

Identified By Love - John 8:1-11

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[0:00] Hey guys, thanks for listening to our Calvary Chapel Charlotte podcast. I will walk by faith and not by sight.

Man, praise the Lord. What a blessing. God is so, so good. I'm so excited to look at this passage with you this morning. Such a blessing. Such a cool section. So, last week we finished up John chapter 7. I was expecting to finish 7 and start 8, but the Lord did something different, which was great. We were looking at identity. The word identity means to prove to be the same as, something that's the same. A lack of identity leads to what? Confusion, right? And we live in a world that thinks you can change identity by changing what? A label. So we could walk outside and, you know, we could see a tree and I could say, well, that's a, you know, a tree. We could go to California and look at the giant redwoods and say, those are trees. And say, no, those are skyscrapers. Really? Yes, they are. And the trees out here, those aren't trees. Those are, I don't know, those are cats, right? You can give a label to it. You can change the label, but what is it? It doesn't change what it is. And we live in a world today and in a culture and a society that thinks, I'm just going to give a new label to it. I'm going to give a new label to men, to women, to love, to marriage, and it'll change what it is. But it doesn't change what it is.

Identity is based on what a thing is and is it identified as the same as something else. So we identify the cars in the parking lot as cars because that's what they are, based on what?

That's what they've been designed to be. And they're the same as others that are so. It's the same with God's word. God's word establishes our identity and affirms it, right? We live in a world that just says, just affirm me. Affirm my identity. That's all you got to do. Well, no, we have to first establish what you are and then I can affirm you, right? God's word establishes identity before it affirms identity. And last week we looked at one of those ways that the world is challenging an identity that God's word gives very clear knowledge regarding. We looked at how God's word gives very clear knowledge, identity regarding his people Israel, regarding the Jews. And then this week we're going to look at how God's word gives very clear identity regarding gender, marriage, sexuality. God's word, we saw last week, removes confusion and clearly identifies the person and purpose of his elect people, Israel. Any place in the scripture you see the word Israel, it always refers to Israel.

There's not one single instance in the entirety of the scripture where the term Israel is used to mean anything other than the literal descendants of Jacob, of Israel, of Jacob. The church has an identity. It is identified as a spiritual body made up of believing Gentiles and believing Jews, but is distinct from the identity of the nation, the people of Israel. The church is identified as a partaker of Israel's spiritual blessings. Praise God for that. Amen. But not as an overtaker of their covenant blessings. That's not who we are. Confusion enters when we allow something else to redefine terms the Bible has clearly and already established. We can give it a different term. We can call it something else. But what is it? What is it actually? And the Bible establishes these things for us. Psalm 105, I'm just going to read some verses to you from it. Psalm 105, beginning in verse 6, says, Oh, you seed of Abraham, his servant, you children of Jacob, his chosen. He has remembered his covenant forever, the word which he commanded to a thousand generations, which covenant he made with Abraham and his oath unto Isaac, and confirmed the same unto Jacob for a law, and to Israel for an everlasting covenant. Anybody like everlasting covenants? Man, we're part of an everlasting covenant.

[4:42] This everlasting covenant to Jacob and to his seed forever, saying unto them, I will give you the land of Canaan, the lot of your inheritance. God is not confused. He's not confused over the identity and purpose of his chosen people, Israel. You know, he's not confused either or unsure of the identity and purpose of his redeemed people, the church. In John 13, we'll get there eventually in the upper room.

Jesus is saying to his apostles, a new commandment I give unto you, that you love one another as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this shall all men know that you are my disciples, if you have love one to another. What is the purpose for God's spiritual body, the church? What is the purpose of bringing all of these peoples from all nations, Jew and Gentile alike, into this believing body? It's for love. God has created us to be identified by love, and we're going to see that as we go through this section this morning in John chapter 8, with the woman caught in adultery. So, how many genders? How many genders are there? Well, a quote here from the, if you put this in Google and you ask how many genders, this is a quote that will come up. It says, there's no single fixed number of genders, because gender is a spectrum. While some people identify strictly with the traditional binary of male and female, many others experience gender outside of these limits, encompassing a diverse range of identities. You know what that is? That's a bunch of college-length words to just say, we don't want to accept what God's done. We don't want to believe that. Gender is a spectrum, because we said it is, because we gave it that label. But what is it? You see, God is not confused over the identity of, or purpose for, creating man and women as distinct, man and woman, as distinct and separate genders. He's not confused. We've looked at this scripture before in Mark. I love this one, because Jesus just encapsulates everything in three verses. But from the beginning of the creation, God made them male and female, two genders. Genders covered. There it is. It's identified. It's established. It's affirmed by Jesus. For this cause, shall a man leave his father and mother and cleave to his wife? There's a purpose for the two of them. God made the one two, so that the two might come back together as one. For this cause, here we have marriage. And they too shall be one flesh. And so then they are no more two, but one flesh. The purpose of sexuality.

It's all encompassed right there. God knows what he's doing. Among Christians, generally, this is generally. Thankfully, it's different by denomination and by, you know, if you are a Bible-believing Christian, but generally among Christians, about 50% believe that homosexuality should be accepted by society. Half of Christians generally think that this should be accepted. We should accept them as this. How do we get there? How do we get to a place where half of the quote-unquote Christians are saying something that God calls an abomination should be accepted in our society? Leviticus 20.13, if a man shall also lie with mankind as he lies with a woman, both of them have committed an abomination. They shall surely be put to death. Their blood shall be upon them. How do we get there?

Where we think that our gender is a spectrum and men and women and what's a woman? I don't know. Well, I do. I married her one. Praise God. It's not good for Jared to be alone. Not good. Maybe a day, but that's about it. I'd be late for church. Oh boy, that'd be a mess. How do we get here? Well, according to the Barna Group, about 40% of practicing Christians believe that living together before marriage is acceptable. 40% of practicing Christians think that it's fine to live together before you're married. There's a decline today in the priority and sanctity of marriage among Christians. How do we get to our gender is a spectrum and that we're okay with same-sex, homosexual abomination stuff that we're going to give a label to?

[9:03] The identity of marriage, we're going to take that beautiful label and put it on that? Well, we got there because we slowly allowed ourselves to be eroded. Our beliefs, the truth of what we identify as true and as God's word.

1 Timothy 4, 1-3 says, Now the Spirit speaks expressly that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith. It doesn't mean they lose their salvation. It means they're departing from the truths that we hold dear based on our faith in Jesus Christ.

