

## THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

APRIL 15TH - 16TH, 2023 // GOSPEL OF JOHN

### THROWING STONES (JOHN 8:1-11) SHOULD WE EVEN DISCUSS THIS?

The earliest and most reliable manuscripts of John do not include verses 7:53-8:11, it's found in various places in different manuscripts, and the standard vocabulary is different. So, it is doubtful it was a part of John's original Gospel.

- Though John may not have written it, few theologians dispute the event's authenticity.

### THE PHARISEES RETURN WITH A SURPRISE PLAN

After the disciples and the crowd went home, Jesus went to the Mount of Olives right outside of Jerusalem. The next morning, Jesus went to the Temple to teach, but was interrupted again by the Pharisees.

- This interruption had a secret weapon, a woman (but no man?) caught in adultery.

### THIS WAS A TRAP

The woman and the questions about her were meant to trap Jesus. Either He would agree to punish her and break Roman law and upset the sinners He came to save, or He would go easy on her and break the Law of Moses.

- In the law, two people had to witness the offense, further implying this was a setup.

### AN INTERESTING FIRST RESPONSE

The first thing Jesus did when questioned about the woman's punishment was to "[stoop] down and [start] writing on the ground." At this, they "persisted in questioning him."

- No one knows what Jesus wrote. Maybe their sins so everyone could see? Maybe the names of other adulterers in the crowd?

### ONE SENTENCE THAT STOPS THE MOB

In Jesus' infinite wisdom, He responds to the religious leaders' question with a trap of His own: **"The one without sin...should be the first to throw a stone..."**

- This reply preserved both Roman and Jewish law (Deuteronomy 17:2-7) while also exposing the evil of the accusers.

### "THEN HE STOOPED DOWN AGAIN..."

After His statement, Jesus continues to write in the dirt, giving the accusers time to think. V9 says that they started to leave "starting with the older men."

- **As time passes in our faith, we must not forget that we also indulged in evil and needed grace and forgiveness.**

### THE VERDICT FROM THE RIGHTEOUS JUDGE

Once the accusers realized the darkness that still resided in their hearts, they left, leaving only Jesus and the woman. Now the only person worthy to "throw stones" declares His verdict.

- **We learn that condemnation is not of God (John 3:17), but salvation, freedom, and forgiveness are.**

### NOTICE THE SIN WAS ADDRESSED!

We often twist this story to be a shield from accountability and an excuse for us to commit sinful actions.

- **Salvation, forgiveness, and freedom are dependent on our response to Jesus' invitation to turn from our evil desires and lifestyles (repentance) and follow Him.**

### LIGHT AND TRUTH (JOHN 8:12-20)

"I AM..."

There are several times in John where Jesus uses "I am" to describe Himself, and those two words will eventually get Him crucified. Here, Jesus says He is the "light of the world."

- **Yes, Jesus is the "light of life," but there is a condition to "never walk[ing] in... darkness": We must follow Him.**

### "YOUR TESTIMONY IS NOT VALID"

Scripture is clear, and Jesus' actions and words only affirmed prophecy, but the Pharisees misunderstood Him because they were selfish and "[judge[d] by human standards."

- **When we only think of ourselves, it is impossible to notice God, even when He is right in front of us!**

### THERE'S NO SALVATION APART FROM RELATIONSHIP

When asked where His Father is, Jesus responds by telling them they don't know the Father.

- The religious leaders had an **intellectual knowledge of God, but no relationship with Him.**

**We cannot "know" God if we're not praying, listening, obeying, and following Jesus.**

### JESUS' THEOLOGY IS CLEAR

Though many modern "theologians" and so-called Christians will tell you that salvation and Heaven aren't exclusive to Jesus followers, **there's no room for universalism in Jesus' theology.**

- There is also no second chance if we deny the gospel in this life. The truth is there will come a time when all must give an account.

### COMING AND GOING (JOHN 8:21-29)

"WHERE I AM GOING, YOU CANNOT COME"

Because the Pharisees had no desire to truly know God, Jesus assured them that He was

leaving to go to a place they could not enter.

- Jesus was actually going away to prepare a place for those who do have a desire to know Him (John 14:3), but a **refusal to see truth bars one from Heaven.**

### IF WE REMAIN "OF THIS WORLD"

Jesus' words made no sense to them because they valued this world (money, power, affirmation, pleasure, etc.) more than God.

- **Do we fail to understand or live out the Word because we've adopted a worldly value system? Have we clung too tightly to things that are going to pass?**

### "...YOU WILL DIE IN YOUR SINS"

In v21, Jesus says the Pharisees will "die in [their] sin," but in v24, He uses the plural "sins."

- "Sin" in v21 is conscious disbelief that leads to a lifestyle of doing things God disapproves of.
- **It isn't a single sin that separates us from God (though it may start that way), but a deliberate sinful lifestyle.**

### "WHO ARE YOU?"

Jesus had been telling and showing the religious leaders who He was for some time, but they had no desire to see His true identity.

- Though they weren't willing to listen, Jesus gives more blatant evidence of His claim as Savior and divinity by alluding to the cross in v28 ("When you lift up the Son of Man...").

### WE DON'T HAVE TO DO THIS ALONE

Jesus knew the difficulties ahead, but He said **God was with Him and He was not alone because [he] always [did] what pleases him."**

- **We will displease God at times, but if we consistently and deliberately live in sin and denial without remorse or repentance, we cannot expect God to be active in our lives.**

### THE UNPOPULAR TOPIC OF SIN

- We've all sinned and fallen short of Jesus' example (Romans 3:23), but Jesus doesn't condemn us for that.
- Jesus came to free us from condemnation through the cross, which offers **forgiveness of sin, restoration, and helps us grow closer to Him in relationship and lifestyle.**
- In light of knowing the weight and price it took to forgive our sin, shame, and guilt, **the true Christian doesn't make excuses to live in sin.**
- So, **we must acknowledge sin and strive to turn away from it** because to know what is right but to not do it is a sin (James 4:17).

### IF WE CHOOSE TO IGNORE SIN

- If we willingly commit the sin of disbelief, it will lead to a lifestyle of sin that will blind and confuse us and eventually eternally separate us from God.
- And, **even if we label ourselves as Christians but live in rebellion to Jesus, we cannot expect the blessings of God.**

### WE MUST KNOW JESUS

- If we know Him, we will desire to become sanctified (set apart) and move further and further from evil.
- If we have a relationship with Jesus, **we live in the peace and security that we're not alone in this world!** We have a Savior, the clear Word, and the Spirit's help!
- **It is only in knowing Jesus that we begin to understand ourselves more fully!** In a world that tries to find its identity in everything except the One we are made in the image of, the Christian finds comfort in recognizing who we are in God!
- **How is our relationship with Jesus?** We tend to place the blame on everyone and everything else, but does the real root of the problems in our lives lie in the fact that we know the world more than we know God?