idea stands out to you the most. B) Paul writes as though the sins of the Corinthian Christians are symptoms of a deeper problem. What seems to be the root issue? (Also see **Romans 3:8; 6:1, 15; Jude 4**.) C) What does Paul recommend as treatment for the "illness" that has infected the body of Christ? What might that look like in our context today? D) It seems as though it is possible for Christians to become "proud" of our irreligious message to the point of distorting it, taking advantage of God's grace, and sinning as a sign of spiritual freedom. Have you seen signs of this today in the Church? Have you seen signs of this in your life?

So What?...

4. J. Carl Laney writes in the Moody Gospel Commentary: "It is sad but true that many people take more delight in investigating the faults of others than in scrutinizing their own lives and conduct. The religious leaders epitomized this perversity – something against which we all need to guard ourselves." What people are you usually most ready to throw stones at?
5. Jesus told the sinful woman two things: 1) "I do not condemn you," and 2) "Go and sin no more." Which expression of grace do you need to hear more from Jesus these days? Talk about your need of grace and pray for each other.

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Notes are available online at themeetinghouse.ca/teaching