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Date: 06 March 2022

[ 0 : 00 ] A fine morning in the Lord today, and if you would, as we get started, open up to John chapter 8, and you can have the word ready for you right there.

Now, some of you may not know, as you look at the bulletin and see, that I'm the director of the Baptist Campus Ministries at Motlow. Maybe you don't know what that means or what that is, and I really didn't come to explain it today, but I thought it was a good thing if I let you guys know so you can pray for us better and so you can know a little bit more about it.

So I thought I'd share just a little bit at the very beginning here. For those of you who don't know, Motlow is our community college, of course, and some of you may have just moved in the area and not know we have a community college right near us right here.

And about 1970s, the Baptist began to do a ministry and a work at the Motlow campus, and it started out that they found a place that was near the campus that had a trailer.

They could put a trailer on the land, and they started having ministries where they brought college students in and helped college students through as they help them grow in their faith as they go through their beginning of their college journey.

[ 1 : 13 ] And that's still the thing today, except that in the 1980s, Motlow got a little desperate and decided to sell some of their land that was on campus, and the Baptist bought it, and we built the building.

And so we have a building right by the baseball field. It's right there on campus, and if you guys ever get to join us, the two biggest ministries that are going on right now are our Monday lunches that churches from the associations come, and the ladies and gentlemen cook for us and make meals for the students.

And on Mondays, we have a small crowd coming through right now because of COVID still. It used to be over 100. I've been there for three, this is my third years. I haven't been there all of three years.

This is the third year that I've been there as director. And it started out, we would have like 100 students on Mondays for lunch. Right now, we're trying to make it back to 30. So just keep praying for us in that.

We are seeing college students come through. It's just been a really slow time recently because of COVID, so keep praying for us. We're still trying to encourage people and trying to share the gospel and get people to come over.

[ 2 : 14 ] And we've been putting flyers on cars, and half the people are online, and half of them are on campus now. So it's a little different, but just keep praying for us. And on Tuesday nights, we have an incredible time.

We've had as many as 21 college students come together for Bible studies on Tuesday nights. You have some church members that come sometimes. So Charlotte and Thomas have come, and Charlotte's been a regular for the entire time I've been there because she was already going to Motlow as a high school student when I first began.

So it's been good to be a part of that, and I'm sure she's learned that I'm learning a lot while I go through this, too. Because I didn't know what I was doing to start with, and God's still teaching me. So he does good.

Doesn't he do good on that? Well, he teaches us how to do what he calls us to do. And as I was preparing for today, I was thinking about what God's been bringing me through, what God's been teaching me, what God would want me to share with you.

And one of the things that came to mind was that I've been dealing with sin quite a lot in the past few years in different ways. And God's been teaching me how do you deal with sin when it's in your family.

[ 3 : 20 ] How do you deal with sin when it's someone out of your family? How do you deal with sin when you're the leader and there's sin there? What do you do? And so I really looked at this passage today, and I want us to go ahead and think about it.

But as you think about sin, there are things that, as we humans think about it, we think, well, there's a lot more shock value for this sin for us sometimes.

Or maybe when this person that you held up here sins, you've got a higher shock value than if somebody else sins that you weren't thinking about that much. And, you know, Jesus doesn't think about it that way.

And that's one of the things that I've been learning, and one of the things we're going to look at today is, how did Jesus deal with this sin today? So let's stand as we read John chapter 8, verses 1 through 11.

Beginning in verse 1 of John chapter 8. But Jesus went to the Mount of Olives. I'm going to back up just one more verse, verse 53 of the previous chapter.

[ 4 : 31 ] I'm going to start there, and then we'll read it. Everyone went to his home, but Jesus went to the Mount of Olives. Early in the morning he came again into the temple, and all the people were coming to him.

And he sat down and began to teach them. The scribes and the Pharisees brought a woman caught in adultery. And having set her in the center of the court, they said to him, Teacher, this woman has been caught in adultery in the very act.

