

Title:            **“NONE BUT THE WOMAN”**

Text:            John 8:1-12

Subject:        *The Savior and the Adulterous Woman*

Date:            Sunday Morning — July 19, 2009

Tape:            John #58

Reading:        *Psalm 130:1-8*

Introduction:

When the feast of Tabernacles was over, we are told that “*every man went unto his own house*” (John 7:53); but, though “*the foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests; the Son of man had not where to lay his head*” (Matthew 8:20). So we read in John 8:1 that “*Jesus went unto the mount of Olives.*” How our Savior loved to go to the Mount of Olives and pray in the Garden of Gethsemane! He went there often to spend the night alone with His Father and our Father, His God and our God (Luke 22:39). This was a place to which He went so regularly that when Judas betrayed Him and led a band of soldiers to arrest Him, the betrayer knew exactly where the Master would be (John 18:1-2).

You will remember that David, the great type of Christ, ascended the Mount of Olives barefooted and sorrowful (2 Samuel 15:23). It was here, in the Garden of Gethsemane, that our Lord Jesus knew He must soon encounter the prince of darkness. Knowing that here, in Gethsemane, He would soon sweat blood in anticipation of being made sin for us, knowing that here he would soon be betrayed, arrested and carried away to the cursed tree to be crucified for us, our blessed Savior made the Mount of Olives and its garden, Gethsemane, His favorite spot of ground. Truly, this place was to Him, sacred ground, hallowed by His own precious blood! — How sacred Gethsemane’s memory ought to be to us!

(John 8:1-2) Jesus went unto the mount of Olives. (2) And early in the morning he came again into the temple, and all the people came unto him; and he sat down, and taught them.

He prayed in Gethsemane by night and preached in the Temple by day. His time seemed to be divided only by these two things: prayer and preaching. So it should be with all who preach the Gospel (Acts 6:2). If we would serve the souls of men, if we would serve the cause of God’s glory in this generation, if we would be useful, let every Gospel preacher devote himself to prayer and preaching. May God the Holy Spirit raise up pastors for His

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people who are addicted to prayer, study and preaching! What might we expect, if He were to do such a thing? — **Read on...**

(John 8:3-11) 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.

We read in verse 10 that “*When Jesus had lifted up Himself, (He) saw none but the woman.*” “*None but the woman*” had His attention. He saw “*none but the woman.*” He cared for “*none but the woman.*” He came to the Temple that morning to save “*none but the woman.*” That is the title of my message — **“NONE BUT THE WOMAN.”** Who was this woman? What kind of person was she? What did the Lord Jesus do for her? — Are there any here like this woman? — Do you suppose that the Lord Jesus might visit His house here this morning? — Might there be one here, in our midst this morning, like this woman upon whom the heart of the Son of God is fixed? — Wouldn’t that be wonderful?

While our Lord Jesus was at the Feast of Tabernacles He infuriated the self-righteous Scribes and Pharisees who were the exalted, highly praised leaders of Israel. Throughout the week, all during the feast, they had been trying to find some reason to kill Him, or at least to discredit him. At last, they hatched a scheme that they thought would surely work. They laid a trap for an unsuspecting woman. One of them seduced her into the act of adultery. While he lay in his tent with this woman, his friends were posted outside the tent door watching to catch her in the very act of adultery.

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Now, on the day after the feast, our Lord came to the temple early in the morning. As he sat down and began to preach, the people gathered around to hear his words. While he was preaching, the Scribes and Pharisees broke in and sat this woman in the middle of the crowd and said, “*Master, this woman was taken in adultery, in the very act. Now Moses in the law commanded us, that such should be stoned: but what sayest thou?*” Those poor, ignorant men thought they had surprised the Savior. They thought, “We’ve got you now!” I can see the smug grin on their faces. Can’t you? — They had no idea that the Lord Jesus had been praying for this woman all night. I can almost see the beaming smile of His heart, as the Pharisees bring the object of the Savior’s love to Him. They brought her to Him, they thought, to have her killed. They had no idea that the Lord Jesus had used them to bring her to Him to have her saved by His grace!

