

## THE WOMAN TAKEN IN ADULTERY

(John 8:1-11)

<sup>1</sup> Jesus went unto the mount of Olives. <sup>2</sup> 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. <sup>3</sup> And the scribes and Pharisees brought unto him a woman taken in adultery; and when they had set her in the midst, <sup>4</sup> They say unto him, Master, this woman was taken in adultery, in the very act. <sup>5</sup> Now Moses in the law commanded us, that such should be stoned: but what sayest thou? <sup>6</sup> 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.* <sup>7</sup> 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. <sup>8</sup> And again he stooped down, and wrote on the ground. <sup>9</sup> 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. <sup>10</sup> 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? <sup>11</sup> She said, No man, Lord. And Jesus said unto her, Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more.

When we last saw Jesus he was at the Feast of Tabernacles. And he was preaching to the unbelieving Jews. And they were murmuring against him and striving among themselves as to the meaning of his words. And you will notice in the last verse of chapter seven that after a long day every man went to his own house. Isn't it interesting that almost all of these unbelievers had houses to go to. All of his prosecutors; all of his enemies had houses. Such is the mercy of God even upon those that hate him!

Sometimes we forget how merciful God is. He has no reason to be merciful to unbelievers. But he looks down in mercy just because he is merciful. And it says that every man went unto his own house.

But notice where Jesus went. Jesus had nowhere to lay his head. (Luke 9:58) And, having no house, when the day was over,

*Jesus went unto the Mt. of Olives.*

John 8:1

We are not told whether he went to some friend's house or to some lean-to pitched in the side of the mountain or whether he found shelter in a cave or under a tree. But one thing we know, he went out of the temple and out of Jerusalem and went unto the Mt. of Olives.

It seems that Jesus had very few true friends in Jerusalem. Every man went to his own house, but they didn't take Jesus home with them. And so, Jesus went up into the mountain at night.

Now he may not have had many friends in Jerusalem, but it is certain that he had many enemies. They were now actively trying to lay hold of him and to take him into custody. And perhaps some would have ambushed him and murdered him in some dark alleyway there in Jerusalem. And so, at the end of the day he left out of Jerusalem and retired to the Mt. of Olives.

We don't know what he did when he went up into the mountain. Typically he would go off by himself and pray. (Matthew 14:23) Sometimes he would take his disciples with him to be with them for a while. (John 6:3) And, of course, it was necessary for Jesus to sleep from time to time. And so, Jesus left Jerusalem and went up into the mountain.

The Mt. of Olives was right outside the gates of Jerusalem. In fact the distance from Jerusalem to the Mt. of Olives is stated in the Scripture. It was a sabbath day's journey. (Acts 1:12) The Jews were not allowed to work on the Sabbath day according to the Mosaic Law. But they then interpreted that to mean that they could only walk a certain distance on that day of rest. And they determined that a man could only walk 2000 paces from his home without violating God's Sabbath Law. This worked out to be about one mile. So, approximately one mile was a Sabbath day's journey. And it says the Mt. of Olives was a Sabbath day's journey from Jerusalem.

Interestingly, you might remember that when Jesus was forecasting the destruction of Jerusalem, he said,

*Pray ye that your flight be not in the winter, neither on the Sabbath day.*  
Matthew 24:20

This is because it would be difficult to run far in the cold of winter and they could only run for 2000 paces on the Sabbath day and then they would have to stop (according to their tradition) and allow the enemy to slaughter them.

So, Jesus went up into the Mt. of Olives for the night. But you see that he came back to the temple in Jerusalem early in the morning.

*And early in the morning he came again into the temple.*  
John 8:2

How diligent was Jesus in his ministry! Though he had preached the entire day before, he came back early in the morning to preach again. Now Jesus probably arose before the sun came up and walked back into the city. And he was there early in the morning.

I hope you have experienced how wonderful it is to wake up in the morning thinking about God's business! Jesus couldn't sleep in. He was excited to do the will of God. And so, he arose early in the morning and he was found in the temple preaching again. And apparently Jesus was not the only one who was excited. Look,

*And all the people came unto him.*

John 8:2

Now the people probably slept in a little bit. But they straggled in one by one as the day went on. And especially when they knew that Jesus was teaching, it says “all the people came unto him.”