Now in the law, Moses commanded us to stone such women. What then do you say? They were saying this, testing him so that they might have grounds for accusing him.

But Jesus stooped down and with his finger wrote on the ground. But when they persisted in asking him, he straightened up and said to them, He who is without sin among you, let him be the first to throw a stone at her.

Again he stooped down and wrote on the ground. When they heard it, they began to go out one by one, beginning with the older ones. And he was left alone, and the woman where she was in the center of the court.

[ 5 : 39 ] Straightening up, Jesus said to her, Woman, where are they? Did no one condemn you? She said, No one, Lord. And Jesus said, I do not condemn you either. Go, from now on, sin no more.

May God bless the reading of this word. You may be seated. Now, I don't want us to look through this passage this morning and focus on the adulterous woman and what did she do and how was she caught and all these other things about her.

But I want us to learn about Jesus this morning. I want us to look at how he dealt with sin. Look at what he teaches us this morning. And so, as we look at the passage, I want you to think about what this really shows us about our Lord, about our Savior, and about his love and his grace and his mercy, and about how he deals with sin.

The first thing that I want to point out is that everyone else the night before went to their own home. And so, it kind of gives us a little reminder at the very beginning as it says, But Jesus went to the Mount of Olives.

He spent the night there. It reminds us that our Savior left his home in heaven and he had no place to lay his head. He said, Foxes have holes, the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head.

[ 6 : 54 ] So, think about, first off, the sacrifice that Jesus made for us, just in the fact that he had nowhere to lay his head. He had no home here on earth. He was going to the Mount of Olives.

And so, it reminds us that he made a great sacrifice, leaving heaven for us. And, as we look at the word, and as we see that he's gone to the Mount of Olives, it also reminds me, as we think about other passages, as we look at other places where he went to the Mount of Olives, what was his custom to do on the Mount of Olives?

And so, I just wanted to read a few things to you this morning. And I'm going to look first in Mark chapter 1. And I'm going to read to you verse 35.

It says, In the early morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house, and went away to a secluded place and was praying there. See, he made it a custom to go somewhere secluded and pray.

And we find that place more and more often as we look through the scriptures. I'm going to read another one to you. In Mark chapter 6, verse 46, it says, After bidding them farewell, this is right after Jesus walks on the water.

[ 8 : 11 ] He says, After bidding them farewell, he left for the mountain to pray. He left for the mountain to pray, after he feeds the 5,000. And so, he's alone on the mountain praying.

He goes to the mountain and he prays. In Matthew, again, we see that... I've got... There we go. Got to get to it real fast. There we go. Matthew chapter 14, verse 23. After he had sent the crowds away, he went up on the mountain by himself to pray.

And when it was evening, he was there alone. So, see, his custom was to get alone with the Father and to pray so that he could do what he was called to do.

He had that custom and he shows that example to us to remind us that we need to have that. We need to have that in our lives. If we're not spending time with God, how are we going to deal properly with sin?

[ 9 : 16 ] How are we going to see what God does in our lives in the proper way? And also, in this passage, as we're looking at John chapter 8, you see that he goes early in the morning to teach.

He goes in to teach. And we see several times in the Gospels, as we look through the Gospels, all through the Gospels, he's always teaching people, isn't he? That seems to be his goal as he teaches.

He goes places. And in Luke chapter 6, verse 10, he says, After looking around at them all, he said to him... Okay. Sorry.

12. Verse 12. It was at this time, he went off to the mountain to pray. And he spent the whole night in prayer to God. This was another verse that I meant to share with you all just a second ago.

Because it shows that even before he chose his disciples, he wanted to make sure he spent time with God. He spent all night in prayer that night. And as we look through, we see so many times as Jesus is teaching the people, he's wanting people to come to him.

[ 10 : 20 ] He's wanting people to learn from him. And here in this passage, we see that early in the morning, he came again into the temple. And all the people were coming to him. And he sat down and began to teach them.

