**Thesis:** When faced with difficult situations, our human instincts lead us to fight, flight, or freeze. This is no different when confronted with sin. When dealing with the ugliness of our shortcomings and failures, we can succumb to them, try to run from them, or face them head-on and deal with them. Though we may not always know how to respond, Jesus shows us that the steps to freedom from sin are at hand.

**Introduction:** Welcome back to the Jesus Podcast, a year of stories showcasing the depth of Christ’s love and the glory of God’s truth. I’m Zak, your host from Pray.com. In today’s heart-wrenching story, Jesus brings hope to another outcast. Remember to follow the podcast as we continue through epic stories of Christ’s redemption. And if you haven’t yet left a review, we’d be honored if you did. These reviews encourage our team and give us insight into what parts of these podcasts are making an impact.

**Context:** In today’s story, we enter a quiet scene of two lovers that quickly changes as their secret affair is discovered. With each passing second, tension builds as the fate of the conflicted adulteress swiftly approaches. The law demands she be stoned, but what does Jesus say?

Together, we’ll weave through the minds of the adulteress, the Pharisees, and finally, Jesus. This scared woman feels the immense weight of her sin, but she’ll soon discover how she might find freedom from it. And the answer may be more straightforward than she ever could have imagined. A story of extreme heartache and mighty redemption awaits us. Let’s dive in!

**Message:** Everyone can relate to feeling the weight of guilt. Whether big or small, it’s never a good feeling. But the gospel tells us that despite our wrongs, we can experience transformation through the redeeming work of Jesus. And it starts with realizing two foundation things: First, know that you are unconditionally loved by the God of the universe no matter what you’ve done. God loves you with perfect love and holds none of it back. No part of you needs to earn His love, and there’s nothing you can do to cause you to lose His love. As Paul writes in *Romans 8:39 “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.”*

Second, transformation takes place when we see that we’re not all that we can be. Every believer is going through a process called *sanctification*. That’s a big Christianese word. In simple terms, sanctification simply means that the Holy Spirit is working in our hearts and lives to make us more like Jesus. Regardless of where you’ve been or where you are now, there’s more potential for you. You can be more and do more than you ever thought possible.

These are two truths the woman caught in adultery had long forgotten or perhaps never knew. But that was all going to change when she encountered Jesus. Through her story, we learn a great deal about how Jesus comes to fight against sin. Today, we’ll focus on four key takeaways that teach us how to respond when we’re caught in sin.

**First, we need to face our sins instead of hiding them.** Sin can only be dealt with in the light. 1 John says, *“But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin.”*

Sin can’t be dealt with if it’s in darkness.

When faced with our sin, the worst thing we can do is deny it. Denying our sin doesn’t make it go away or magically disappear. Sin will grow in the secret depths of our hearts until it slowly consumes us. John goes even further to say in 1 John 1 that if we deny our sins, we make God a liar. This is because the good news of the gospel is preceded by the bad news that we’re all sinners deserving of death. To deny that is to contradict what God has declared to be true about humanity.

While it may feel painful to confront our sin, or worse, be confronted with it like the woman caught in adultery, it’s much more painful to hold onto it as it eats away at our souls and draws us further from God. **Sin wants to stay hidden**. It doesn’t want to be discovered. Like a virus, it wants to feed on us as it takes over our whole being.

Confessing our sins brings us into the light. It’s out in the open, and now it can be dealt with because we can’t deal with what isn’t acknowledged. We see an example of this in the life of King David. After David takes Bathsheba and has her husband killed, he’s blinded to his sin. He was in denial, and left his sins unprocessed and unattended to.

God then sends the prophet Nathan to confront David about his sin. Once David admits his wrongdoing, God can begin working on his heart. The same is true for us. We have to confess our sins to God and repent. Repent simply means “to turn from.” When we repent of our sins, we turn away from our old way of life and turn to Jesus, seeing that His ways are better than ours.

After we repent, it’s essential that we spend time with Jesus. To sit at His feet and listen to His words. In our story today, we saw that after the Pharisees and crowds leave, Parisa is left alone with Jesus. As she sits there in her shame, it’s the words of Jesus that remind her she hasn’t been condemned that pull her out of her brokenness. But it required her to sit and listen.

If you’re feeling trapped by sin, take some time to just be with Jesus. Spending time in the Bible and praying can do wonders for our hearts and minds. What we’ll find is Christ’s open arms of forgiveness. This promise is emphasized in Ephesians 1:7, *“In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God’s grace 8 that he lavished on us.”*

Forgiveness is freely given to anyone who turns to Jesus as Savior, who put our sins to death when He was raised up on the cross. A fascinating foreshadowing of this can be found in the book of Numbers, chapter 21. As the Israelites are complaining in the wilderness, God sends venomous snakes to bite the people. The people realize their wrong and repent to Moses, who then goes to God.

The Lord tells Moses to craft a bronze serpent and lift it on a pole, and anyone who simply looked upon the serpent would immediately be healed. This is the reality of the cross. If we repent and gaze upon Jesus and the work He accomplished when lifted on the cross, we will be forgiven and healed from our sins.

It’s so incredibly simple on our part. But maybe that’s an obstacle for you. Maybe you feel like you have to make up for your sins. Sometimes, the biggest obstacle to receiving forgiveness is getting to the point that you’ll allow yourself to receive it. But God did the hard work so that we could enjoy the benefits of true freedom. Freedom to go and sin no more. Freedom to walk in the newness of life. Take a moment while listening to think about a sin you’re struggling with. That sin that just feels like it won’t let go. Think about Christ’s words that He hasn’t come to condemn us, but has compassion for us. He isn’t here to shame us but to accept us and draw out the best in us.

A term my wife and I like to use is calling each other up instead of calling each other out. When you call someone out, you’re trying to expose them. When you’re calling someone up, you’re wanting them to reach their potential.

That was the difference between the Pharisees and Jesus. The Pharisees called Parisa out. They wanted her to feel ashamed and exposed. But Jesus called her up. He didn’t condemn her to shame, but lifted her up to a better life.

How beautiful it is to live in forgiveness. It changes everything for us. And what’s even better is that we can help others find the same forgiveness by leading them to Jesus. When we are forgiven, it should soften our hearts towards others. Freedom from our sin empowers us to point others to freedom. This is such an important concept in the kingdom of God that when Jesus teaches the disciples the building blocks of prayer, He instructs us to ask the Lord for forgiveness of sins, and then immediately follows it with a call for us to forgive others.

Stop and take a moment today to ask God to search your heart. As hard as it may be, ask Him to reveal the sins in your life and give you the boldness to confess them to Him. Pray that He would give you the strength to turn from your sins and turn to Him as His kindness draws you to repentance. Receive His forgiveness and feel His Spirit empowering you to live free from sin. You have endless potential when you submit your life to Jesus. Just as a sculptor looks at a block of marble and sees the masterpiece within as he chips away at the exterior, so too does God look at you and sees everything you can be as He works steadily but surely in your life.

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