

Fifth Sunday of Lent

April 7, 2019

Reading - 2 Corinthians 3:8-14

Gospel - John 8:1-11

Picture yourself in the temple in the time of Jesus. The men are gathered listening to Jesus preach. Women are not allowed on the main floor but often gathered on a raised gallery along three sides of the court. Now imagine that the scribes and Pharisees pull a woman to the center of the crowd gathered there. They accuse her of committing adultery, and they question Jesus as to the woman's punishment. By law, her punishment is to be stoned until dead. Are you one of those standing there, as the crowd goes silent, waiting for Jesus to answer?

Her sin could have been any sin, not just adultery, but any of the commandments given to Moses. Did she steal? Kill? Bear false witness? Did she take God's name in vain? Or any of the other five? Are you the woman (or man) accused of sin? Or are you part of the crowd ready to administer punishment? As Jesus writes in the sand on the floor, He reminds us that we are both. We all sin but we are also, at times, all too ready to pick up a stone to deliver punishment. As both sinner and accuser, are we inclined to pick up that stone to punish ourselves for our own shortcomings or our own sins? Paul helps us with this question.

In Paul's letter to the Philippians, he writes **"It's not that I have already taken hold of it or have already attained perfect maturity, but I continue my pursuit in hope that I may possess it, since I have indeed been taken possession of by Christ Jesus."** Paul further writes **"...I do this one thing: I forget about the things behind me and reach out for the things ahead of me."**

Ever feel the freedom of leaving your sins in the confessional and starting anew? Ever feel an old "sin" come back and darken your spirit again even though you have been forgiven? Sometimes we must keep reminding ourselves that we have truly received absolution and we **belong to Christ Jesus** and we are to forget the things of the past and **"pursue the goal, the prize of God's upward call in Christ Jesus."**

Kathleen Koch