Now the temple in Jerusalem was always a place where teaching was going on. There were the Sadducees in one part of the courtyard, and the Pharisees in another part. And each group had their teachers who would instruct for hours in the courtyards of the temple, especially during the feast times. And you might ask, “How could they sit there for hours to hear these teachers.”

You have to remember that in this day they had no television to keep them entertained. They had no internet; no facebook; no twitter. They had no computer games to occupy them 24 hours a day. They had no ballgames, no golf courses, no movie houses. And so they gathered in the temple to hear teachers.

And it appears that Jesus found himself a place in the temple where he also taught the people. And when Jesus taught it says, “All the people came unto him.” That is, the congregation of the Sadducees began to filter over to hear Jesus. And the Pharisee congregation came over. And so many of the people came over to hear Jesus, that John said, “All the people came.”

It must have seemed like all the people to the other teachers. Who wants to hear some scribe drone on about the sayings of Rabbi so and so when Jesus is teaching the words of God right down the way! And so, the people were crowding around Jesus to listen to him teach.

Now so far we have seen the time of his teaching; it was early in the morning. And we have seen the place of his teaching; it was in the temple. And now we notice the posture that he took in his teaching.

*And he sat down and taught them.*

John 8:2

You have to understand that the teaching in the temple was often an all-day affair. They were not like us. We can barely endure 30 minutes before we are looking at our watches and are ready to go home and watch TV. But they didn't have TV or computers or electronic games or daily sporting events. And so, the teaching went on hour after hour in the temple.

And Jesus sat down and taught them. How wonderful it must have been to see Jesus sit down and teach! When he sat down this showed that he intended to stay a while. He was not going to read a short passage and leave. Rather, he was going to

teach for an extended time. And they knew when he sat down that he would give them his attention for a long time.

Now while Jesus was sitting and teaching in the temple,

*The Scribes and Pharisees brought unto him a woman taken in adultery.*

John 8:3

### The Rude Demeanor of the Scribes and Pharisees

First of all, notice how rude and crude these scribes and Pharisees were. Jesus was teaching the people. He was undoubtedly in the middle of a lesson, when they burst into the midst and interrupted him. This shows that not only were they not listening to Jesus themselves, but they were intent on disrupting so that others couldn't listen either.

We have here a passage of Scripture that is often referred to as "The Woman taken in adultery." But you will find that it is every bit as much about the sin of the Pharisees. This is really what our text is about. It is about a group of scribes and Pharisees who devised a plan to put Jesus on the horns of a dilemma and in doing so, they sinned greatly.

I want you to be fully aware that at this time "the Jews," that is, the Jewish rulers, are engaged in a campaign to put Jesus to death. They have met in the Sanhedrin chambers and have engaged in a plan to kill him.

Now you must remember that Jesus has called them unbelievers. (John 6:36) He has told them that they cannot enter the kingdom of God without a new birth in order to see the kingdom. (John 3:5) He has told them that they do not have the Father's word abiding in them. (John 5:38) And perhaps most infuriating, he told them in Chapter 6 that only the elect can come to him (John 6:37) and that explains why they will not and cannot come. (John 6:44) How utterly infuriating that Jesus would tell the Jews that they are not elect!

Furthermore Jesus was capturing attention all over the region because of his great healing miracles. And the Jews were jealous and resentful. At first they were curious. But then, they became furious. And they were devising plans as to how to trap him. Now more than likely they were having late night meetings, planning their strategies. And they were trying to figure out how to outsmart Jesus. Now they knew they were up against a smart fellow. But, they didn't know they were up against a man who knew all things. They knew they were striving against a wise man, but they did not know they were plotting against the author of all wisdom. And so, they gathered in dark corners and schemed as though they would take Jesus by surprise. You see, this is what this passage is really about. It is really about the sin of the Pharisees rather than the sin of this woman. Yes, there is a secondary story about a sinful woman. But the

primary story is about sinful scribes and Pharisees. Before we take a look at the sins of the Pharisees, let's take a look at,

### The Sin of the Woman

The first thing that we should know is that,

- I. Adultery was a grave sin in the Old Testament which was punishable by death.