They'll give heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of devils, speaking lies and hypocrisy. Isn't it such a hypocritical thing to say that this is a marriage, what God calls an abomination?

That is a lie spoken in hypocrisy. Having their conscience seared with a hot iron just means they're numb to it. They've cauterized it. They can't feel it anymore. The nerves have been so burned. And then what does it say they will do? Forbidding to marry. Forbid means to hinder, to withhold from, or to deny or restrain. And we live in a culture today that hinders, that withholds people from, that denies or restrains them when it comes to marriage.

[10:14] You don't want to get married. That's not what you want to do. Marry, the word marry there, means to lead in marriage, to take a wife, to give oneself in marriage, to give a daughter in marriage.

Girls, you don't want to be oppressed in marriage. That's not what, no, that's not what you're created for. That's not why you're here. That's not what God has for you. No way.

Girl power. You don't want some man ruling over you. Feminism, the definition, is an ideology, and this is, again, a bunch of big words that sound important but in a reality meaningless, an ideology that aims to dismantle systemic inequalities and patriarchal structures that have historically disadvantaged women and girls.

That's great. If there's an ideology that teaches a system to disadvantage women and girls, I'm all against that.

I think that's horrible. If there's a patriarchal structure that is put in place to disadvantage women and girls, I'll sign my name to being against that.

[11:27] Absolutely. What do they mean by that, though? Feminism has influenced marriage rates by dismantling God's order and redefining relationships.

When they say patriarchal structure that has historically disadvantaged women and girls, what are they talking about? Listen, Islam is a patriarchal structure that disadvantages women and girls, and I am all against that.

That is of the devil. That is a doctrine of demons. But you know it's not Islam they're going after. They go after Christianity. They go after Ephesians 5.23, which says the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church and he is the savior of the body.

Oh, see, if you get married, your husband's gonna, he's your head, that means he's gonna just, ladies, he's just gonna keep you under. He's gonna wanna tell you everything you do. You don't wanna be in a system like that.

Can I ask you as the church, do you have a problem with Christ as your head? Have you ever felt oppressed by Christ? Is following him a burden? Is it so hard? Is it difficult?

[12:35] Jesus is the savior of my body. He has saved me. Ah, I feel so oppressed by your salvation, Jesus. Is that a thing? I think that's called being backslidden.

Ladies, do you have a problem if your husband leads you as Christ leads you? Do you have a problem if your husband seeks your good, your salvation, your deliverance as Jesus did?

I don't think so. I don't think we have a problem with that. The data and historical evidence contradicts the contemporary narrative that the Christian faith is oppressive to women. The data and historical evidence is completely contrary to this idea that Christianity is oppressive to women. In reality, it provides a transformative power that elevates, empowers, and dignifies women in ways that are both historically and presently significant. Jesus, he refused to see women as inferior or unclean.

And it was a society at that time that did. Remember what they would pray? God, thank you that I'm not a Gentile or a woman. That's what the Jews, the men, would pray. And even more than that, he made them his disciples and he revealed himself to them.

[13:51] Who did he reveal himself to first after the resurrection? A woman. And to the women who were on the way and then Mary Magdalene and what are the disciples? We didn't believe them. It's not good for them to be alone either.

He is the model of how to treat women. As we get into this section, which I think is most likely familiar to a lot of us who've been in the church, who've been in the word. You know, the woman caught in adultery, brought to Jesus and laid at his feet.

Jesus is our model of how to treat women. Jesus is the one who establishes identity. That's what we're gonna see this morning. So let's jump in here to John chapter eight, verse one. So remember at the end of seven, Jesus had just finished teaching in the temple, dealing with all of these questions of unbelief regarding him.

And we ended last week as they were wrestling with his identity. Well, who is he? The son of David will come from Bethlehem, but he comes from Galilee. It doesn't make sense. And we looked at apparent contradictions in scripture, which are actually just opportunities to dig deeper, right?

The contradiction's never with the word. It's always with me. And so Jesus now says, at the end of this, at the end of discussing with these guys, chapter seven, verse 53 says, and every man went unto his own house.

[15:08] And Jesus, in verse one, went unto the Mount of Olives. Jesus heads out to the Mount of Olives. They totally didn't load the slide, a picture of it. Well, look up yourself, a picture of Jerusalem in Jesus's day.

The Mount of Olives is like right here. And then you go down to the Kidron Valley and you come up and boom, you go through the gate and there's a temple right there. So he's just heading over to the Mount of Olives. The Mount of Olives was historically the location that was used for making anointing oil for the kings and priests of Israel.

That's why it's called the Mount of Olives. Had a lot of olive trees there. It was the place that they would go and they would make the oil for the kings and priests of Israel. It was also the place where Israel's true king and priest performed his role as intercessor as well.

As Jesus prayed in the garden on the Mount of Olives, before he went to the cross in Matthew 26, he said, and he went a little further, he went a little further and fell on his face and prayed saying, oh, my father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me.

Nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt. Jesus was sore, pressed, wasn't he? And what came out when Jesus was pressed?

[16 : 19] He sweat drops of blood, blood. Our king, our priest, went to that mountain to be pressed for us so that we could be anointed as kings and priests unto God by what came out of him, by his blood.

What a beautiful picture. The Mount of Olives, it's also a place of promise. As the apostles with Jesus, before he ascends to heaven after the resurrection, it says, they will come together, this is on the Mount of Olives, and they ask him, saying, Lord, will you at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?

He said unto them, not now, guys. It's coming. There's a season for that. He said unto them, it's not for you to know the times or the seasons. There is a season for that, but that is not the season we're in right now.

But you shall receive power after the Holy Spirit has come upon you. This is the season of the Spirit, guys. It's not yet the season of the kingdom. That is in the Father's hands.

That is under his power and his control. Right now, we are in the season of the Spirit. That is under his power and his control as well. It's a place of promise.

[17 : 29] Promise for us, for this time, time of the Spirit, a promise of a future kingdom. However, at this time, right here, in John chapter 8, it seems to be the place where our prophet, our priest, and our king went to camp overnight.

He went out and he went to camp there. He spent the night there with his apostles. Remember one of the times when there was people coming to Jesus and saying, we'll follow you, Lord. I'll follow you anywhere.

Jesus turned to one of them and said, foxes have holes and birds of the air have nests. The Son of Man has not where to lay his head. He said, I don't have anywhere. I'm camping out in the Mount of Olives.

