

Woodland Baptist Church
 February 22, 2014 - Morning Worship
 John 7:53-8:11 - Are You Holding a Stone

1) READ JOHN 7:53-8:11

2) Verses 53-2 Jesus was continuously TEACHING the PEOPLE

a) **They went each to his house, but Jesus went to the Mount of Olives. 2 Early in the morning he came again to the temple. All the people came to him, and he sat down and taught them.**

i) He went away to the Mount of Olives and got some rest...but was back at it "early the next morning" when he came to the temple.

(1) He didn't sleep in...he didn't come up with something else to do...Jesus got up and went to the temple.

ii) All the people came to him - he taught them - when he showed up, the people came to him? Why? Because they knew he cared for them, they had heard him teach before...they had seen the religious leaders to try silence him and it had not worked - Christ continued to teach and teach and teach.

iii) He taught them - this was not a time to talk about sports or the weather or advances of livelihood or anything else - this was a time that Jesus used to teach about the Kingdom of God.

b) The modern Christian struggles to maintain a regular diet of God's Word...the modern preacher/teacher/pastor struggles to maintain a regular diet of God's Word...during the first century, during the time of Jesus and the Apostles, this was a daily and continual reality.

3) Verses 3-6 There is always someone trying to TEST the TEACHER

a) **3 The scribes and the Pharisees brought a woman who had been caught in adultery, and placing her in the midst 4 they said to him, "Teacher, this woman has been caught in the act of adultery. 5 Now in the Law Moses commanded us to stone such women. So what do you say?" 6 This they said to test him, that they might have some charge to bring against him. Jesus bent down and wrote with his finger on the ground.**

- i) **Testing the teacher/preacher/leaders** - you can put any of those titles in the paragraph here and it would be acceptable. In this instance, the teacher/leader is Christ, but there will always be someone out there who is ready to test you as a Christian leader/teacher or preacher. Someone is going to come at you and make your life challenging, in this case, its the same guys that always did it to Christ - Scribes and the Pharisees. Remember who has antagonized/tested Christ so far:
- (1) Chapter 5 - really heats up when He heals the man at the pool in Bethesda, they decide they want to kill him.
 - (2) Chapter 6 - heats up again when Jesus challenges them to drink his blood and eat his flesh
 - (3) Chapter 7 - it heats up when he claims to be living water; then the Jews try to arrest him
- ii) Christ has stirred it up my friends, and at this point, a situation presents itself that they could not resist, in fact, some theologians believe that this situation could have been manufactured just for this moment, to try to trap Christ in an unanswerable situation.
- b) **The scribes and the pharisees brought a woman who had been “caught in adultery”** and they brought her and the angry mob to Christ in front of the whole crowd while he was teaching...they didn’t wave him back privately and respectfully request his advice on what to do...they brought it loudly, publicly, with a frenzied mob ready to kill a woman for her sins...very interesting and noteworthy that the man was no where to be found - perhaps he got away...perhaps he was politically connected and protected...who knows.
- c) **“Teacher, this woman has been caught in the act of adultery. 5 Now in the Law Moses commanded us to stone such women. So what do you say?”**
- i) Let’s take a minute and put ourselves in this position - you are a controversial teacher, who has just had an alleged adulteress brought before you for judgment. You are looking into the eyes of the greatest religious minds of the time; you can’t call out for help from anybody [Kevin! Frank! Brad! Randy! Bill! Angie!]. It’s just you and an angry mob of full grown men in a death frenzy...this woman’s life depends on what comes out of your mouth.
- d) What do they mean by “in the Law Moses commanded us to stone such a woman?”

- i) **Leviticus 20:10** - 10 "If a man commits adultery with the wife of his neighbor, both the adulterer and the adulteress shall surely be put to death.
- ii) **Deuteronomy 22:22** - 22 "If a man is found lying with the wife of another man, both of them shall die, the man who lay with the woman, and the woman. So you shall purge the evil from Israel.
- iii) **Deuteronomy 22:23-24** - 23 "If there is a betrothed virgin, and a man meets her in the city and lies with her, 24 then you shall bring them both out to the gate of that city, and you shall stone them to death with stones, the young woman because she did not cry for help though she was in the city, and the man because he violated his neighbor's wife. So you shall purge the evil from your midst.

(1) Notice something very important:

- (a) Leviticus - "both" are to put to death but it does not say how.
- (b) Deut - "both" are to be put to death but it does not say how
- (c) Deut - "both" are to be stoned to death.