*If a man be found lying with a woman married to a 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. If a damsel that is a virgin be betrothed unto a husband, and a man find her in the city, and lie with her; Then ye shall bring them both out unto the gate of the 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 neighbor's wife: so thou shalt put away evil from among you.*

Deuteronomy 22:22-24

Adultery was and always has been a grievous sin against God. It is one of the Ten Commandments. "Thou shalt not commit adultery." (Exodus 20:14) Adultery is not only the act of a lying heart, but also it is an act of an unfaithful heart. It is the act of a rebellious and an impenitent heart. It strikes at the core of a marriage and it strikes at the core of a relationship with God.

God made a man and a woman to be a picture of Christ and the church. And physical adultery is a picture of spiritual adultery. When Israel left the true God and worshipped other gods, God considered it adultery and he issued Israel a bill of divorce. (Jeremiah 3:8, 9)

So we see that adultery was a grave sin in Israel and the penalty under the Law was death. Yet, you should also know that,

- II. The death penalty for adultery was not often carried out in Israel.

In order to convict someone of an offense under the Law of Moses there must be two witnesses.

*At the mouth of two witnesses, or three witnesses, shall he that is worthy of death be put to death; but at the mouth of one witness he shall not be put to death.*

Deuteronomy 17:6

In other words, it wasn't good enough to have circumstantial evidence. It wasn't good enough that they were seen going into the tent together. But it was necessary that there be two eyewitnesses to the adulterous act. By the very nature of adultery, this is

rarely possible. Adultery is an act carried out in dark secrecy. It is not like stealing a car where someone might look out the window and see you. It is done when the husband is away and when no one else is around. And therefore almost never was anyone stoned for this offense.

Also, because of the low view of women and because of the widespread abuse of women at that time and because of the sexual perversion of both men and women everywhere, adultery was so widespread that the Law of Moses was not commonly enforced when it came to the sin of adultery. And so, it was quite unusual that these Pharisees brought this woman for law enforcement when it was otherwise almost never enforced.

III. This woman was guilty of adultery.

This woman in John eight was an adulterous woman. She was a sinner. Now we don't know whether she had a husband or whether she was engaged to be married or whether she was a single woman who slept with someone else's husband. All we know is that she committed adultery and she was caught in the very act.

Now it is quite likely that she was lured into the act. She may have been set up by the Pharisees. They may have created the circumstances. They were probably lying in wait so they could catch her in the act. But it is clear that she did commit the act. They weren't lying about her. She really did commit this sin, because in the end Jesus, who knew all things, told her to go and sin no more.

### Lessons to be Learned

We learn from this woman's sin that,

I. Sin is done in secret, but the news of it is broadcast publicly.

I am sure that this woman thought that her sin would not be found out. All sinners think this. The thief comes under the cover of darkness. The liar thinks his story is airtight. And this woman tiptoed into a strange bedroom thinking that she would never get caught. But what does the Bible say?

*And be sure your sin will find you out.*

Numbers 32:23

A. Your sin will find you out in the final judgment.

There are some sins that may escape notice in this life. But they will certainly be found out in the final judgment. All things will then be exposed to the light.

*But I say unto you, That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment.*

Matthew 12:36

Now if you will be held accountable for every idle word, then you will also give account for every idle deed. And I suspect that the same is true for every idle thought. There is no such thing as getting away with sin. All sin will be judged. Every individual sin will be judged. Every busy sin and every idle sin will be judged. God absolutely despises sin, and in his infinite mind, non-forgetting mind he takes notes day by day. And you can be sure that sins will be found out when you stand in eternal judgment.

Will the sins of the wicked be found out? Yes, especially the sins of the wicked. Their sins are being stored up one by one against the day of wrath.

