

JOHN 7.53-8.11

Hey, how many of you like the video scriptures?
I know at first a few of you folks were a bit hesitant about it,
but now a lot of you have said it's a good thing.

Well, however you answer that question,
when watching the video isn't it easier to
feel the passion and the pain of these people,
get caught up in the confusion and chaos of their conflicts,
and sense the tension and turmoil of their times.

The way the religious leaders go after Jesus reminds me
of the paparazzi sticking microphones and flashing cameras
in the faces of celebrities trying to catch them at their worse.

It reminds me of the press and politicians
during the presidential election campaigns
recording and analyzing every word, every inflection,
and every facial gesture of the politicians.
Supposedly they were trying to get the scoop,
but it seemed they really wanted to politicians to mess up.

Well today as we observe the scripture,
we see and hear the Pharisees and teachers of the law
squaring off with Jesus, trying to trip him up and make him look bad.

But they won't embarrass him as much as he will embarrass them.
Jesus turns the tables on them.

That is one of the things Jesus came to do,
turn the tables on you and I
to turn the tables on us, to help us change our lives,
to make us better people.
So, let's not forget that.

And let's not forget two other things;
Let's not forget what we are suppose to do,
Let's not forget what Jesus has done for us.

LET'S NOT FORGET WHAT WE'RE SUPPOSE TO DO?

The religious people did...

the real religious people did forget what they were suppose to do.

Listen, *"Then each went to his own home.*

But Jesus went to the Mount of Olives." J7.53-8.1

Jesus had a friend who put him up for the night.

*At dawn he appeared again in the temple courts
where all the people gathered around him, and he sat down to teach them.*

The people wanted to learn.

*The teachers of the law and the Pharisees brought in a woman caught in adultery.
They made her stand before the group and said to Jesus,
“Teacher, this woman was caught in the act of adultery.
In the Law, Moses commanded us to stone such a woman.
Now what do you say?
They were using this question as a trap, in order to have a basis for accusing him.*

Isn't this an ugly seen? As ugly as it gets?

Think of you and me here this morning and all of a sudden there is this great commotion
and a couple of the church leaders drag a half dressed woman up here
and throw her in front of the altar, accuse her of adultery.
And then they asked me what to do with her.

What would you think about that?
Wouldn't you shocked by what you saw?

The religious leaders in our story today aren't
being the protectors and defenders of the faith they are suppose to be.
They're simply being cruel and callous, malicious and mean.

This charade, this sting operation was strictly driven by their desire
to take Jesus down and to take Jesus out.

Jesus is is caught in the middle by their question.
One of the Confirmation kids said, "He is in a pickle.
You see, if he "upholds" the law and this woman is stoned,
He'll lose the popular support he has with the people.
If he lets her go, he loses his integrity as a teacher and law abiding leader.

Another thing is we see is that these law "abiders" are really law benders.

Where is the guy?
The last time I checked , it took two people to commit adultery.

They weren't really interested in justice.
They are quick to condemn and swift to punish.

We know someone has to enforce the laws and extract punishment.
We all judge, we have to judge...
it is the way we judge that is the issue.

In the Sermon on the Mount we hear some of these words, taken from the Message Paraphrase.

It's the "Do not judge" passage in Matthew 7.1-5,

"Do n't pick on people, don't jump on their failures or criticize their faults, unless of course you want the same treatment.

The critical spirit has a way of boomeranging.

It has an ugly sneer and a face of contempt.

It's has a traveling show mentality.

And people act as if they are holier than thou."

The Pharisees should not only have been enforcing the law
But they should have been to trying to understand her behavior.
Then they should have tried to find ways to help her reform
and be reconciled to God and to the community.

THEY FORGOT WHAT THEY WERE SUPPOSED TO DO, didn't they?

Paul has to remind the folks at the Corinthian church,
a truly fractured and broken community of faith what they are suppose to do.

I think he is reminding you and I what we're suppose to do as well,
so that we don't, become a fractured and broken community.

