

The Overlooked Commands of Jesus

#3 Do Not Sin

John 8:2-11

Introduction: We are citizens of two kingdoms; one is the Kingdom of Heaven, and the other is the Kingdom of this world, and specifically for us, the United States of America. But as believers, we are first and foremost citizens of heaven as Philippians 3:20 says: ***“But our citizenship is in heaven. And we eagerly await a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ.”***

Historically the church has leaned toward one of two extremes when it comes to relating to the culture around them.

Christ against Culture – This response to culture, is like the Amish, who retreat from culture so that it won't affect them. There are Christians who hide behind the stained-glass windows and everything they do is related to the church with church people.

The problem with a Christian Subculture is you become like the boy who was born without an immune system and grew up in a bubble, but then he fell in love so he created a suit so he could pursue the love of his life. But he was always in the bubble.

The other extreme is...

Christ of Culture - This is the liberal response to culture... believing that Christ is represented differently in every culture, so right and wrong changes with the times; don't be different as a Christian, just go with the flow. If homosexuals are accepted in mainstream, let's ordain them as ministers.

The biblical perspective is not Christ against culture or Christ of culture, it's...

Christ in Culture - Saving, redeeming, and making all things new.

When Jesus showed up, He announced that He was establishing a new relationship between God and man. He taught, did miracles, and raised the dead; He gave his followers a new command, ***“Love one another as I have loved you,”*** you know the story; then He died. And as far as His followers were concerned it was game over; it seemed like everything died with Him. **But then He rose from the dead and everything changed.**

Karen Armstrong wrote a book called, “Fields of Blood; Religion and the History of Violence.” When she gets to the part about the rise of Christianity, she says, “**against all odds, by the third century, Christianity had become a force to be reckoned with. We still do not know how this really came about.**”

Historians look for natural causes as to why things happen, but when it comes to Christianity there is no natural explanation. It’s supernatural.

Paul says it like this in 1 Cor. 15:1-8; “***Now, brothers and sisters, I want to remind you of the gospel I preached to you, which you received and on which you have taken your stand. By this gospel you are saved, if you hold firmly to the word I preached to you. Otherwise, you have believed in vain. For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, and that he appeared to Cephas, and then to the Twelve. After that, he appeared to more than five hundred of the brothers and sisters at the same time, most of whom are still living, though some have fallen asleep. Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles, and last of all he appeared to me also...***”

I began a sermon series two weeks called; “The Overlooked Commands of Jesus.” These commands are not suggestions but are things that Jesus told His followers **not** to do. **Before the resurrection these commands were unrealistic and unattainable; but when He rose from the dead, ascended to the right hand of God, and sent the Holy Spirit, everything changed.**

We began with Jesus’ command: ***Do Not Fear***. The early Christians understood, and we better understand; that when you come to the place where you stake your life on the fact that Jesus died for your sins, was buried, and then rose from the dead three days later, to offer us resurrection life; **you will begin to live a FEAR NOT LIFE.**

The Key Take-Away was: “You don’t need to be afraid even when there is something to be afraid of.” Jesus says, don’t fear the person, don’t fear the thing that can kill the body...don’t fear the storm...don’t fear the disease...instead fear the One who is King of Kings and Lord of Lords.

Last week we looked at Jesus' command: ***Do Not Worry***. Do you realize that worrying can cause heart disease, cancer, migraines, and even diabetes. The Mayo Clinic estimates that more than 80% of their total caseload is directly related to worry on the parts of their patients. One medical doctor said that if people could learn to stop worrying, most diseases would be cured.

We saw from Jesus' Sermon on the Mount, that one of the biggest parts of that sermon dealt with WORRY. Jesus evaluates the reason why we worry. He then eliminates the cause of worry, so He can elevate us above worry.

The Key Take-Aways from last week were: Proper priorities promote peace. Misplaced priorities multiply worry. Your priority every day should be His rule over your life and His righteousness in your life. When you focus on His will, He takes care of your worries.

Today's overlooked command is a big, big deal, and if I were to just say it up front, you would say that it was impossible and tune me out. So, I want to tell you the story where this ***'Forgotten Command'*** comes from.

Speaking of stories...I heard that after an exceptionally long and boring sermon, the congregation filed out of a certain church not saying a word to the pastor. After a while a man came up to him and said, "Pastor, that sermon reminded me of the peace and love of God!" The pastor was happy about that because no one had ever said anything like that before. Seeking for an explanation, the pastor asked him how his sermon reminded him of the peace and love of God. "Well," said the parishioner, "it reminded me of the peace of God because it passed all human understanding, and it reminded me of the love of God because it endured forever and ever!"