Now, I think we have a hard time picturing it because we have different churches in all different spots around the country. And you picture your church.

I picture my church when I think about where I go to worship God. And, you know, even though our lives are meant to be worship all the time, we kind of picture our church as we think about the place we go to worship. And you might not be able to picture the temple and what the Jewish customs were and things like that.

It might be hard for you to kind of picture that. And I'm not sure that I can paint a great picture for you today. But I think we kind of think of a building like this or something similar. And what I want you to see today is what Jesus came to that day to teach at.

And the whole top of Mount Moriah, Herod had turned the whole top of Mount Moriah into the temple. He had expanded and expanded, never shut it down. But when he became the ruler of the area, he just kept building and building and building.

[ 11 : 26 ] As the Jews would come, it would be bigger every time they came. Until the walls around the temple encompassed a whole 37 acres on top of the mountain. And so we're talking about a huge place.

And so when people came to worship, they had different courts. And as you came in, you came into one huge area where all the people could come in. And everybody was welcome. And so they had the court of the Gentiles was what it was called.

And in that court, you would have seen the people set up with all their things to sell. They would have had their doves, the pigeons, the different animals for sacrifices and things like that.

And they would have had other things. So everybody can come into that place. And then the next court up, you get to the court of women where the women were allowed to go that were Jewish. And so as you went through, it was just this huge area.

And people would come on the Sabbath to learn. And so usually there would be teachers. And you would have such a big space, there would be a lot of teachers in different places.

[ 12 : 25 ] Usually setting up by some of those pillars that they had set up. And they would go and sit. And they would have the people that were learning from them come to them. That was kind of

how they considered their disciples, the ones that came and learned from them.

And so Jesus sets up and he sits down to teach this day. And it says all the people were coming to him. In other words, I'm picturing it like this.

It's like he sets up in the court of women because that's what, anyway, that the scholars say that he's at. Because the woman is brought in and it's a place where the women were allowed to come in.

And so he's set up there to teach that day. And I'm picturing people coming in from the inner courts too, the ones that are closer in. Because the higher up you were in the Jewish society, the further in you could go.

And, of course, eventually only the priests can go into certain areas. And so I'm picturing the people kind of coming in, oh, Jesus is in here teaching. And they all start coming from the other teachers away from those teachers and coming to learn from Jesus that day.

[13:21] And so as he's teaching, he's wanting people to learn from him. And he wants us too to be learners from him, to be his disciples. That's really what a disciple is, is I'm a learner from Jesus.

I'm learning from him still. And that's why I'm a disciple today. And that's what makes us disciples today is we want to learn from him. And so Jesus is showing us by example, you know, we should pray.

Yes, we should be in prayer. We need to be in prayer if we're going to deal with sin. We need to be learners from Jesus if we're really going to deal with sin rightly. We don't need to be saying, well, I'm a learner from War Trace Baptist.

I'm a learner from this place or that place. But that we are his disciples. If we really want to deal with sin rightly in our lives, we need to deal with sin and be his disciple.

And so as all of these are coming to him, the Bible tells us that the scribes and the Pharisees brought a woman caught in adultery. And having set her in the center of the court, they said to him, teacher, this woman has been caught in adultery in the very act.

[14:27] It does say in the next verse they're trying to trap him. They want to trap Jesus. So how is it that this question would trap him? How is it that this question, what do you say?

Since Moses says this, what do you say? Would trap him? Well, there's a couple ways. No matter what Jesus answers, if he answers in the positive or the negative, they've got him where they want him.

Because, first off, the Jews had come to the place where the Romans had taken away their right to execute. Their right to stone anybody to death was taken away by the Romans.

And so if anybody said, yes, this person deserves to be stoned, they could say, okay, Roman, come over here and arrest this guy. He just said, we should execute this woman. And they would have him where they wanted him. They had grounds to accuse Jesus at that point if he said, yes, stone this woman.

