**John I The Women Caught in Adultery John 7:53-8:11**

John 7:53-8:11

Review last week.

We were in Luke 19-21 where we saw the Jewish Chief Priests and Teachers of the Law trying to trap Jesus by trick questions about the Law.

This passage fits the context exactly. Note, Jesus went to the Mt. of Olives, where he was staying every day of the Passion week.

Aside: Look at your footnotes. This passage probably was not in John in this location. Some manuscripts have it tacked on to the end of Luke, others after Luke 21:38, at the end of Jesus’ ministry in Jerusalem. Others have it after John 7:36 or at the end of John. In fact, the most likely place for it to fit the context of Luke 21:38, in which the teachers of the law are trying to test Jesus.

Conclusion: This story was always part of the oral tradition about Jesus, which was the “gospel” before the gospels were written.

Everyone agreed it should be in the gospels, so it was placed into various places in Luke, John. It may not have been in the original John, but it is definitely a genuine story, so we can treat it as inspired.

Read John 7:53-8:11

Jesus is teaching in the temple courts—the same place where he drove out the merchants.

Trying to trap Jesus: This woman was caught in (the act of?) adultery. What should we do?

The trap: If Jesus says to let her go, he will be guilty of not upholding the Law, but if he condemns her, he will lose some of the support of the multitudes and appear to contradict other things he has taught.

Between a rock and a hard place.

From Matthew sermons: Between mercy and sacrifice. Q: Which will Jesus choose?

v. 5 The law says to stone such women.

In the Mishnah, the Jewish commentaries, married women caught in adultery were to be strangled, but not-yet-married women were to be stoned to death.

Implication: this woman is 12-15 years old. She is a fairly young teenager.

It is very likely that the guy was much older.

In fact, this situation has every appearance of being a set-up! Imagine the inhumanity of these legalistic opponents of Jesus.

BTW, in Lev 20:20 both were to be put to death, not just the woman!

Besides, who is in the position of power in this sin? Surely, in Jewish society, it is the man!! But the Pharisees want to take vengeance on the young woman. In fact, Deut 22:22-27 acknowledges this power differential in the case of an unmarried woman.

Imagine you are this young woman. What are you thinking? What are you feeling? You are absolutely terrified.

I have just a few minutes, and then I will die by a horrible and painful death.

Q: Do these Pharisees and teachers of the law care about this woman?

Q: Which is important: Upholding the law and moral purity or loving and showing compassion to lost people?

Both!!!!! Which should we give first attention to in how we interact with both the saved and the lost?

Note parallels to Luke and the sinful woman who anointed Jesus in Luke 7:36-48

Simon, look at this woman.

Matthew 5:7 Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown merch.

Matthew 9:13, quoting Hosea 6:6 I desire mercy, not sacrifice, and acknowledgement of God rather than burnt offerings. “Sacrifice” is purity and doing things the right way. “Mercy is putting others before you.”

There is a place for calling people to live right. Jesus could be blistering on righteousness at times, especially at religious hypocricy. Jesus did this, but his natural attitude was mercy. Grace. That is why Jonah was so angry at God. “Jonah became very angry. ‘Isn’t this what I said, Lord, when I was still at home? This is what I tried to forestall by fleeing to Tarshish. I knew that you are a gracious and compassionate God, slow to anger and abounding in love, a God who relents from sending calamity.

Q: Are you ever tempted to want God to send calamity on enemies and sinners?

Do you hope people will get caught in their sin?

They say “hate the sin, love the sinner”

Hate the sin = sacrifice

Love the sinner = mercy.

It is really hard to do this!!!! I say love the sinner and love the sinner (and, by the way, hate the sin)

Mercy is a posture.

Everything we do should have a redemptive quality. (Gregg M.)

As disciples, we need to uphold rightness and holiness and oppose sin in all of its aspects.

But… Our first, our primary posture needs to be mercy, not sacrifice.

When you catch your brother or sister in blatant sin, stop, take a breath, and consider John 7:53-8:11.

This is not good… But what led to this? What is going on in this person’s heart? Might God possibly be working through this situation?

Jesus wrote on the ground. What was he writing? (We have absolutely no idea)

[demonstrate this: do this while sitting in a chair, looking down on the ground…]

By the way, Jesus is sitting on the ground, which is how Rabbis always taught. They would stand to read the Scripture, then sit down to teach.

Why did he do this? He wanted to add to the drama of the moment, and to get the crowd to catch their breath—to see what was really going on here.

Crowds feed on emotions.

v. They kept questioning him…. Jesus, are you afraid to answer? Jesus, you have an opinion on everything. What’s wrong?

Finally, Jesus looks up and looks them right in their eyes. “Let any of you who is without sin be the first to throw a stone at her.”

Legally, the witnesses who brought the woman would be the first (Deuteronomy 17:7), but it is likely that this was a set-up. Their hearts are totally revealed!!!!

The old left first. The younger are more hot-headed.

Jesus looks her in the eyes. Where are they? Has no one condemned you?

Then neither do I condemn you. Go and leave your life of sin.

Imagine the relief on the heart of the woman.

But that is what God has said to us about our own sin, thanks to Jesus, right???!!!!

I desire sacrifice, but I desire mercy before sacrifice. Which will motivate us more?

Look at that woman. The law was not sufficient to stop her from adultery, but the love of Jesus was enough.

Jesus: I did not come to judge the world, but to save it. John 12:47 John 3:17 Aren’t you glad. But, when Jesus comes back, it will be to judge, not to save!

Summary

Is anyone here without sin?

Who will throw the first stone?

Let us come to Jesus who desires mercy, not sacrifice.

But let us listen to Jesus. “Go, now, and leave your life of sin!!!”