These proud fools thought that this time they had surely laid a trap from which the Lord Jesus could not escape. They reasoned within themselves that there is no way possible for this woman to be forgiven, without the law being broken.

- If Christ forgave the woman, they would accuse him of dishonoring the law.
- If he commanded the woman to be stoned, they would accuse him of falsely pretending to be merciful and compassionate.
- They thought that the Lord would have to relinquish justice, or that he would have to refuse mercy.

You see, with devilish insight, these self-righteous men had hit upon the problem of all problems in respect to the relationship of a sinful man to a holy God. The problem is this: — How can God show love, mercy and grace to a sinner and still be just, holy and true? — How can God be both just and the Justifier of the ungodly? — How can a man be just with God? From a human point of view, and in the minds of these self-righteous religionists, the problem was unsolvable. But that which with men is impossible, is possible with God.

In this woman we have before us one who symbolically represents every true believer. She was guilty, but not condemned!

**Proposition:** In this passage of Scripture we have a vivid picture of our Lord’s compassion, mercy and grace upon sinners. He said, “*I came not to*

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*call the righteous, but sinners to repentance,”* and that is what he did! The self-righteous Pharisees went away confounded, and the poor guilty sinner was accepted, pardoned and justified.

**Divisions:** Here are five very important lessons for us to learn from this story of the woman taken in adultery.

1. The Terrible Evil of Self-Righteousness
2. The Utter Severity of God’s Holy Law
3. The Only Grounds for Divine Forgiveness
4. The Mysterious Ways of Divine Grace
5. The Nature of True Repentance

**SELF-RIGHTEOUSNESS**

*First*, we see, in the actions and attitude of these Scribes and Pharisees, **the terrible evil of self-righteousness**. The real evil revealed in this passage is not adultery, but self-righteousness. The real culprits were these proud, religious hypocrites, the Pharisees, not this woman. These Pharisees were very proud of their pretended righteousness and morality, though in reality they were the vilest of men. They were not without guilt in this matter.

Without question, self-righteousness is the most terrible of all sins. It is more offensive and abominable in the sight of God than any other crime.

- Murder is a terrible crime; but I would rather be charged with murder before the law of God than with self-righteousness.
- Stealing is a dreadful offense; but I would rather be charged with stealing before the bar of Divine justice than with self-righteousness.
- Adultery is a loathsome evil; but I would rather stand before God as an adulterer than as a self-righteous man.
- Lying is a fearful breach of God’s holy law; but I would rather appear before God guilty of lying than to appear before him guilty of self-righteousness.

**This is no new sin. Ever since man became sinful, he has professed to be righteous. — Self-righteousness is the most difficult sin you will ever have to deal with.** Anger, wrath, envy, hatred and lusts may be overcome, because they are easily identified. But pride and self-righteousness are most well covered. Those who have the most of it are the least aware of it.

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**Self-righteousness flourishes and grows best among devoutly religious people.** There it is watered by prayer, cultivated by religious profession, and fertilized by religious ceremony (Matthew 6:1-4, 5-8, 16-18). — Most of our public praying is self-righteous. — Most of our religious works are self-righteous. — Most of our assurance is self-righteous. — Most of our morality is self-righteous. — All of our hurt feelings are self-righteous.

(Matthew 6:1-8) Take heed that ye do not your alms before men, to be seen of them: otherwise ye have no reward of your Father which is in heaven. (2) Therefore when thou doest *thine* alms, do not sound a trumpet before thee, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may have glory of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward. (3) But when thou doest alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth: (4) That *thine* alms may be in secret: and thy Father which seeth in secret himself shall reward thee openly. (5) And when thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the hypocrites *are*: for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward. (6) But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly. (7) But when ye pray, use not vain repetitions, as the heathen *do*: for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking. (8) Be not ye therefore like unto them: for your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask him.