That will not be my intention today. I believe you will be WOWED by God's Holy Word today. **Let's PRAY**

To see the importance of the encounter Jesus has with the people in this story, it's important you know where it takes place.

This drama unfolds in what would be called today the temple mount. This is where Solomon's temple stood in the first century. In Jesus' day this was still the epicenter of God's activity among the people of Israel.

This story takes place along the south wall, which is about 900 feet long. In the middle there is what is known as the southern stairs; 240 feet wide that led up to this gate. **This was the path to atonement.**

This is the way that day after day people would walk up these stairs and enter through the gate at the top with their sacrifice. They would leave their sin offering at the altar and descend back down feeling free and forgiven; and their relationship with God restored. **Essentially this was their stairway to heaven.**

And this is what makes the location of this story so significant. Everyone involved had most likely walked up these stairs and entered that gate at one time or another. So, this location is vitally important...the path to atonement, redemption...restored relationship with God...the stairway to heaven so to speak. Everyone with me so far?

Okay, so here we go. The story is found in John, chapter 8, beginning with verse 2; **"At dawn (this is important) he appeared again in the temple courts, (meaning He walked up these steps, through the gate into the temple at the court of the Gentiles) where all the people gathered around him, and he sat down to teach them."** (So, the sun is barely up, and they are already looking for Jesus.) **"The teachers of the law and the Pharisees brought in a woman caught in adultery. They made her stand before the group.**

Part of the story we miss sometimes is that this is very early in the morning; so where were these Pharisees and this woman all night long? And the logical answer is that the issue wasn't what should we do with this woman; the issue was – this is a great opportunity to trap Jesus.

My guess is that they kept this woman all night somewhere and when they heard Jesus was in the temple, they dragged her up the stairs, through the gate, into the court, close to the Holy of Holies, in front of all the people. **This is going to be a public spectacle, on purpose, because they have an agenda – and it's not upholding the law or the welfare of the woman; it's to trap Jesus.**

...and they said to Jesus, “Teacher, this woman was caught in the act of adultery. (As in do not commit adultery; one of the Ten Commandments. This is not a rumor; she was caught in the very act.

By the way, adultery hardly ever begins with sex. Usually, it begins with friendship. A man and a woman meet each other at work or at the little league field where their kids play ball, or through school or church activities. They develop a friendship. In the course of time, they share their stories, and sympathize with each other. And one day, when neither of them was expecting it or planning for it to happen, they cross a line.

Walter Wangerin calls it **the moment of maybe**. Up till now this person has been nothing more than a friend. But because you’ve been letting your guard down, you’ve opened the possibility that maybe this can be more than just a friendship, and you continue down a slippery slope toward unfaithfulness.

STORY: A man was dining alone in a fancy restaurant and there was a gorgeous redhead sitting at the next table. He had noticed her there alone since he sat down but lacked the nerve to talk with her.

Suddenly she sneezed, and her glass eye flew out of its socket towards the man. He reflexively reached out, caught it, and handed it back to her.

'Oh my, I am so sorry,' the woman said, as she popped her eye back in place. 'Let me buy your dinner and make it up to you.'

They enjoyed a wonderful dinner together, and afterwards they went to a movie and had some coffee. They talked, they laughed. She listened to him with interest. The guy was amazed. Everything was so incredible! They had such a great time. 'You know,' he said, 'you are such a beautiful and amazing woman...Are you this nice to every guy you meet?'

'No,' she replied... 'You just happened to catch my eye!'

Now the woman in our story is in the last place she wants to be. This woman had most likely walked this same path before, bringing her sacrifice, but now it looks like she will be the sacrifice for her sin. She can see where the Holy of Holies is and if she had not felt her sin before, she is overwhelmed by her sin and guilt now.

Verse 5: ***“In the Law Moses...In other words be careful Jesus, we can take you around the corner to where the law is kept and show you. ...commanded us to stone such women. Now what do you say?”***

And man did it get quiet. The only sound you could hear would have been the sound of dying animals behind the wall being sacrificed. Jesus could have said, “Well stone her! Why did you drag her all the way up here if you’re so sure of her guilt? If Jesus wanted to get nasty, He could have reminded them what the law really said in Leviticus 20:10 which was...

“If a man commits adultery with another man’s wife—with the wife of his neighbor—both the adulterer and the adulteress are to be put to death.” NIV

Who’s missing from this picture? Where’s the man? So once again what do we have? - Sacred men in their sacred place with their specialized interpretation of God’s holy word trying to manipulate God’s holy Son.