*But after thy hardness and impenitent heart treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God, who will render to every man according to his deeds.*

Romans 2:6

There is no sin that will go unpunished. There is no wrong that will go un-righted. Wrath is being stored up in heaven sin by sin. And the unrighteous will suffer the consequences in that day of wrath. You see, today is not the day of wrath. Today is the day of mercy. Today is the day when the merciful hand of forgiveness is offered to sinners. This whole age is an age of grace. And God is longsuffering. And he is holding back his awesome wrath until the day of wrath. And in that day, that awful, awful day, every sin will be exposed. Do you understand how imposing that day will be? How utterly intimidating? How terrifying, when sinners stand before a God who hates sin, and their sins will be exposed in the light of day.

Be sure your sins will find you out. And then, his wrath will be unleashed like a mighty flood upon sinners. And there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth (Matthew 8:12) when the wrath of God is unleashed.

So, we know that sins will be found out in the Day of Judgment. But the wicked are not too concerned about eternal things, are they? They thumb their noses at the wrath of God in eternity. All they care about is this life. All they care about is what advantage or disadvantage they will see in this life. But let me also say that the general principle is that,

B. Your sin will find you out in this life.

Even though sin is usually done in the dark, there usually comes a day when your sin is exposed in this life. And there is a penalty to be paid even in this life.

The wrath of God is dammed up for now in heaven. And He is holding it back against that great day of wrath. But his wrath laps over the edges of the dam and

trickles down at times upon sinners in this life. Sinners get a taste of his wrath even now. And there is a very bitter taste to sin indeed.

You won't escape the awful effects of sin even in this life. Be sure your sins will find you out. They will find you out now and they will find you out later.

Consider this sinful woman. She crept into a stranger's room in secret. But what she didn't know was that it was a trap. The Pharisees laid in wait. And when she was in the very act, they barged in on her. And all of a sudden, her sin was not so secret anymore.

And they took hold of her and they dragged her out of the dark bedroom and into the light of day. And they brought her into the outer courts of the temple where all the people were gathered listening to Jesus. And look what it says,

*And when they had set her in the midst . . .*  
John 8:3

They brought her against her will. They brought her by force. And they set her right in the midst of all the people. And all the people stared at her. Every eye was on her. And all of a sudden her sin had found her out.

We should all live our lives as though our actions are open to public inspection. Every word that we utter should be uttered as though it is being publicly broadcast. We should monitor the thoughts of our hearts as though they are open to public inspection. For the principle is, "Be sure, your sins will find you out."

Now not only did they bring her out into the public eye, but also they publicly announced her sin.

*They said unto him, Master, this woman was taken in adultery, in the very act.*  
John 8:4

Now I am sure that they did not come up and whisper this in the ear of Jesus to protect the woman's privacy. Oh no. They announced this so that all the people could hear. This was their intent, to publicly put Jesus on the horns of a dilemma. They had no concern for the dignity or the privacy of this woman. In fact, I am sure that their wicked hearts took some delight in humiliating her in front of all. And so they announced in front of all, "This woman was caught in the very act of adultery."

This sinful woman learned a very hard lesson on this day. "Be sure, your sins will find you out." They will find you out in this life and they will certainly find you out at the last day.

Before we leave consideration of this woman's sin, let's consider,

## The Treatment the Woman Received From Christ

Now the Pharisees treated her rudely and probably roughly. And they dragged her in front of the people and sat her down in front of Jesus. And we can certainly say that the Pharisees had no concern for this woman at all. They were ready to send her to the stoning pit. But look how Jesus treated her.

- I. Jesus ignored her accusers.

*But Jesus stooped down, and with his finger wrote on the ground, as though he heard them not.*

John 8:6

Here we have the Pharisees bringing charges against this woman. And Jesus ignored them! What a merciful act this was. Here was a sinner cast at his feet and her accusers were pointing fingers at her. And Jesus looked the other way! He went about his business as though there were no accusers at all. And isn't this how Jesus treats sinners in this age of grace? He is interested in saving sinners. There will be a day for condemnation, but now is the day of grace!

This is why Jesus told Nicodemus,

*For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved.*

John 3:17

There is a day of condemnation. There is a day of wrath. But this is not it. Today is a day of grace and forgiveness. And when they cast a sinner at his feet, Jesus was not interested in pronouncing condemnation but he was interested in setting her free. The Pharisees had hate in their eyes. But Jesus had love in his. And when the Pharisees accused this woman, Jesus ignored them.