And if he said, no, he's going against the law of Moses. And they could say, kick him out of the temple. He deserves to die. He's not following the law of Moses.

[15:29] So it didn't really matter if he affirmed or if he said the other way. They had him right where they wanted him, they thought. And so, but how often does Jesus, it's interesting to think about this for a second.

Just how often did the people that day try to throw Moses in Jesus' face and say, wait a second, you guys aren't doing this. You should be doing this. And as we remember, though, that Jesus, of course, fulfills the law of Moses.

He is greater than Moses and he fulfills the law. But just think about this for a second. When his disciples were eating grain on the Sabbath, they said, hey, wait. Moses says, uh-uh, no work on the Sabbath.

Don't do that. You're not allowed to eat grain. And when he healed on the Sabbath, they said, whoa, you can do this any other day of the week, but not on the Sabbath because Moses says. Then they would come to him and say things like, why did Moses command us then to give papers of divorce to our wife and send her away in Matthew 19? Then they would say in Matthew 27, teacher Moses said, if a man dies having no children, his brother has to marry him.

[16:39] And so if a man has, if there's seven brothers and one man marries the woman and then he dies and he doesn't have any children, the next, the next, the next, the next. They're trying to trick him again. Whose wife will she be in the resurrection if there's really a resurrection?

This was coming from people that didn't believe in the resurrection. They were trying to prove through Moses that there wasn't one because Moses said this. But each time, Jesus would show them how they weren't thinking things through.

They weren't thinking things through because he would say something like, well, you've heard it said, do not commit adultery. But I say to you, do not even think about it. If a man thinks of a woman with lustful thoughts, he's already committed adultery in his heart.

He would raise the bar instead of saying, yeah, that's exactly how it is. He would raise the bar and say, I say, you know, it's even more than you're thinking. Because y'all are thinking about physical things.

And I'm telling you, even in your mind, you can sin against God. And so at this point, he raises the bar again as they say this. When he bends down, he's riding in the dirt.

[17:44] They're thinking they've got him. They're thinking he's stalling for time. He's just, we've got him right where we want him. And he's not stalling for time. He's got a purpose for whatever he did in the dirt that day.

He's got a purpose. And as we look at it, he's also pointed out to them already in John.

And he had already told them, if you believed Moses, you would believe me because he wrote about me. So they're not really looking to honor Moses in what they're doing.

They're not looking to follow God. They just want to trap Jesus this day. And if you really look at the law, if you really look at the law that they're quoting, I'm going to read just a couple of them real fast that say what they should have done.

The first one is Leviticus 20, verse 10. It says, In other words, both had to be put to death.

[18:53] There was no stipulation if you pull one person out of the situation to leave the other one. In Deuteronomy 22, it says, If a man is found lying with a married woman, then both of them must die.

The man who lay with the woman and the woman. Thus you shall purge the evil from Israel. So how am I saying that Jesus is raising the bar when he tells them, Let him who is sinless cast the first stone?

Well, the law in Deuteronomy 17, 17, Let me get there.

States this. 17, 17. No, that's not the one. 17, 7, sorry.

There we go. 17, 7. The hand of the witness shall be the first against him to put him to death, and afterward the hand of all the people, so you shall purge the evil from your midst. So the first stone had to be thrown by the witnesses.

[20:02] Those witnesses had to, if they were accusing somebody, throw the first stone. And he was saying, okay, you're the witnesses now. Of you, the one who's sinless, let that one throw the first stone.

In other words, he points out gently to them, Are you sinless? Are you without sin? Are you able to throw the first stone?

You know, gently showing that sin. Now, I have struggled to gently show people their sin when I feel God's showing me. I need to speak to this person.

I've got to do something to help them. Because in my view, once God shows me something that I need to deal with, I'm like, well, if God showed me, I need to tell them so they can repent, they can get right with God.

And so, sometimes in my life, I've had a hard time gently approaching people and saying, Hey, you know, how does God feel about this?