(Matthew 6:16-18) Moreover when ye fast, be not, as the hypocrites, of a sad countenance: for they disfigure their faces, that they may appear unto men to fast. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward. (17) But thou, when thou fastest, anoint *thine* head, and wash thy face; (18) That thou appear not unto men to fast, but unto thy Father which is in secret: and thy Father, which seeth in secret, shall reward thee openly.

The wrath of God burns most intensely against self-righteousness; and the hottest place in hell is reserved for the self-righteous (Luke 20:46-47).

(Luke 20:46-47) Beware of the scribes, which desire to walk in long robes, and love greetings in the markets, and the highest seats

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in the synagogues, and the chief rooms at feasts; (47) Which devour widows' houses, and for a show make long prayers: the same shall receive greater damnation.

**Self-righteousness hates the grace of God.** — **Self-righteousness is at the root of all gossip, slander and persecution.** Love covers sin. Self-righteousness exposes it. These Pharisees were not interested in honoring the law of God. They were interested in their own honor. They had no regard for this woman. They hated Christ, because he exposed the evil of their hearts. They hated the doctrine of Christ — Salvation by grace alone. They were using this woman for their own purposes. They no regard for her at all. They could not have cared less whether she lived or died. They had no regard for Moses and the law either. They were just using the law and Moses' name for their own designs. — That is always true of Pharisees. — They are religious zealots who care for nothing but themselves!

**Self-righteousness is the most deadly of all sins.** It most effectually bars a man from any hope of salvation. It makes God a liar (1 John 1:10). It blasphemes God. It rejects the righteousness of God in Christ. Self-righteousness is the most loathsome form of idolatry. It is the worship of self.

This is the first obvious thing to be learned from this story. Self-righteousness is a terrible evil. *“Beware of the leaven of the Scribes and Pharisees!”* It is self-righteousness (Luke 16:15).

**STRICT JUSTICE**

The *second* thing we see in this passage is the utter severity of God's holy law. **The law of God is unbending, unrelenting, uncompromising in its strict justice.** There is no question that the law of God most certainly did require that this woman be put to death (Deuteronomy 22:22-24; Leviticus 20:10). — *“The soul that sinneth, it shall die”* (Ezekiel 18:20).

(Leviticus 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.

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(Deuteronomy 22:22-24) If a man be found lying with a woman married to an husband, then they shall both of them die, *both* the man that lay with the woman, and the woman: so shalt thou put away evil from Israel. (23) If a damsel *that is* a virgin be betrothed unto an husband, and a man find her in the city, and lie with her; (24) Then ye shall bring them both out unto the gate of that city, and ye shall stone them with stones that they die; the damsel, because she cried not, *being* in the city; and the man, because he hath humbled his neighbour's wife: so thou shalt put away evil from among you.

The law of God is perfectly clear and utterly severe. There are no exceptions, no excuses, no extenuating circumstances to be considered. There is no room for pardon. There are no grounds for amnesty. — *“The soul that sinneth, it shall die!”*

- The law does not take into consideration the sinner's age, only his guilt.
- The law does not take into consideration the sinner's ability or lack of ability, only his guilt.
- The law does not take into consideration the sinner's environment, only his guilt.
- The law does not take into consideration the sinner's intelligence or ignorance, only his guilt.

One breach of God's holy law, one transgression, one act of sin is grounds enough for your punishment. Any lack of conformity to the holy law of God, in thought, in word, or in deed demands eternal damnation. Sin is an infinite evil, demanding infinite satisfaction, or eternal punishment. You are guilty, and you must die. The law of God demands it. *“The soul that sinneth, it shall die.”* The law of God will not allow leniency. The law will not allow mercy. The law will not allow pardon. The law will not allow forgiveness. The law of God is utterly, inflexibly severe. Wherever sin is found, it must be punished. — *“Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God. Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin”* (Romans 3:19-20).