This also serves as a beautiful picture of what Jesus does when Satan accuses the elect day after day. Satan has caught all of us in the act. Just like these Pharisees did to this woman, Satan has set a trap for us and he has lured us into great sins. And he drags us daily before our God and says, "What sayest thou?" (John 8:5)

And do you know that God ignores the accusations of Satan? He treats Satan with disdain and he refuses to acknowledge him.

*And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night.*

Revelation 12:10

And when the Pharisees came to accuse this woman, Jesus treated them with disrespect. He acted like he didn't hear them! Neither does he hear Satan when Satan accuses the elect of sin.

- II. Jesus diverted the focus from the woman and pointed at the sin of the Pharisees.

When you are standing in court and all eyes are on you and you are being accused of violating some law, it is a great relief when the focus of attention is diverted to someone else. And Jesus told these Pharisees, "He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her."

In this context, it seems that Jesus was accusing these Pharisees of the very sin for which they sought to stone this woman. He was accusing them of adultery. He was not saying, whichever of you have never committed any sin, but he is saying, whichever of you have never committed adultery, let him cast the first stone. You see, it might be acceptable for a liar to stone an adulteress. But it would be a strange thing for an adulterer to stone an adulteress!

And so, essentially, Jesus pointed at the Pharisees and accused them of the very sin of adultery! The principles of sin also apply to the Pharisees. Be sure, your sins will find you out. And I am sure these Pharisees knew each other. They had probably bragged to each other about their own adulteries. And they began to look at each other. And now even their eyes were diverted from this woman.

Oh how she must have rejoiced at the wisdom of Jesus! All of a sudden, all of the attention was on these adulterous Pharisees. And notice what happened.

*And they which heard it, being convicted by their own conscience, went out one by one.*

John 8:9

We see here how even the lost suffer the conviction of the conscience. They have no proper response to such conviction, but they are nevertheless convicted. In the Old Testament, God imposed the law even in the hearts of the Gentiles so that they had a conscience, a recognition of right and wrong. And these lost, unbelieving Pharisees walked away one by one, because they knew they also were adulterers under the law.

- III. Jesus spoke to the woman.

*Woman, where are those thine accusers? Hath no man accused thee?*

John 8:10

Remember, that this woman had committed a sin which Jesus hated. Her sin was not only an offense to her husband or to some offended spouse, but her sin was an offense to Jesus. I don't think we can imagine how he hates sin. And yet, he graciously

spoke to her. He could have walked away in disgust. He could have ignored her like he ignored the sinning Pharisees. But he spoke to her, and he spoke kindly.

How we should wonder at his mercy when he condescends to speak to us! He has no reason to do so except that he is kind and merciful. And he opened his mouth and spoke graciously to this sinful woman.

IV. Jesus deferred immediate condemnation upon the woman.

It was in the power of Jesus to condemn this woman to an immediate death for her sin. He could yet refer her to the authorities. But he declined to do so. He said,

*Neither do I condemn you.*

John 8:11

Now this woman has not expressed any faith in Christ. She has not expressed any repentance. She has not acknowledged that Jesus is the Christ. She has only said three words in this entire episode. When Jesus asked her if anyone had accused her, she said,

*No man, Lord.*

So what we see here when Jesus says, "Neither do I condemn you," is a declaration of a deferment of condemnation. He is speaking of immediate punishment for her sin. And Jesus has the right to defer or to postpone punishment. Jesus has the right to be longsuffering. Jesus has the right to be merciful even unto unrepentant sinners. And here, Jesus chooses to be merciful to a sinner.

Did Jesus save this woman? We don't know. There is no other mention of her in the Scripture. But knowing Jesus, don't we suspect that he found her later and spoke unto her words of eternal life? This is what he did for the man at the pool of Bethesda (John 5:14) and the blind man (John 9:35). And I strongly suspect that he later found this woman and saved her soul so that she avoided eternal condemnation.

This should be our ultimate goal, to stand at that final judgment and to hear Jesus say, "Neither do I condemn thee." What a glorious moment that will be when we finally hear him say it and when our accuser is banished forever from his presence.