[21:04] How does God feel about this? What does Jesus say about what you're doing? And that's been a struggle. And so, as I'm looking at this passage, I see how gently Jesus dealt with these people.

I mean, they came in wanting to catch him, and yet he points out their sin. He points out the fact that none of them are sinless. And yet, here he is.

He's there sinless, and he's the one that could have thrown the first stone, right? Because he was a witness, too. He knows all things. But he asked her the question.

I'll read it from the Scripture, so I don't quote it wrong. He said, Woman, where are they? Did no one condemn you? So, he purposefully works in a way where he wants us to know that he loves us.

He doesn't want us to feel like he's the God that wants to hold things over us. He wants to catch us in the act. Oh, I've got you right where I want you.

[ 22 : 14 ] I want you to... He's very loving, yet he dealt with sin. He dealt with sin with both them and with the woman. Because as you look at the next verse, when she says, No one, Lord.

And Jesus said, I do not condemn you either. Go. From now on, sin no more. Now, if she goes and she turns away from this sin that he's asked her to turn away from, that's true repentance.

That's true repentance. That's what God is wanting us to do. He's wanting us to help people come to true repentance and to find... Help them find that relationship healed with God again.

Because when we have our... When we are forgiven by men and we're forgiven by him, we can have that relationship restored. And you notice how I mentioned he kind of took that to the next level, saying that...

Saying that, let him who is sinless cast the first stone. He's raised the bar. He's pointed out the sins of everyone there.

[ 23 : 20 ] He's not trying to let people off. He's not brushing sin under the rug. And I think we oftentimes do that. And I found myself doing that in my life sometimes. I have one little example to kind of show you.

Something happened at our church. It was in the church sin with our family. And I just told my wife, you've got to forget about him. He just talks that way.

And just brush it under the rug and forget about it. And that's not the way you do it. You know? You don't just brush it under the rug. Things happen in church, yes. But God wants us to deal with those sins.

That's why he gave us special instructions about sin. Special instructions to say, when you realize your brother's sinned against you, leave your gift at the altar.

When he has something against you, leave your gift at the altar. Don't get right with God first. Go first to your brother, then come back to the altar. And one of the reasons why he tells us that is because we can't be right with God first when we're not right with somebody else.

[ 24 : 22 ] He wants us to get our relationships with each other right. Make sure we come together. And what I should have told my wife that day was, let's go talk to him and pray. I shouldn't have just said, he's just different.

He doesn't mean what he said. He's just different. Just forget about it. I should have said, let's go talk with him. Let's go pray. Let's go make sure we get our lives right with the Lord.

And let's get that relationship right with our brother. And so, I hope today, as you think about how Jesus deals with sin, and you think about what he has for us to do, he wants us to recognize what a great sacrifice he's made for us.

And just be in awe of him for that sacrifice. Not just leaving heaven, but the sacrifice of the cross. So, the chapter starts out with these guys wanting to stone this woman, even though we realize they're just trying to trap Jesus.

They're not really looking to stone this woman. They want to trap Jesus and find a way to trap Jesus because they want to accuse him. But if you look at the very last verse of the chapter, you see it ends with some of the same people.

[ 25 : 33 ] And Jesus said to them, the last two verses, Jesus said to them, Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was born, I am. Therefore, they picked up stones to throw at him.

But Jesus hid himself and went out of the temple. You see, it wasn't his time yet. He did come to give his life for sinners, just like these that are confronting him in the temple, and for you and for me. He came to give his life for sinners, but it wasn't his time yet. It wasn't his time yet. They pick up these stones, and they're ready now to throw them at Jesus. When you look at the story, think about how we act in the church sometimes.

The things that we do as we live out our lives in the church, as we're trying to do what Jesus told us to do, as we're trying to be his disciples, as we're trying to be unified as a church body, yet he's telling us how to live that life, and then we go against his teaching.

