

John 8:1-11

while Jesus went to the Mount of Olives. Early in the morning he came again to the temple. All the people came to him and he sat down and began to teach them. The scribes and the Pharisees brought a woman who had been caught in adultery; and making her stand before all of them, they said to him, "Teacher, this woman was caught in the very act of committing adultery. Now in the law Moses commanded us to stone such women. Now what do you say?" They said this to test him, so that they might have some charge to bring against him. Jesus bent down and wrote with his finger on the ground. When they kept on questioning him, he straightened up and said to them, "Let anyone among you who is without sin be the first to throw a stone at her." And once again he bent down and wrote on the ground. When they heard it, they went away, one by one, beginning with the elders; and Jesus was left alone with the woman standing before him. Jesus straightened up and said to her, "Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?" She said, "No one, sir." And Jesus said, "Neither do I condemn you. Go your way, and from now on do not sin again."

REFLECT & DISCUSS

Context

This passage has a unique history. The earliest manuscripts of John's gospel do not have this story in the same place. It "floats" between different locations in the story of Jesus' ministry. The passage even shows up

in one early version of Luke's gospel. Whether it was original to John's gospel, another gospel, or just found its way in later on, it is a powerful story that highlights the challenging and creative way Jesus befriended those considered lowly, less-than, and limited.

Big Ideas

- **Write in the Sand:** when the mob mentality threatens our better judgment, we need a way to pause and think courageously.
- **Separate Who from Do:** Jesus doesn't call anyone a sinner (though we do). His challenge to our actions always proceeds from love for us and not condemnation.
- **Disarming Sinners:** Jesus not only befriends (and defends) the woman, he befriends the crowd by disarming them and preventing them from acting on their lowest impulses.

Reflect

1. Read the scripture passage carefully and slowly. What word or image stands out to you? Why?
2. How do you see the "mob mentality" at work in our culture today?
3. Why do you think understanding ourselves as a friend of Jesus (and not--or not only--a "sinner") matters?
4. How was Jesus a friend to the those in the crowd? How might we, individually or as church, disarm the crowds calling for violence in our day and age?