As we said before, this portion of Scripture is not really so much about this woman taken in adultery. This story is about the Jewish leaders setting a trap for Jesus. It is very likely that this adulterous woman was set up. Perhaps she was a known prostitute, and the Jews lured her on this day and at this hour into the tent of a married man. Such was the Jews' lack of respect for the law of God. In order to set a trap for Jesus, they perhaps set up an occasion for adultery. And when this woman committed adultery, they were lying in wait and they caught her in the very act. And so, I would suggest that these Pharisees sinned by,

The Pharisees perhaps lured this woman into an adulterous act.

Note: This is a serious offense in itself, to lure someone into sin. As Christians, our duty is just the opposite.

*And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works.*  
Hebrews 10:24

Our duty is not to lure someone into a sin, but to do all we can to provoke them or to encourage them into good works.

But in order to lay their trap, It was necessary for the Pharisees to catch this woman in the very act of adultery in order to convict her under the Law. And it is likely that they planned it in such a way that at least two witnesses caught her in the act.

So, I would suggest to you that these Pharisees contrived to solicit this woman into a gross sin. If this is true, then woe to them!

The Pharisees were not interested in upholding the Law.

Now there are other interesting questions about this incident which cast doubt as to the integrity of the Jews. In the Law of Moses, both the woman and the man who engaged in adultery were to be stoned. And yet, the Pharisees only brought the woman to Jesus. Were they interested in upholding the holiness of God? Were they interested in upholding the Law of God? It doesn't seem so, for then where is the man?

The Pharisees were interested in trapping Jesus.

But a second question appears as well. Why do they bring the woman to Jesus? Jesus is not a civil authority. He is not a religious official. He is not a member of the Sanhedrin. If this were merely a procedural matter of imposing Mosaic sanctions upon this woman, there was no need of consulting with Jesus. In fact, the Jews who wanted to kill Jesus would have otherwise been quite reluctant to acknowledge that Jesus had any authority whatsoever in their criminal matters.

And so, it is clear that this incident is merely a ruse. They are not the least concerned about the holiness of God, nor the integrity of the Law. But they are interested in trapping Jesus into a criminal offense.

*This they said, tempting him, that they might have to accuse him.*  
John 8:6

The Pharisees rudely interrupted Jesus while he was teaching.

While Jesus was seated and teaching all the people, these obnoxious Pharisees rudely and loudly interrupted him. If you have any respect for a public speaker, you take pains not to interrupt him or to divert his attention. But these Jews dragged this woman to the front, undoubtedly interrupting and disrupting the ministry of Jesus. They had no respect for Jesus or his teaching and this is quite clear.

The Pharisees were obnoxiously persistent in their interruption

*So when they continued asking him . . .*  
John 8:7

The Pharisees were very ungracious to the woman.

You can just feel how spiteful and hateful they were to this poor woman. They “brought” her to Jesus. The idea is that they brought her by compulsion. They dragged her there unwillingly.

And when they got there, they didn’t wait in the back of the crowd until they could get a private meeting with Jesus. Rather, they made a public spectacle of this woman and they set her in the midst of all the people and in front of Jesus. There is no grace in their actions at all. A gracious heart would have had some compassion for this woman and some respect for her feelings. But they had no compassion for her at all because their hearts were evil.

Isn’t this the nature of the lost man? His heart is hard and cold. He has no feeling. His heart is stony. It is not looking for a way to be gracious, but is looking for a way to hurt someone. And so, they brought this woman in a most ungracious way to Jesus.

The Pharisees announced her sin in front of all the people.

Sometimes it is compassionate and wise to deal with sin privately, isn’t it? Every time someone sins, we don’t rush to the front of the church and announce it. In fact, the Scriptures give a whole procedure that should take place before it comes to that.

*Moreover if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church . . .*

Matthew 18:15-17

The Pharisees were themselves guilty of adultery.

When Jesus said, “He that is without sin, let him cast the first stone,” he most likely meant, “He that is without the sin of adultery.” Obviously, if any human being is to execute judgment upon another human being, it will be sinners executing judgment upon sinners. And so what Jesus most likely meant was that whoever executes judgment on an adulterer must not be an adulterer. And all of the Pharisees left one by one.