You want to come with me? Grab your camping gear. And for some of us, that is more comfortable than others. The idea is, foxes have holes and birds of the air have nests. They each have a place that is comfortable.

They each have a place of their own where they are welcomed. Jesus said, I have none. And so here, he's camping out. And then verse 2, early in the morning, he gets up and he heads back into the temple.

[18 : 30] And he came again into the temple and all the people came unto him. And he sat down and taught them. That's an awesome scripture. I just love that scripture. Just a picture of it. He came again into the temple.

They all came to him. He just sat down and taught them. That's because the teacher would sit and everybody else would stand. And here, we just all sit. Much better. You know, you can't teach as long if all of you guys stand.

That wouldn't work. But where is Jesus found? Remember when Jesus was about 12 years old and Mary and Joseph, they'd come up to the feast with him and all their friends and relatives, right? And then they're going back home and they can't find Jesus.

If you've been entrusted with the Messiah, the promised one, the Christ, and you lose him as a child, it's not good. It's not good to lose your kids. It's really not good to lose Jesus.

And I was thinking about, man, I must have, you know, they didn't just turn around and go right back to Jerusalem, did they? You know they're going among everybody. And how long do you search? How long do you call out? This is Jesus. He's responsible.

[19:32] He's never disobeyed before. He'll come back. And so they go back and they find him and they find him in the temple speaking with the doctors at law. And they were amazed. They marveled at the answers and questions he was giving.

And Mary and Joseph said, didn't you know we would be worried? Your father and I were searching for you. And he said, didn't you know I'd be in my father's house about my father's business?

And here the people come and where do they find him? In his father's house about his father's business, speaking his father's words to his father's people. It's a beautiful thing. Where do we expect to meet Jesus? Where do you expect to meet with Jesus?

The people here who came to Jesus, they prioritized three things. They prioritized the worship of God. Where was Jesus? Where were the people? In the temple. It's where you worship God. The people who came to Jesus, they prioritized the worship of God and the people of God. They were with God's people. Well, I find Jesus all over the place. You know, I find him, you know, sleeping on Sunday.

[20:32] I don't go to church. I don't go where God's people are. I find him at the shopping mall. I find him, okay, not that you couldn't encounter Jesus there. It's not that because we're in the seasons of the spirit, he's not with us.

But man, the people who prioritized Jesus, who looked for Jesus, they found him at the place where the people of God were, the worship of God was, and the word of God was. Are we willing to take time to sit with Jesus, to stay with Jesus, and then to hear what Jesus has to say?

Because Jesus sat down and he taught them early in the morning. You know, the section before in John 7, it was the great day, the last day of the Feast of Tabernacles.

It was a high holy day. It would have been a Sabbath. This is the day after. It's time to go back to work, folks. It's time to get back to business. And Jesus is sitting down willing to teach.

Where are you going to be when Jesus is willing to teach? I was supposed to be getting ready for church, but I was, you know, sitting with Jesus in my study. Are you willing to take the time to sit with him and stay with him and hear what he has to say?

[21:38] And what does he prioritize? Preaching. He didn't heal. He didn't cast out demons. He didn't say, come on, let me, come with me. I'm going to show you how I'm going to put the Pharisees in their place today. He prioritized preaching and he practiced what he preached.

Remember when Satan came and tempted him and what did he say? Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God. Well, how are you going to hear every word that proceeds out of his mouth unless you are with him where he's speaking and listening to what he has to say?

And when did he do this? Early in the morning. It's like, oh, I know for some of us, it's like, gee, I wish it didn't say that. The scripture puts a great emphasis on morning. You know why?

Because it is in the morning that the sun, S-O-N, rose. It's in the morning that the sun rises. On the first day of the week, very early in the morning, they came unto the sepulcher.

The women came to the sepulcher and they found the stone rolled away and they entered in and they found not the body of the Lord Jesus. Very early, Jesus rose. I don't rise very early or I work nights and I sleep all day and I, listen, the point is this.

[22:47] When you rise, rise with the sun. When you rise, prioritize the sun. And when you rise, partake of the sun. That is the point.

Not as a very early or prioritize it. Rise with him, prioritize him and partake of him like these people. So Jesus is teaching. It's a wonderful time.

He's probably just getting to the best part of his entire message and the scribes and Pharisees come. Dun, dun, dun. Like, oh man. And they brought unto him a present.

A woman taken in adultery. The people came to Jesus for edification. The Pharisees came out of envy. Instead of seeking to understand why the people prioritize Jesus, why are they coming and listening to him?

They saw instead to stop them. We don't want these people to do this because they're envious.

They want what he has. They sought Jesus' popularity. They sought his power.

[23:49] But what would they not seek? They would not seek his person or his presence. You see, they identified Jesus as a threat. And one can never be comfortable around a threat.

1 John 4.18 says, There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear because fear has torment. He that fears is not made perfect in love. You cannot be comfortable around a threat.

Who's Jesus to you? Who is God to you? Oh man, he's going to be mad at me. He's going to be upset at me. I know God's displeased. You're never going to be comfortable around a threat. Perfect love casts out all fear.

When we identify with love, we choose not to identify any longer with fear. And that's not just because we're putting a new label on something. That's because of who we are, as we're going to see here. But they identified Jesus as a threat.

And they could not be comfortable around him. And then we see here in the middle of verse 3, And when they had set her in the midst, throw her down in the midst of all of this, Jesus is teaching and they just barge right in.

[24 : 59] The people are standing, he's sitting, and they just throw him down. And they said unto him, Master. That word master there means one who gives doctrine.

One who is the one who explains the doctrine. All right, Jesus, what do you have to say about this? They said unto him, Master, this woman was taken in adultery in the very act. The Pharisees had brought this captured woman to Jesus for the purpose of capturing him, didn't they?

Little did they realize they were bringing this captive woman to Jesus so he could set her free. They brought her, they're like, yes, we got you.

He's like, oh, thank you. To set her free. Luke 4, 18, as Jesus stands in the synagogue in his hometown and he teaches and he says, the spirit of the Lord is upon me because he's anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor.

He's sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives and the recovering of sight to the blinds. to set at liberty them that are bruised.

[26 : 03] This bruised woman. Who is Jesus? Who is he? Do I identify Jesus as the place where sin is judged?

The place where the sinner is judged. We will be sorely disappointed if we expect Jesus to judge the sinners we bring to him. Sorely disappointed.

Lord, I've been praying about this situation for a long time. You know what that person's doing. You know they're not right. Why won't you take care of it? Why won't you fix this? Why won't you judge them? For God sent not his son into the world to condemn the world.