(2) This was a real situation and they were ready to kill this woman over whatever it was they caught her doing - or whatever plot they had devised to trap Jesus using this woman.

e) 6 This they said to test him, that they might have some charge to bring against him. Jesus bent down and wrote with his finger on the ground.

i) Brings some charge - how could this have gotten Jesus in trouble? Two ways:

- (1) If he consented to them to stone her to death - Christ would have been in deep trouble with the Romans - they were the only one that gave sanction to the death penalty.
- (2) If he let her go, then they have made Jesus look bad by seeming to disregard the Law and the seriousness of sin.

ii) Jesus bent down and wrote with his finger on the ground - we were obviously not meant to know what he wrote, because it was not included in the Bible but there have dozens of interesting speculations.

- (1) Some say he wrote the name of the man that was involved with the woman - which caused them to panic.
- (2) Some say he wrote the Ten Commandments

(3) Some say he wrote a portion of **Exodus 23:1** - "You shall not spread a false report. You shall not join hands with a wicked man to be a malicious witness. 2 You shall not fall in with the many to do evil, nor shall you bear witness in a lawsuit, siding with the many, so as to pervert justice, 3 nor shall you be partial to a poor man in his lawsuit.

(4) I think it likely that Jesus' stooping to write on the ground served, at least, to draw the crowd's accusing looks from the woman. I think Jesus may also be taking his time in order not to dignify the question by a too prompt or a too defensive response.¹

f) So here is the test for Christ - the Jews are trying to trap him and the words that come from his mouth will determine whether or not this woman lives or dies.

4) **Verses 7-9** The teacher must **HOLD** his ground and **ENDURE** the test

a) **7 And as they continued to ask him, he stood up and said to them, "Let him who is without sin among you be the first to throw a stone at her." 8 And once more he bent down and wrote on the ground. 9 But when they heard it, they went away one by one, beginning with the older ones, and Jesus was left alone with the woman standing before him.**

i) **They continued to ask him** - they were relentless - they continued to push Jesus to answer their question - I think Jesus was just making them dig themselves into a deeper and deeper hole.

ii) **"Let him who is without sin among you be the first to throw a stone at her"**- that stopped them dead in their tracks - they probably thought to themselves, "Jesus, just go back to drawing on the ground again while we discuss what you have said." Let's look at the brilliance of this statement:

(1) It could not possibly be construed as a rejection of the law, Jesus specifically instructed that a stone must be thrown. But his limitation on who might throw it effectively prevented any harm coming to the guilty woman.

(2) The saying does not deny that she may be stoned, but insists upon the innocence and therefore the competence of whoever stands forth against her as accuser and witness.

(3) The words of Jesus are both an appeal to conscience and a warning to the hearers that their own lives might very well be at stake. If they stoned the woman they must be very sure of the witness.

¹ Brunner, 505

iii) **When they heard it they went away one by one, beginning with the older ones, and Jesus was left alone with the woman standing before him.**

(1) This crowd is overwhelmed in conscience and turns and leaves, dropping their stones. The older ones left first, probably indicative of their deeper realization of their sin, as younger ones are many times less willing to meet defeat.

b) Jesus held his ground, enduring the test and the woman lived.

5) **Verses 10-11** The teacher is the **VOICE** of God's **MERCY** to sinners

a) **10 Jesus stood up and said to her, "Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?" 11 She said, "No one, Lord." And Jesus said, "Neither do I condemn you; go, and from now on sin no more."**

- i) **Woman where are they?** It makes you think that perhaps she was covering her face or looking away, not wanting to see what was happening and Jesus finally addressed her and she turned to see that everyone was leaving.
- ii) **Has no one condemned you?** Questions are always a better way of opening up the heart of someone to help them change than words of condemnation.
- iii) **No one Lord** - all that had been there holding stones had left.
- iv) Jesus gives the woman mercy and encourages her to sin no more.

(1) He does not let her go without calling what she did "sin."

6) **CLOSE**

- a) Christ was "without sin," and might cast the first stone; but though none more severe than he against sin, for he is infinitely just and holy, none more compassionate than he to sinners, for he is infinitely gracious and merciful, and this poor malefactor finds him so - *Matthew Henry*
- b) Every time I read this story I can't help but think that there were people there that day that just "went along" with the plan to kill this woman who had no idea whether or not she was truly guilty as accused. As Christians we must not be that way - we must search for truth of innocence or guilt.
- c) When these types of situations happen - are you holding a stone? Do you have any idea the truth of what is happening or are you just jumping on the bandwagon?