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Salvation by the works of the law is a foolish absurdity. The law demands perfection or punishment. It offers no alternatives. Behold the utter severity of God’s holy law, and be warned!

**DIVINE FORGIVENESS**

*Third*, this passage of Scripture teaches us much about divine forgiveness. **It shows us that sin cannot be forgiven until God’s broken law is silenced.** — God must do something for Himself before He can do anything for a sinner. Let me show you what I mean by that.

Before this woman could be forgiven the law of God had to be dealt with. Her accusers had to be silenced. And before any of us can be forgiven, the accusations of God’s law must be silenced. The law of God must be satisfied. Our Lord Jesus Christ came not to condemn, but to save. Yet, he came not to destroy the law, but to fulfil the law. Now, how could that be done? How could he fulfil the law and yet save this poor, guilty, adulterous woman? How could he fulfil the law and yet save us?

**Our Lord silenced this woman’s accusers** (vv. 6-9).

(John 8:6-9) 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.

**At first, our Lord ignored these religious hypocrites.** He knew who they were, what they had done and why they had done it. But they continued to press the issue, thinking that he was now trapped in the dilemma they had created. Then he drove away the woman’s accusers.

**He cast the light of judgment upon these men.** Obviously, He wrote something on the ground astonished these men, something that shocked them. — He may have written some names, some times and some places involving these very men. — He may have written the name of the man



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who was with this woman in the act of adultery. — He may have written out the events exactly as they really happened.

**He may have written something like this:** Suppose a perfectly innocent one volunteer to take this woman’s place. Let her go, and take Me instead. I will give myself to be her Substitute.

Whatever it was that He wrote, it seized these hypocrites with a legal conviction. They were pricked by their own guilty conscience. At last, they all left. There were not witnesses to accuse this woman, so the law had no claim upon her. The Lord Jesus silenced this poor woman’s accusers and drove them away.

**So, too, by His one, all-sufficient, sin-atonng sacrifice for us at Calvary, our Lord Jesus, our all-glorious Christ has forever silenced the claims of the law against us** (Romans 8:1-4).

(Romans 8:1-4) *There is* therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. (2) For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death. (3) For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: (4) That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.

This is the only grounds by which the law of God can be satisfied and the mercy of God can be extended. Christ died as our Substitute, under the penalty of God’s holy law for us. The substitutionary sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ at Calvary is the only grounds of Divine forgiveness; and justice satisfied demands that the sinner go free (Romans 8:31-34).

(Romans 8:31-34) What shall we then say to these things? If God *be* for us, who *can be* against us? (32) He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things? (33) Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God’s elect? *It is* God that justifieth. (34) Who *is* he that condemneth? *It is* Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us.

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**Our Lord Jesus Christ freely forgave this guilty woman.** — She was guilty, but not condemned! The law could not condemn her; and Christ would not condemn her, so she must be pardoned. She must go free. — *“Neither do I condemn thee: go and sin no more.”*

Now, my friends, this is what the Lord Jesus Christ has done for us. We were guilty. Indeed, we are guilty. But we shall never be condemned. — Our sin is gone. Christ took it away. — The law is silenced. It cannot charge us with sin. — Justice is satisfied. Christ satisfied it.

Christ Jesus my discharge procured,  
The whole of wrath divine endured:  
The law's tremendous curse He bore;  
Justice can never ask for more.

Payment God cannot twice demand,  
First at my bleeding Surety's hand,  
And then demand the price from me,  
For whom Christ died at Calvary.

Be still, my soul, and find sweet rest —  
The merits of my great High Priest,  
His righteousness and precious blood,  
Have satisfied the Holy God.

I'll trust Christ's efficacious blood,  
And never fear the wrath of God,  
Since Jesus Christ has died for me,  
And lives for me to intercede.

Do you hear what I'm telling you? Can you hear me? Oh, may God enable you to hear this good news: — **There is no condemnation for any believer in Christ.** — There is no basis for condemnation. — There is no condemnation now. — There is no condemnation for the future.