Verse 6: ***“They were using this question as a trap, (As if we didn’t know already) in order to have a basis for accusing him.”***

Their goal has always been to divide Jesus from the people. Now they have the perfect opportunity to do it, because if Jesus sides against Moses, against the Law, and against the temple, He will certainly lose His popularity. The Pharisees had planned this moment so carefully. And so now, it’s game on:

Jesus vs. Moses.

Jesus vs. the Temple.

Jesus vs. their Interpretation of the OT Law.

This may have been one of those moments where the disciples are backing away from the crowd, thinking this may not go well; if they take Jesus, they’ll come after us. Do you remember what happened next?

Jesus bent down and started to write on the ground with his finger.

Just so you know, this is the only mention in the gospels of Jesus writing anything, and it wasn’t on parchment, so we can’t find it in archeological digs.

The one time we know of Jesus writing, He did it with His finger, in the dust at his feet. It probably didn't even make it through the day, before being erased.

So, we're left to either ignore it, or speculate about it. I don't want to make too much of this but, now you have the finger of Jesus vs. the finger of God; because you remember that God wrote the Ten Commandments on stone with His finger.

Vs. 7 goes on to say, ***“When they kept on questioning Him, He straightened up and said to them, “Let any one of you who is without sin be the first to throw a stone at her.”***

He who is without sin, go ahead and throw the first stone, and let's not forget where we are standing. How many times have you climbed those stairs to enter through that gate to come to the place to make a sacrifice for your sin? And so now it brings to their mind their own sins.

Here is the amazing thing about this drama. There was One standing there who had no sin; but He is also the only One who had no intention of throwing a stone.

Verse 8 then says; “Again he stooped down and wrote on the ground.”

9 At this, those who heard began to go away one at a time, (they went out of the temple; they exited the gate and walked back down the stairs away from the epicenter of God's interaction with His people... they went out in a certain order) the older ones first,

In other words, the ones who had made the most trips to this sacred place to atone for their own sins.) until only Jesus was left, with the woman still standing there.

10 Jesus straightened up and asked her, “Woman, where are they? (And then Jesus asks a very important question) Has no one condemned you?”

The question is not, has anyone accused you, because they already had accused her, and she was guilty – caught in the act.

The question for the woman essentially is, 'Is there no one here to make you pay for what you have done.'

11 "No one, sir," she said. And Jesus said, (are you ready for this...because this is what we're hear for...what Jesus says next is what we need, and even when He says it, we're not sure we believe it.)

And Jesus said, "Then neither do I condemn you."

Translation: I will not force you to pay for what you've done. And in saying this, Jesus announced to those who were there, and those who would read this account afterwards, '**I am greater than Moses, I am greater than the law, and I am greater than the entire temple system, the sacrificial system, I am greater than the Old Testament,**' and we learn later that He came to fulfill the OT by **establishing the new covenant by His blood.**

This is important to this story. The woman understands the cost of this offer. At the beginning of this ordeal, she was going to die, and Jesus stood up for her. Jesus stood between her and the crowd...her and the accusers. Because Jesus stopped them, she is saved, but now they want Jesus to die, and He will die. She will live because Jesus will die in her place.

This is at the core of the gospel; the idea that a new life comes to us because Jesus says, ***"I'll die in your place. I'll take all your sin on me."***

And then he gives her the overlooked command for today.

Jesus says, "Go now and leave your life of sin." Or go and sin no more.

Today's Forgotten Command of Jesus is for every man, woman, and child. Before the resurrection it was impossible, but with the resurrection power of Christ in us by the Holy Spirit it is possible to go and, **Sin No More!**

More than anything I want you to notice the **tone** of Jesus towards sinners who have been caught and are guilty. This may not be the tone you grew up with in church. In this moment Jesus exposes His heart toward sinners. And just so you know, ***"all of have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God."***

Jesus didn't come to condemn anyone. You remember John 3:16? "For God so loved the world..."

Sometimes we forget verse 17 that says: "***For God did not send his Son into the world to CONDEMN the world, but to SAVE the world through Him.***" John 3:17

Jesus' tone was not condemning, because Jesus knows what we all will learn if we continue in sin. The wages of sin is death. Every sin comes prepackaged with a penalty.

I came across an article called, "Sinners in the Hands of Willy Wonka" stating that most of us know that five children entered Willy Wonka's chocolate factory one cold British morning and experienced a trial like no other. Before the day's end, four of the children were weighed, measured, and found to be wanting--their shortcomings revealed. The fifth child, Charlie Bucket, was proven kind and virtuous and received the reward.

The four rejected children were spoiled, each in their own way. They had "gone bad" the way a peach spoils when left on the kitchen counter too long. In the language of the Scripture, these children were corrupted.