John 3, 17. But that the world through him might be saved. We will be so disappointed if we bring sinners to Jesus expecting him to judge the sinner. And what does he do? He delivers them.

He shows them grace. He forgives. And we're left with a hard heart. The Pharisees' hardness of heart had brought them to this point where sin had lost its shame.

[27 : 03] Here they bring this woman. There's no shame anymore. They just throw her down. And it simply becomes, sin had simply become a tool to accomplish their own self-interests. That's how they looked at sin now.

You see, in their eyes, this woman and her sin were nothing more than an opportunity for self-glorification and self-gratification. That's what this woman was to them.

Just an opportunity to gratify myself. What should have been a reason for shame was instead being flaunted openly as a cause of self-promotion. They are using her sin, her shame to promote themselves.

It's almost as if they're like celebrating pride. Maybe they'll name a month after it or something.

What a terrible idea to be proud of things that should cause shame, to flaunt it openly for self-promotion, speaking lies and hypocrisy, having their conscience seared, unfeeling the hot iron. It says she was taken in adultery. They say to him, this woman was taken in adultery in the very act. Taken means to seize upon, to grab hold of. Why did they grab her?

[28 : 14] Did they want to rescue her? Did they want to have compassion on her? Did they want to condemn her? There's only one safe way to handle sin, guys. There's only one safe place to bring sin.

I don't know. We know the Pharisees were trying to catch him. We know they wanted to trap him. Maybe they thought this was how you handle sin as well. This is what we'll do. We'll teach this person not to sin again.

There's only one safe way to handle sin. The scripture tells us in Titus chapter 2 verses 11 and 13, for the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men.

That is the only way to handle sin. That is the only place to bring our sin. The grace of God that brings salvation. God's grace handles sin. Teaching us that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts,

we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world.

How do we handle sin? Man, we go to that place of grace and salvation, which then allows us to live in a world where we can live and handle the lusts. We can live soberly.

[29:20] We can live righteously. We don't have to give into these things. We can live godly in this present world, looking for that blessed hope and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Savior, Jesus Christ, when the presence of sin will then be gone because we will be in his presence.

There's only one way to handle sin, not the way these guys are doing it. And in fact, this wording here, in the very act, you can use your imaginations, it literally means to catch a thief in the act of his crime.

Hand us in the cookie jar. And so, there's some questions we need to ask ourselves about this situation and they're not very comfortable questions. How do they know she was taken adultery? Who took her? And what is the glaring, glaring, glaring person that's missing in all of this? Where's the man? This is what sin does.

They've thrown this woman down and what do they say? This woman. Who is she? What's her name? What's her story? Why is she there? They don't know and they don't care. Because sin erases identity.

[30:26] Sin erases our identity. We're no longer are we identified with what God desired us to be, with what God created us to be. Now I'm just identified with this sin. And especially sexual sin erases identity.

Why? Because sexuality deals with who we actually are, not with who we identify ourselves to be. We are who God created us to be.

And that touches at the very core of who we are, not who we identify ourselves to be. We can identify, oh, well, it's love. Oh, well, it's an alternative lifestyle. It doesn't matter what we call it because God has already created it.

1 Corinthians 6, 18 says flee fornication. Every sin that a man does is without the body. But he that commits fornication sins against his own body, against his own identity of who he is.

And look how they treat this woman. They have erased her identity. They treat her without value. They treat her without honor. They treat her without a name. This woman's sexuality is no longer sacred.

[31:34] It's a show. And sin had left this woman faceless and nameless. We live in a world that is honoring shame, that is promoting the things that are shameful, that are erasing people and especially women, their identity, using their sexualities as a show and leaving them faceless, nameless, honorless, valueless.

What about for the woman? Where is she coming from? I don't know. I don't know where her, where she stands in all of this. I don't know what her reasons were why she was in this position. Maybe it started as a desire of love for love and acceptance. Maybe she thought, you know what? He understands me. He gets me.

My husband, we should never have gotten married. Maybe you shouldn't have, but you should stay married. What God has joined together, let not man put us under. But either way, what may have started as a desire for love or acceptance had destroyed at least one marriage.

One of them was married for it to be adultery. And it had brought her to a place where she was now identified for her lust and not for her love. Her identity was no longer, oh, I love this person.

[32:58] And it was now identified in her shame and her sin and her brokenness. You see, whatever one's reason for sin, for entering into sin, there is no way to avoid the corruption that it brings.

You can't. Galatians 6, 8 says, for he that sows to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption. But he that sows to the spirit shall of the spirit reap everlasting life.

You can't avoid the corruption of sin. You can't say, well, this time it won't happen. This time it'll work differently. This time it'll work backwards and sin will bring a blessing.

You know, sadly, there are many times that I, well, not sadly, I've been blessed to talk with many, many people and in different situations. And it's like they get to the cliff edge, they're about to fall over and God grabs them and he pulls them back and they realize it and they're broken and they're like, oh, I don't know how I got you.

I don't ever want to be here again. And you're talking with them and you're counseling and you're like, you know what? You need to prioritize Jesus. You need to prioritize God's people. You need to prioritize God's word. You need to be where Jesus is.

[34:02] And God pulls them back and he drops them way back from the cliff edge. They're like, oh. And you watch and they hop back on the same path that took them to that cliff edge. You're like, please don't keep going that way.

No, I'm good this time. This time it'll work. And I think many times we come to the Lord and we say, Lord, I know what I'm doing. Maybe it isn't exactly what you want me to be doing. If you could just bless it and make it turn out good, right?

Turn the donut into a carrot on the way down. You can do that if you want to. God doesn't work against his word. He doesn't work against his order. He doesn't work against his creation.

And they said to him in verse five, they said, now Moses in the law commanded us that such should be stoned. But what do you say? This they said, John tells us this, tempting him.

They might have to accuse him. So we find out the reality of the reason for this question. It wasn't like, well, we really want to know what we should do in a situation like this. We just happened to find this woman committing adultery in the very act.

[35:07] And they quote the law. They're putting Jesus in a situation where they're saying, Jesus, either you're going to go along with what the word says and we're going to say, ha, gotcha.

You've got to follow our views, our plan, our interpretation, our way. Or we're going to show that you're a lawbreaker. We're going to invalidate you. One way or another, we got you.

They actually do quote the scripture. They just don't quote all of the scripture. Leviticus 20 verse 10 says, and the man that commits adultery with another man's wife, even he that commits adultery with his neighbor's wife, the adulterer and the adulteress shall surely be put to death.