**And this pardon and forgiveness is absolutely free and unconditional.** If our Lord had said, “Go and sin no more, and I will not condemn thee,” the poor woman would have been without hope. But he said, *“Neither do I condemn thee.”* My pardon and forgiveness is free. *“Go and sin nor more.”*

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Who shall condemn to endless flames  
The chosen people of our God,  
Since in the Book of Life their names  
Are written clear in Jesus’ blood?

He, for the sins of His elect,  
Has full, complete atonement made;  
And justice never can expect  
That the same debt should twice be paid!

**As guilty sinners, worthy of eternal damnation, we will worship and praise the Lord Jesus Christ, our Redeemer, for the free, full, everlasting pardon of sin through his blood.** That precious blood is the only grounds for Divine forgiveness. And that shed blood is effectual, securing the forgiveness of every sinner who believes on the Son of God unto life everlasting.

**SOVEREIGN GRACE**

*Fourth*, we are here taught something about **the mysterious ways of God’s sovereign grace.** These Scribes and Pharisees were doing exactly what they wanted to do, without any force or compulsion except their own wicked wills. Yet, the Lord God was sovereignly controlling all the circumstances and events of the day. He was secretly working through these wicked men to bring this poor, guilty woman to Christ. Truly, as William Cowper wrote...

“God moves in a mysterious way  
His wonders to perform;  
He plants His footsteps in the sea,  
And rides upon the storm.

Deep in unfathomable mines  
Of never failing skill,  
He treasures up His bright designs,  
And works His sovereign will.”

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This poor, guilty, trembling woman was not seeking the Lord. But He was seeking her. He had chosen her. He loved her. He was about to redeem her. And now the appointed time of grace had come. She would be his.

- He used ungodly men to expose her shame. — The very men who wanted her dead and sought her destruction were used by God to carry the chosen object of His sovereign love into the arms of her Savior!
- He used her shame to humble her.
- He used even her loathsome sin to bring her to himself.
- He wisely, graciously, sovereignly and tenderly made her willing to embrace Him in the day of his power. At the time of grace, He wrought a mighty change in this woman’s heart! Once she saw Christ, she hated her sin, and she fell in love with Him.

**TRUE REPENTANCE**

One final thing that we are taught in this story is **the nature of true repentance**. The Apostle Paul tells us that there is a repentance that must be repented of, a repentance that “*worketh death*” (2 Corinthians 7:10).

True repentance is much more than a mere reformation of life. It is a change of heart and attitude toward the Lord Jesus Christ. **In the presence of Christ this woman was convinced of her sin**. She offered no plea in her own defense. She stood before the Lord silently in her guilt. The Pharisees were convinced of their guilt by their consciences. This woman was convinced of her guilt by the Savior, by Christ Jesus making Himself known to her. — Theirs was a legal conviction of terror. Hers was a Gospel conviction of brokenness and contrition before God.

**This woman recognized Christ as her Lord**. She did not ask for anything. She seems to have simply waited in submission before her sovereign Master, realizing that he had the right to damn her and the power to save her.

**This woman refused to leave Christ**. She was overwhelmed by His grace and conquered by His love. Her only hope was in the Savior; and she knew it. She could not leave Him. She had no where else to go. She submitted herself to the authority and dominion of Christ the Lord. From that day forth she took up her cross and followed Christ in the way.

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**APPLICATION**

You must place yourself somewhere in this story. Are you like the crowd, who stood watching? They witnessed forgiveness, but did not enter into it. Are you like the Scribes and Pharisees? They were in the place where grace was bestowed, but they were too proud and self-righteous to seek it. Or, are you like this poor woman, crushed with guilt before God, broken with the heavy, heavy load of guilt and sin before the Son of God, — guilty, — dirty, — exposed, — naked? If you can take your place with this poor, dirty adulterous woman before the Lord Jesus, He will forgive you too!

**Illustration:** *Tie a white handkerchief on the clothesline.*

Amen.