

INTRO

- What's a small mistake or embarrassing moment you can laugh about now—but definitely didn't want people to know about at the time?

It's one thing to laugh about an embarrassing moment years later. It's another when we feel exposed, judged, or defined by our mistakes. That's the tension we'll explore in today's passage.

READ

John 8:2-11

(See also John 3:17, Rom 8:33-34)

REFLECT & RESPOND

The religious leaders bring a woman caught in adultery to Jesus, not to address her wrongdoing, but to trap him. She is guilty, yet they use her failure to shame her and establish their own moral superiority.

Q: Where do you see people using moral convictions to shame others or make themselves look better? Why are we tempted to do this?

Jesus challenges their self-righteousness:

“Let any one of you who is without sin be the first to throw a stone at her.”

One by one, the accusers leave. Jesus, the only one without sin and the one with the right to condemn her, offers mercy instead:

“Then neither do I condemn you.”

Q: Which is more difficult for you: extending mercy to someone, or receiving mercy when you have failed? Why?

Mercy does not mean pretending sin is unimportant. John 3:17 tells us of Jesus' mission,

and at the cross he bears the cost of our redemption. His mercy frees us from condemnation, but it also calls us into a new way of living: “Go now and leave your life of sin.”

Q: Jesus offers mercy without dismissing sin. How does this challenge both the tendency to condemn others and the temptation to excuse our own behaviour?

Q: What might it look like for Jesus' mercy to shape the way you respond to your own failures and the failures of others?

Put it into Practice

Identify one practical step you can take this week: receiving God's mercy, pursuing repentance or restoration, or responding to someone else with truth and compassion rather than condemnation.

PRAY

- **Receive mercy:** Bring shame, regret, or past failures before Jesus. Ask for the confidence to trust his forgiveness.
- **Extend mercy:** Ask God to reveal where you have been judgmental and help you pursue truth without humiliating others.
- **Live differently:** Ask the Holy Spirit to help you take a concrete next step toward repentance, restoration, and a life shaped by Jesus' grace.