How many people shall be put to death? Two. The adulterer. And where is the emphasis, the load of responsibility, where does it fall? The man that commits adultery.

You see, we cannot pick and choose God's word. We can't. We can't just take one part because we like how it speaks to us or we like how it fits my views of how I want God to interact in my world.

[36:14] Paul said in Acts 20, 27, I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God. All of it. Even the parts I don't like. This is one of those, where these parts where we're talking about this stuff is just, C.S. Lewis, when he wrote the book Screwtape Letters, he said, in writing it, it was all itch and bother.

Having to write from the perspective of the enemy's camp. Going through this was just like, ugh. I don't like going through this stuff. I don't like having to wade into sin.

But guys, we can't pick and choose God's word. When he puts it in front of us, we have to receive all of it. What does that mean? Well, it does not mean that we can't quote scripture to establish the truth of God.

Right? Does that mean I just can't take a scripture to establish a truth? I've got to like, I'm going to quote the whole book, you know, or the whole chapter, Jared, like you do on a Sunday morning? Instead of just giving us one scripture, you give us 12 to give context?

Is that all we have to do? It doesn't mean we can't take a scripture and quote it to establish the truth of God. What we cannot do, though, is we cannot quote it in a way that leaves out a truth of God.

[37:20] Right? I'll give you an example. Romans 1.16. We quoted this last week. For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believes.

Is that a truth that I can quote and establish? Absolutely. If you believe today in Jesus Christ, that God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten son, that whosoever believes in him, you won't perish.

That mental assent that you give to the life-changing work that God has done on your behalf by giving himself in sacrifice, a blood debt that you owe for your sin, you give mental assent to that, God will do a spiritual work in your life.

I don't know how it works, but I know it does. That's a promise. I can quote that to establish that truth, but you know what I cannot do? I cannot quote that to leave out God's truth.

It is the power of God and salvation to everyone that believes, to the Jew first, and also to the Gentile. Today, we have a gospel. We hold a gospel in our hands, as Paul says in 1 Corinthians 15, this is the gospel that I deliver unto you, that which was delivered unto me, that Christ Jesus, according to my gospel, you know, was crucified, was buried, and rose again.

[38 : 30] And that gospel today is for the Jew first. And much of the church ignores that. It says, oh, no, no, no, no, no, no, we don't want to deal with that. So we don't pick and choose God's word.

We take the whole thing. The Pharisees and scribes, they were seeking to use scripture to do what? They wanted to establish their own truth instead of using it to establish themselves in the truth.

Oh, let me quote this scripture to you that backs up, that it's okay, it's okay, we love each other, we can live together. You know, God loves and forgives everyone. So I'm accepted even though I'm living this way.

I can't use God's word to establish my own truth, my own perspective. I have to elect God's word to establish me in the truth. See, it is already identified as the truth, right?

God's word already has an identity as the truth. I'm coming to it because I want to be identified with it. I'm not asking it to come and identify itself with me.

[39 : 29] So what does Jesus say to sin? And what saith thou? We're going to trap you, Jesus. Listen guys, Jesus is never going to be trapped by sin.

He's never going to be trapped by someone else's sin. He's never going to be trapped by my sin. And I never need to be afraid that, oh no, this is a dead end, Lord. There's no dead ends with Jesus. There's none. You're never going to get to a point with Jesus where you're going to feel like, I don't, there's nothing I can do here.

He doesn't have an answer for me. Lord, this is one that you don't know how to fix. Oh, I don't think you can handle this one, Lord. What does Jesus say to sin? He says, I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.

You know what Jesus is looking for? Sinners. He could have essentially said, thank you very much. I was looking for sinners. Thank you for bringing me more. Wonderful.

Verse six, and Jesus stoops down and with his finger, he wrote on the ground. And then we have in brackets here or italics, depending on your version of reading, to help us understand better, as though he heard them not.

[40 : 37] It doesn't actually say that. But we're going to see by the fact that they keep asking here in verse seven, and when they continued asking him, he then lifted himself up. So Jesus has, the woman comes, they throw her at his feet.

It seems like Jesus is sitting and teaching and he stands. And then he goes right back down. They ask him these questions. He just begins to write in the sand with his finger. He ignores them.

And they continue to ask him. And so then he stands back up and he says unto them, he that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her.

And he goes right back down to doodling on the ground. And if you read commentaries or you've heard different teachings on this, like what did Jesus write?

You know, we're going to see that they're going to be convicted and they're going to go away from the oldest to the youngest they're going to leave. Well, maybe he wrote their names from oldest to youngest. Maybe he wrote their sins. You know what I can tell you Jesus didn't write?

[41 : 35] He didn't write condemnation. He did not. I don't know what he wrote, but I can tell you what he did not write. He didn't write condemnation. He came not to condemn sinners.

Didn't write out their sins. Jesus also did not stand up and stare down his accusers. He didn't say, let me tell you.

No, write back down to what he's doing. You know why I think he did that? He didn't want to increase her shame. They bring this woman, they throw her at her feet. She's taken in the act. How put together do you think she is? How clothed do you think she is? And they're thrown at Jesus' feet and what does he do? He just bends down and turns away and busies himself with something else to cover her shame.

Jesus knows though their lack of genuineness. See, they wanted to know what Jesus would say. But if they knew Jesus, they would have known that he would never misquote or misuse the scriptures.

[42 : 36] What are you going to say about this scripture? Are you going to go against it? Jesus will never contradict the scripture. We know that, right? Can we all agree that Jesus is never going to contradict the scripture? But what did he also not do?

He didn't deny her sin. And he did not deny the penalty, did he? He simply identifies the greater sin of these men.

You hypocrite! First, cast out the beam out of your own eye, and then you shall see clearly to cast out the mote out of your brother's eye. That passage there, the idea is, I want to help you. I'm not trying to get the beam out of my own eye so I can smack the mote out of your eye. That's not the idea. Hang on, let me just get this beam here. We'll take care of that. Now, it's for restoration. It's for love. Jesus understands the word, doesn't he? Jesus gives us understanding. He gives understanding in a way that he expands God's word, doesn't he?

[43 : 39] They said, shouldn't we stone her? And he said, you're right. You're right. Her sin, the penalty for her sin is stoning. You're right. That's what it says. But let me expand upon that a little bit, guys.

Let him that was without sin among you cast the first stone. Jesus is again quoting scripture. This is from Deuteronomy chapter 17 verses 5 through 7.