We do things that we're not supposed to do in the church, and we live the way we want to live instead of the way he's called us to live. And we're living like these people because God describes our unfaithfulness to him like adultery.

[ 26 : 53 ] He describes the people of Israel and their unfaithfulness like adultery because he loves us so much. He wants us to be totally and wholly committed to him, and yet our hearts tend to go after other things.

And so, as we think about what Jesus did and how loving he is, remember that he's ready to be that loving to us, to you.

Even right now, if you realize that your heart has been going in the wrong direction, he is so loving. He's ready to forgive all sin. He wants to forgive all sin.

He wants it to be washed away. He wants you to have that relationship restored so you can go and you can sin no more. You can follow him in the best way and really be his disciples.

Think about his mercy, his grace. She stood there. She never said, I didn't do it. She never said, I'm not guilty.

[ 27 : 57 ] A lot of times, we get to the point where we're like, I'm not that bad. I'm doing okay. We kind of throw up our hands and say, I'm not doing so bad. And I was thinking I was on the right track before what I told you happened at the church.

And I was thinking I was following Jesus really good. I'm not that bad. I'm doing good. And then I realized as something happened that that kind of situation hurt my wife's heart because she let that build up inside.

And the next time it happened, I said the same thing. The next time it happened, I said the same thing. And that built up inside her. And all of a sudden, I realized I had hurt my wife. And I was the cause of her hurting inside.

And I had to realize we got to go to this person. We got to go to a couple people. And so we finally did what Jesus said. We finally said, you know what?

We got to go and talk to these people because we got to get right with God. And we can't get right with him until we go meet with our brothers and sisters. And so we went to our church friends that we had hurt.

[ 29 : 00 ] And they had hurt us. And we talked. And we received forgiveness. And what really came out of it was after we got that forgiveness from them, we just totally, God just totally forgave us for what we had done.

Because he was showing us, you know, those bad relationships in the church, they hurt the gospel message. When you're having a bad relationship with somebody in the church, it hurts the gospel message.

And he's like, even though I'm a full-time evangelist, I'm a part-time BCM director, I was realizing at that point I was hurting the gospel. And it really struck me and hurt me because I was like, I'm all about the gospel.

What do you mean? He's like, no. When you have those kind of relationships at church and you're not unified, it hurts the gospel. You got to get right. And as we got right before the Lord, and he really brought revival into our home, and he showed us that he wanted to be that close with us, that close to have that great love relationship restored where we were feeling a little distant from God because of things that were happening that we hadn't worked out in the church.

And so when we found out and got it all together and God fixed it all, that relationship was restored. And that's what I want for each person today. At the college where we serve, I'm hoping to see people with that relationship restored.

[ 30 : 24 ] At the church where we minister and serve as members, I'm hoping to see people with relationships restored. And right here today, I'm hoping that you see that when you let God deal with your sin, you don't hide it anymore.

I'm sure that woman didn't want anybody to know what she'd done, but she got to deal with her sin that day. She got to walk away from it. Will you walk away from that sin no matter what so you can have that relationship restored?

Let's pray. God, I thank you so much. I thank you for healing my heart, for healing Kathy's heart, for helping us to realize there's purpose for your word when you tell us to deal with sin before the sun goes down because you want to be in relationship with us right now.

Right now, you want us to deal with it, to make things right with you. And so I pray, Lord, I pray that there's any here today that need to do business with each other. I pray they would do business with each other first.

Go one-on-one and say, I'm sorry, or forgive me, or I need to tell you how you hurt me. Whatever they need to do, I pray they would do that business first so they can have that right relationship restored with you again.

[ 31 : 40 ] Lord, I pray that you would bless us today, help us to really walk as your disciples and to live as your disciples, to grow, to know you better.

I pray that you'd help us to follow your example and meet with the Father every morning, every night, and have special time with you, Lord. We thank you so much and ask you to bless each one here today.  
In Jesus' powerful name, amen.