

“GO AND SIN NO MORE”

John 7:53-8:11

Pastor Keith E. Gephart

INTRODUCTION

I want those of you who have brought other translations with you to look at them and tell me what you notice about today’s passage. Where is it found, and what do the notes say?

Now, what shall we say about these “modern translations?” Is there some kind of liberal conspiracy against the Word of God? Do these translators have no convictions about the inspiration and inerrancy of the Scriptures? **If you want to get more detailed answers about translations, you need to come to the Wednesday night studies we will be having in a few weeks following our study on creationism.**

As your pastor, I promise you that we will never skip the “difficult issues” of Biblical interpretation. We will not speak only of those matters that are popular with the masses, or those that avoid possible conflict. It is urgent that we be transparent and straightforward. Jesus said in 7:17, “If any man is willing to do His will, he shall know of the teaching whether it is of God or whether I speak from Myself.” **Submissive and obedient believers can and must discern the truth.**

Now let us go a step further. Sometimes there is a question concerning the text itself. Was the particular text a part of the originally inspired Scriptures of truth, or was it inserted later? There are not many passages about which such questions must be asked. We can be totally confident of the vast majority of passages. In fact, questionable passages would fill only about a page and a half of the Greek text; most such passages are quite brief. This passage is one of the two longer ones—the other is Mark 16:8-20.

I can make two clear points about this passage based upon the evidence at hand:

- 1) *This passage was almost certainly not an original part of the Gospel of John.*
- 2) *The incident described here is likely authentic and accurate.*

Concerning **point one**, we can say that both *external* evidence (the Greek manuscripts) and *internal* evidence (the content of the passage itself) show us that this passage was not in John’s gospel originally.

EXTERNAL EVIDENCE

- A) None of the earliest manuscripts contain it.
- B) The earliest church fathers are not aware of it.
- C) The earliest translations omit it.
- D) Even manuscripts that contain it put it in various places—some at the end of John’s Gospel, some after verse 36, some after v. 44, some after Luke 21:38. They did not want to get rid of it, but did not know where to put it. The manuscripts containing it at this place are quite late—after the 8th century AD.
- E) There is an extraordinary number of variant readings in the passage—**80 words out of 183!**

F) Even many manuscripts having the passage at this place insert an asterisk or obelisk to indicate that it is questionable.

INTERNAL EVIDENCE

- A) The vocabulary is unlike that of John—many words he rarely if ever uses; many of his familiar words are not used.
- B) The style is unlike that of John.
- C) The story interrupts the context; it doesn't fit here. Verse 12 naturally follows 7:52.

Concerning **point two**, we can say that the story:

- A) Is true to Jesus' character.
- B) It is authentic—it “rings true.”
- C) It is an ancient story—found as early as Papias in the second century—but not in John's Gospel.
- D) It is found in the *Apostolic Constitutions*—albeit a later edition.
- E) Jerome mentions it as being found in many manuscripts.

There is one thing about which I will be very dogmatic; it is important for me to be clear about this because of the **many strong statements being made today to the contrary**:

ENEMIES OF THE GOSPEL AND OPPONENTS TO CHRISTIANITY DID NOT DELIBERATELY EXCISE THIS PASSAGE FROM THE BIBLE!!

Such a practice is just unknown! Willful corruptions are “in fact all but unknown” (Westcott, p. 429). Alfred Plummer has stated, “The utmost license of the boldest transcribers never makes even a remote approach to the excision of a complete narrative of the Gospels” (pp. 181-182).

So then, there are two things of which we can be confident: **This passage was not originally part of John's Gospel, but this passage gives us an accurate description of an incident that actually took place during the life and ministry of our Lord Jesus Christ.**



So then, what does this passage teach us about Jesus and about sinners?

- 1) Jesus came to seek and to save those who are lost!
- 2) Jesus never condones sin, and always directs us to stop our sinning!
- 3) Jesus has no patience for hypocrites who have no concern to reach sinners but only look to make themselves look better.

You must know that Jesus wants to save you from your sin, but will not save you IN YOUR SIN!

I. Jesus Values His True Disciples (7:53-8:2).

II. Jesus Has Not Time Or Patience With Those Who Are Mere Critics. (8:3-9).

III. Jesus Has Compassion On Those Who Recognize That They Are Sinners (9b-11).

IV. Jesus Demands Purity Of Life (11).

CONCLUSION

We live in a world where many simply look to find fault with the Bible or with the Christian faith. They are not really looking for help! Moreover, they look to put down those who are guilty of wicked sins, even though they are guilty of such sins themselves, and are often unjust in the way they treat such sinners.

Jesus has compassion upon sinners; He came to seek and to save them. He did not come into the world in order to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through Him.

Grace gives the chance to start over again!

However, Jesus demands that the sinner be forgiven and transformed. He may not continue in his sinful lifestyle.

IF YOU ARE A CHRISTIAN, YOU MUST REALLY BE DIFFERENT—YOU CANNOT CONTINUE IN YOUR WICKED LIFESTYLE.