Deuteronomy 17, it says, then thou shall bring forth that man or that woman which has committed that wicked thing unto your gates, even that man or that woman and shall stone them with stones till they die.

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. They're following the law. They're bringing her.

They've got more than one witness. More than one witness to catch her in the act. Not good. The hands of the witnesses shall be the first upon him to put him to death.

[44 : 41] And afterwards, the hands of all the people. So those that came and said, hey, we caught her, they should be the first. You know, I think they would have been like if Jesus said, all right, let's stone her. They'd be like, yeah, let's do it.

But then at the end of verse 7 in Deuteronomy 17, it says this. Why? Why? Is it that God just wants to put people to death? God's word does not excuse sin, but neither does it seek to execute sinners.

It's seeking to put away the evil so that you may put the evil away from among you. God has no desire to execute sinners. God just wants the evil put away from among them.

And listen, if I'm going to choose to identify with sin and stay in sin and continue in sin, then there's a penalty that's going to happen so that that corruption doesn't spread, so that the evil can be put away.

Jesus quotes the law and then he gave the heart behind it. Why were they doing this? Why did Moses command this? To put away the evil? And what is he revealing? There's a greater evil here, isn't there?

[45 : 44] The greater evil is the and even Jesus to establish the evil of their own hearts.

Did they really want to put the evil away from this sinner and spare the sinner? No. They just wanted to get rid of her for their own benefit. To establish the evil that was in their own hearts.

Jesus was in the way. This woman was in the way. The law was in the! In Hebrews 9.26 He didn't come to put away sinners.

He came to put away sin. And again, after responding to them, after speaking to them now, he stoops right back down and writes on the ground some more. And they which heard it, which heard him say, let him that is without sin cast the first stone.

And they which heard it being convicted by their own conscience, they went out one oldest, even unto the least, the youngest. And Jesus was left alone, and the woman standing in the midst.

[47 : 01] It was not what Jesus wrote, but what he said that convicted. And there's a principle here that I think we can pull out of this. And it's quite simply this. Never seek to complicate the plain meaning of the text.

Well, maybe he wrote something. Maybe it had something to do with it. Maybe it did or didn't. What does the Bible say? When they heard it, they were convicted in their own conscience. It's the word of God that convicted them.

I don't know what he wrote, but it's not why they walked away. And I think it fits because it is not in character with Jesus to be sitting there and writing out their sins, keeping a record of wrong, writing out, oh, remember that time?

I'm going to write your name or I'm going to write a date. Maybe you wrote a date. The result is that these men were now more aware of their own sin than the woman's. Here they bring this woman, condemn her, and Jesus gets right to the heart.

Praise God for conviction. I'll make three quick points about!! There they are, convicted of their sin, convicted in their hearts, and what do they do?

[48:12] They leave Jesus. Conviction of sin will find no relief apart from going to Jesus. There's nowhere else you'll find relief from that conviction except with Jesus.

And here's the danger, guys. The closer we draw to Jesus, the greater our awareness of sin and the greater our conviction. That's just a fact. But don't think that I need to run away.

No, and here we also see an older conscience should be a wiser conscience. The older ones were the first to have their conscience triggered. They should have been wiser. They should have known. I need to take this to the Lord.

The closer we draw to Jesus, the greater the awareness of our sin and of our nature and of the things in my heart is going to be. What do I do with that? I go to Jesus. He is the place where conviction of sin finds relief.

He did not awaken their consciences or arouse their conviction by any other means than doing what? He rightly divided the word. He applied the word.

[49:14] 2 Timothy 2:15! Study to show yourself approved unto God, a workman that needs not reproach rightly dividing the word of truth. Jesus rightly divided the word and then he rightly applied the word.

And what happens? All the men left, but the woman stayed. Why? Why wouldn't she slink off as they're kind of leaving and like, okay, I'm getting out of here.

Put something on a little more decent. She stayed. Why? Why? Verse 10. When Jesus had lifted up himself, Jesus is just, he says that, turns away, doing his thing in the dirt.

She's just standing there waiting. The silence grows. And when Jesus had lifted up himself and he saw none but the woman, he said unto her, woman, where are your accusers?

Where are those thine accusers? Has no man condemned! What does Jesus say to sin? What does Jesus say to sinners? What does he say to sinners?

[50:24] Jesus had lowered himself beneath this sinful woman. She's standing, he's squatting, writing. He had lowered himself beneath this sinful woman to alleviate her shame.

He had brought himself low to alleviate her shame. What was he writing? Guys, I am convinced, this is, look, we can speculate a little, right? I won't say convinced.

If we can speculate on what he was writing to those Pharisees, I'm going to speculate, I think he was writing to the woman. I think he was writing for her. I don't think he thought about them at all. When they threw her down in the midst, Jesus thought, here's a sinner.

All right. Okay. And he turns himself and squats down and she's there and she's looking with her head right in the dirt and keep it legible.

Probably big. But let's just say he wrote all of this. But maybe something like he's not dealt with us after our sins, nor rewarded us according to our iniquities. For as the heaven is high above the earth, so great is his mercy toward them that fear him.

[51:32] As far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our transgressions from us. I think he was writing for her. He wanted to alleviate her shame. You see, this woman, she expected judgment.

But what did she find? She found justice. She expected humiliation. She found humility. She expected grief, and she found grace.

And so she is still there. And everybody leaves, and Jesus turns and says, woman, where are your accusers? Has no man condemned you?

What have the Pharisees been calling her? This woman, this woman, Jesus didn't say, what's your name? He said woman, too. But I think this woman who had lost her identity to sin was for the first time accurately and correctly being identified for who she really was.

The creator who had made her a woman said, woman, you are a woman. You have a purpose. You have a plan. I have a plan for you. You are valuable.

[52:36] You are more than just what this world says you are. You are more than your body. You are more than what you think you can provide. You are a woman. From the beginning of creation, God made them male and female and for the first time, she was correctly identified for who she really was.

Jesus now stands. He's standing in the place of judge and the judge asks the woman to call her first witness. Who are your accusers? Woman, where are thine accusers?

You know, accuser, the word means a complainant at law. Where are the ones who complain that you've broken the law? Has no man condemned you? Condemned means to give judgment against, to judge worthy of punishment.

Woman, where are those? Are there any that complain you've broken the law? Are there any that are here to say that you're worthy of punishment? I love this. One of my favorite responses in all the scriptures.