Augustus Gloop had been over-fed by his mother until he could not control his appetite;

Violet Beauregard had been indulged by parents living vicariously through her;

Veruca Salt was a brat because her father had never told her "no;"

Mike Teavee was an odious, unruly boy because his parents had surrendered him to the electronic babysitter.

No one could fault Mr. Wonka for not giving them the chocolate factory because it would have destroyed the children completely.

These children were, "spoiled." They were not rejected because they broke the house rules; they were sent away because their child-like nature had been corrupted into monstrous distortions of their true potential.

The word spoiled is a useful image for understanding our sin nature. The harm of sin is not lawbreaking, but that it ruins the image of God in us. We have, quite literally “gone bad,” no longer fit for our highest calling.

We were created to live in harmony with our Maker, but how can we do so if we think our greatest need is to satisfy our sinful nature?

When followers of Jesus persist in seeing sin as a violation of the rules, they miss the offer of abundant life. He longs to free us from sin because it will also release us into a freedom unimagined before. He calls us to the perfection of completion that we might drink deeply of the river of life.

CONCLUSION:

Ok let’s wrap this up. In Romans 7, Paul talks all about being released from the Law and being bound to Christ. Paul then talks about the Law and the problem of sin and after laying that foundation, look at how he begins Romans, chapter 8...

1 Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, 2 because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit who gives life has set you free from the law of sin and death.

3 For what the law was powerless to do because it was weakened by the flesh, God did by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh to be a sin offering. And so, he condemned sin in the flesh,

4 in order that the righteous requirement of the law might be fully met in us, who do not live according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.

Down to verse 11

11 And if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies because of his Spirit who lives in you.

Verse 26 says, ***“the Holy Spirit helps us in our weakness.”***

There is a line separating weakness from sinfulness. One of the warning signs that a weakness is on the line of sinfulness is secrecy.

Our strengthened weaknesses become useful, while our ignored weaknesses will become our downfall. God responded to Paul's struggle in 2 Corinthians 12:9 with this assurance, **"My grace is all you need. My power works best in weakness"** (NLT).

In our weakness, we are on the same side with God. Romans 8:31 states, **"If God is for us, who is against us?"** (NASB) with the emphasis on, "God is for us."

God is for us working with us when we are weak. However, when we are sinful, God still loves us, but we have placed Him in a situation where He is forced to confront us. God is holy. No sin can be in His presence.

God is not against us to condemn us, but He is against us to bring us back into fellowship and right standing with him.

Relationship defines my connection to another person. Fellowship, on the other hand, defines the quality of the relationship. Anytime you breach the fellowship, you strain the relationship. As a believer, my relationship with God is grounded in Jesus being my Savior.

31 What, then, shall we say in response to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us?

32 He who did not spare his own Son, but gave Him up for us all—how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things?

33 Who will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen? It is God who justifies.

34 Who then is the one who condemns? (Does that question sound familiar? Look at the answer) No one. Christ Jesus who died—more than that, who was raised to life—is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us.

35 Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword?

37 No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us.

38 For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers,

39 neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Every sin comes prepackaged with a penalty. Every time you sin, something dies. Over time sin will kill your conscious, your marriage, your testimony. Sin will ultimately kill your mind, your body, your self-control, your reputation. And we know that the wages of sin is death. So, Jesus says – leave your life of sin.

It is the consequence of sin that is the reason Jesus urges this woman to leave her life of sin.

In the Old Covenant temple model, the message is that when you sin you break God’s law.

In the New Covenant Jesus model, the message is that when you sin, you break God’s heart.

Sin no more. Leave your life of sin. Not because God will get you; but because it will kill you. Not because God will punish you, but because Jesus died for you and took the punishment for your sin and my sin upon himself.

The consequences of sin are the reason that Jesus urges us to leave our life of sin. And here’s the amazing thing – a little while later, Jesus would die for her adultery, and for your sin and my sin.

Because of what Jesus Christ did for you on a cross 2,000 years ago, God can now pardon you instead of punishing you. The question is will you let Him?

It’s interesting that if you go to the temple mount today; at the top of those stairs, the gate has been sealed up. **You can’t go that way anymore.** And you know what; you don’t have to go that way to atone for your sins. In fact, no more sacrifice is needed for sin, because Jesus walked up Calvary instead.

So, here’s your question: **What’s your sin?** What’s killing you and those around you? Jesus says - Leave your life of sin, because I already died for your sin. So why would you continue in anything that is going to hurt you and everyone around you? Leave your life of sin, not because you’ll be punished, sin is already punishing you. Leave your life of sin; not because God will get you; but because it will kill you. Leave your life of sin, because Jesus died for you and rose again, and the same spirit that raised Jesus from the dead lives in you and gives you power and victory over sin. **Sin No More**