It's right up there when Jesus in the garden after the resurrection, right? And Mary's weeping at his feet uncontrollably and doesn't recognize him. And you know, ladies, when you're weeping uncontrollably, you can't recognize anything.

[53:43] He's in his resurrected body and she's like, if you know where his body is, I'm so desperate for Jesus, I'd rather have a dead Jesus than no Jesus. And he says, Mary.

I just love that part. And so Jesus says, woman, where are your accusers? Does no man condemn you?

And she said, no man, Lord. There's no man who can stand in judgment against sin. Why? Because the scripture tells us he would be simply judging himself.

Romans 2, 1 says, therefore thou art inexcusable inexcusable, O man, whosoever thou art that judges. For wherein you judge another, you condemn yourself. For you that judge do the same things.

There is no man who can stand in judgment against sin, because if I judge sin, I judge myself. If I condemn sin, I condemn myself. Only the one without sin could rightly judge sin.

[54:46] For he has made him to be sin for us who knew no sin. He knew no sin. And how did he judge sin? Did he judge the sinner? He was made to be sin for us.

He identified with sin so that we could be identified, have an identity with righteousness. It's not a label change, guys. It's not just like, well, I called you sinner, now I'm going to call you righteous. Well, I called you, you know, this, now I'm just going to call you Christian. It's a label. It's who we are. He made him to be the righteousness of God for us. essentially, this woman is responding to Jesus and saying, there was no man found worthy who could judge me because there was none without sin.

Like you said, Jesus, any without sin, there was none found without sin. No man gave judgment against me, but what about you, Jesus? No man, Lord, the word Lord in the Greek, to one, one to whom a person belongs, one who has the power of deciding.

This woman, who had possibly been grabbed by the hands of many men against her will, pulled out of this horrible moment, maybe before this, many hands had been upon her.

[56:01] She was now willingly placing herself in the hands of the truest of men. She had found a real man. Think back to when you're in John 4 with the woman at the well. He was able to identify her for who she truly was because she recognized him for who he truly was.

Lord, Lord, you're the one to whom I belong. You're the one who has the power of deciding. I'm putting myself in your hands. Jesus was the sinless man who came to condemn sin, not sinners. Jesus came to condemn sin and not sinners. Romans 8 3, for what the law could not do, and that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin condemned sinners, condemned sin in the flesh.

God looked at a bunch of sinners and said, man, we've got to deal with that. We've got to put away the evil. Let's get down there. Let's wipe them out. Let's start over.

No. He looks at the most vile of sinner and he says, you know that's not your identity. I didn't create you for that. I didn't make you to be a sinner. Man, if we could just put away the evil from you, if we could take care of the sin, you would no longer be a sinner.

[57:24] Can we all agree that if you don't sin, you're not a sinner? Jesus wasn't a sinner. And Jesus said unto her, neither do I condemn you, neither do I judge you worthy of punishment.

Go and sin no more. Jesus does two things here. He gives the verdict, not condemned in sin. And he gives the sentence, not continue in sin.

No mere man can do that. No mere man is able to, only the sinless man. Now, isn't he doing exactly what the Pharisees were accusing him of? They wanted him to do? Isn't he operating outside the law?

Didn't he just sidestep the punishment? Okay, Jesus, I understand that you're God and you're going to go to the cross, but in this moment, how can you say this to her?

Didn't they have a legitimate cause and a legitimate point to say the law condemns her? Jesus says in Matthew 5, 17, do not think I'm come to destroy the law or the prophets.

[58:28] I'm not come to destroy, but to do what? Fulfill them. Do fulfill. Jesus did not operate outside the law, or contrary to the law. He fulfilled the law, he followed the law, and he freed those condemned under the law.

Do you understand that? Jesus came to fulfill the law and follow the law for the purpose of what? Holding it over our heads because we're sinners? Making sure we act correctly? No, to free us because we were judged worthy of punishment under the law.

Jesus lowered himself to alleviate our shame. you know, we saw this verse, remember in Deuteronomy 17, 7? And the hands of the witnesses shall be first upon him to put him to death, and afterwards the hands of all the people, so shall you put away the evil from among you, saying they should be stoned, right?

If you have your Bibles, turn to Deuteronomy 17. I want you to see this. Jesus will not operate outside the law. Jesus understands. He will not operate outside the scripture, but Jesus is able to understand and expand the scripture in a way that only the sinless son of God can.

Jesus is actually operating in complete agreement with the law and the scriptures. So that's verse 7, that section ends. Look at verse 8, Deuteronomy 17, verse 8 through 10.

[59:51] If there arise a matter too hard for you in judgment, between blood and blood, between plea and plea, and between stroke and stroke, being matters of controversy within your gates.

Was it too hard for them? It was. They all left. They're like, okay, this is too much for us. We don't know what to do. The law is telling them if there's a matter too hard, you can't figure out how to operate in it, according to the scripture and the law, here's what you're going to do.

You shall arise. You shall get up into the place which the Lord your God shall choose. And you shall come unto the priests and the Levites. And where are they? They left. It was too hard.

And unto the judge that shall be in those days. And inquire, and they shall show you the sentence of judgment. And here she is standing there before the judge that God has appointed in those days. And he said, well, I don't see anybody else who can handle this matter. I got you. You are not condemned. And you shall do the sentence, and you shall do according to the sentence which they of that place, which the Lord shall choose, shall show you.

[61:00] And you shall observe to do according to all that they inform you. Jesus stood there according to the scripture in position and person as the judge and said, here's my judgment on you.

You are not worthy of death. Was it in accordance with the law? It was. It was in accordance to the law here that it was a matter too great for them so he was able to then give judgment and it was in accordance with the law that he would take the penalty for her sin.

So he could say to her what? Go. Go. It says right here, observe to do all according to all that they informed you to do. What did he tell her to do? Go. Go.

Do not allow your past identity of sin to keep you from walking in the freedom of your new identity in Christ. Go and sin no more. Don't stay there.

He has given her a new identity. It's not just a new title. Not just a new name. Go and sin no more. Sin is no longer who you are. Don't stay in that place of your past identity and don't let it be your future identity because it's not.

[62:05] Sin is no longer my identity. Why? Because Jesus identified with my sin. So that I can move forward in a new identity freed from sin. And that's what he's saying to this woman.

This is no longer your identity. You now have a new identity that is free from sin. So go and sin no more. Through Christ this woman she no longer was identified by sin by the law or by judgment.

This woman found her true identity not in her sexuality or her freedom from constraints in her culture around her but in the word of God the face of God and the grace of God is where she found her true identity.

She was now identified by what? By love. Galatians 2 20 I am crucified with Christ nevertheless I live yet not I but Christ lives in me the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the son of God who loved me and gave himself for me.

That identity of sin is gone. It's gone because he took that identity upon himself. I should I'm crucified with Christ meaning what? That was my punishment.

[63:12] I should be dead but I live. But I recognize the reason I live is because I now have a new identity. Identity that came through love. I'm identified by love.

As we wrap this up God is not confused over the identity of his creation. God created man as an image. In the image of God he created him.

Male and female he created them. He's not confused over your identity. You are made in the image of God. That's not something that's a label. That's who you are. And yes the evil has been attached to us and he came to put that away so that we could then operate in our true identity and our true capacity as those that are created in God's image.

He's not confused over the identity of his creation or his own identity. First John 4 8 for God is love. Verse 10 tells us here in his love not that we loved God but that he loved us and sent his son to be the payment the satisfaction for our sins.

He knows who you are and he knows who he is. We are identified by love. We are identified in love. Not the counterfeit love of the world. It's love.

[64 : 23] It's not. Or the flesh or a fallen man but the life creating love of God. God created man and woman because God is a God of love.

Herein is love that he loved us. In Christ we are recreated now with a new identity. An identity that is no longer defined by sin. As men and women as male and female we are recreated into whose image?

The image of the sinless son of God. That's who we are. The God who created male and female he's still creating today. He's recreating us into a new identity.

I can say today that I am created in the image of God as a man and I am recreated into the image of God because of the sinless son of God. therefore if any man be in Christ he is a new creation.

Old things are passed away behold all things have become new. I like the literal translation of this. So if anyone is in Christ he is a new creature.

[65 : 30] The old things did pass away. Lo become new have the all things. the all things they are all new. Anything you can come up with is new in Christ.

The world had left this woman worthless wounded wasted. In Christ sin would no longer define her but it would now remind her of her new identity.

Every time that came up aren't you that woman that yeah yeah it was. That sin doesn't define me anymore. It's not who I am. It reminds me of my new identity.

That isn't me. And listen here's the danger. Her identity was not in herself. Okay. It wasn't that Jesus said go and sin no more and she's like yes this is now who I am. No because who is she? She's the same woman that two minutes ago was caught in adultery. She's the same person and for the rest of her life she could carry that stigma if she allowed it to stick with her. Oh you're that person.

[66 : 35] You got a rap. Okay. You got a record. Okay. If she tried to claim an identity in herself don't we do that? Okay. Old things are passed away.

I've come to Christ and he's cleansed me of my sin. Praise God. Oops I just sinned. Oh I'm supposed to be a new creation. I blew it. The problem is you're trying to find your identity in yourself.

Our identity is in Christ. If any man be in Christ her identity was Jesus. Anytime she removed herself from that or pulled herself away from that who was she?

An adulterous woman. It's only in Christ. Romans 8 1 says there is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus.

And listen you can think well okay all old things have passed away all things have become new up to this point. What about going forward? Have you experienced all things? I haven't experienced all things of my life.

[67 : 33] Like today was a new thing. I haven't experienced it until now. So all of those things too are become new. All the things. Become new have all the things. What we've experienced or not experienced yet.

They are all new. Jesus identified with the sin so we can identify with the Savior. And what he says to us this morning is go go and live in the reality who you are.

Don't let a label define you. Don't let your past sin define you. Don't let someone else's sin define you. And don't expect to find identity in yourself either.

I'm now a Christian and I'm an older Christian. That can work against us too. That older conscience should be wiser. We can also fall and fail and go I should know better. I shouldn't have done that.

How can I undo this? What can I do to change it? What can I do to get back to where I was? Man, go to Jesus. Go to Jesus with your conviction. Because what does Jesus do with sinners?

[68:36] He removes the evil every time. Father, thank you for your word to us this morning, Lord. Thank you for your word to me, Lord.

Lord, we don't have any identity outside of you. We can only identify with our sin, Lord. We don't have any standing.

Even if we want to, we end up judging ourselves. And Lord, the closer I get to you, it seems like the more aware I am of my own state of this sin.

It kind of freaks me out, Lord. I think maybe I'm not changed. Maybe I'm still identified with that old man. Maybe the sin is still there.

Lord, would you speak to us this morning like you spoke to that woman? In that moment, she felt so vile, so filthy, so shameful, so lost.

[69:46] And the only people in her life were other sinners. But Lord, if we all come together as sinners, not seeking to see each other judged, but seeking for the evil, for the vile to be removed, what we will find is that Jesus, you welcome sinners, you give us a new identity, you give us a new direction, you give us a new name.

We don't know this woman's name, it's just woman, but she has a new name, written in heaven, and so do we, Lord. Lord, I pray for my brothers and sisters as we leave this place this morning, Lord, that we would go forth identified not with our sin, not with sinners, but with you, who we are in you, not a label.

And in doing that, we would look around at the sinners, in our own families, in our own lives, and we would seek to bring them to you, not for them to be judged, but for the sin to be removed.

And Lord, as we stand and worship you now, thank you for lowering yourself, Lord. Thank you for alleviating our shame. And as we sing and worship you, Lord, remind us again, not of our sin, but of the grace that covered our sin.

And Lord, bring those people to our hearts and to our minds, the ones that we, in all honesty, Lord, I would like to seem judged, because I'm a sinner. but Lord, to bring them to you, that you might show them your grace.

[71:23] We love you and thank you. In Jesus' name, amen. A thousand times I have failed, still your mercy remains. Should I stumble again, still I'm caught in your grace. The cry of my heart is to bring you praise from the inside out.

Lord, my soul cries out. You know, scripture says the righteous man falls seven times and gets up again. Why? Because that's who he is.

He doesn't stay there. He doesn't stay identified with that. Guys, we want to be those that help each other up. We don't want to be those that point the person, point out the person that's down.

We want to be those that say, that's not who you are. I know who you are. That's not who you are in Christ.

Let's get rid of the evil. Be willing. Be willing to receive the conviction and let him wash it. Be willing to let God use you not to put people down but to lift them up.

[72:28] Be encouraged. This is who we are. The Lord bless you and keep you. The Lord make his face to shine upon you and be gracious unto you. May the Lord lift up the light of his countenance, the light that will shine when all else fades.

God bless you. Go and do not be identified with sin anymore. God bless you.

God bless you.