In II Corinthians 5.17+, he says,

*"Therefore, if anyone is in Christ he is a new creation;
the old is gone, the new has come!*

*All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself
through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation:*

Verse 20 continues, *"We are therefore Christ's ambassadors of reconciliation..."*

To reconcile means to put things back together.
So as ambassadors of reconciliation we are to help
others restore their relationships with God and with one another.

So, you and I are Ambassadors of Reconciliation-let's not forget that.

And let's not forget JESUS AND WHAT HE DOES.

Let's see how he handles this dilemma, verse six and following,

"But Jesus bent down..."

I would guess he was appalled at how these guys treat this woman,
So for the moment, he ignores them.

He bends down thus drawing all the lecherous, livid, lewd,
and lust filled eyes away from the woman and to himself.

And right there, we see the care, concern, and compassion Jesus has for the woman.

*“He bent down and started to write on the ground with his finger.
When they kept on questioning him, (more like nagging)
He straightened up and said to them,
“If any one of you is without sin,
let him be the first to throw a stone at her.”*

TO-SHAY!!!

If you're for the “underdog,” you're cheering about now.

WOO-HO!!!

They put him Jesus in check and found themselves check-mated.

So what do you think he was writing?

Maybe he was just buying time, trying to think of a good answer.

Or maybe he was doodling or drawing circles...or swirls...or stars...or whatever...

Our confirmation class and the Bible Busters didn't think so.

They did some homework on the words “write” and “finger. “

They found that “to write” did not mean just “to write,”

but means “to record” or “to make a list.”

“Making a list, checking it twice, going to find out who is naughty or nice...”

Then we looked up the word finger

in the Bible to see how else it is used.

We found it referred to creation, David writes in Psalm 8.3,

*“When I consider the heavens, the work of your fingers,
the moon and stars which you have set in place...”*

We found that in Exodus it referred to God sending the plagues ,
in Daniel, judgment, and in Leviticus, guilt offerings.

But more interestingly we found in Exodus 31.18 these words,

*“When the Lord finished speaking to Moses on Mount Sinai,
he gave him two tablets of the Testimony,
the tablets of stone inscribed by the finger of God.”*

And as Moses is retelling the story to the people in Deuteronomy 9.10, he says

“The Lord gave me two stone tablets inscribed by the finger of God.”

So putting the word “record” together with

the picture of God's finger writings commandments,

We think Jesus was recording their sins, making a list of their sins,

listing the commandments these pious nitpickers have broken?

Two commandments come quickly to mind.

Remember they “caught” the woman in the act of adultery.

Hum...I wonder what they were thinking about when they

saw, watch, and “caught” her in the act of adultery?

Here is Jesus interpretation of the seventh commandment, Matthew 5.27-28,
*“You have heard that it was said, Do not commit adultery.
 But I tell you that anyone who looks at a woman lustfully
 has already committed adultery with her in his heart.”*

We know about their anger towards Jesus.
 His comment on that from Matthew 5.21-22,
*“You have heard it said to people long ago,
 Do not murder and anyone who murders will be subject to judgment.
 But I tell you anyone angry with his brother will be subject to judgment...”*

The finger of Jesus moved some dust,
 and the finger of Jesus must have moved some hearts.
 They dropped their stones and left.

We read in verse 9, *“at this, those who heard, began to go away one at a time,
 The older ones first, until only Jesus was left, with the woman standing there.”*

One thing Jesus did for them as well as us,
 is to bring us all up short.
 He convicts us of our sins.
 He loves each of them just as much as he loves each of us.
 He wants all of us to be reconciled to God.

If you're feeling a little ping of conscience or a whole lot of pain because of guilt,
 check it out. Some of us have over developed consciences, so check it out.

Jesus might be reminding you or I not to say
 or do something we're not suppose to say or do.
 Or he might be reminding us of something we need, to say or do.

Now, another thing that we don't want to forget is that
 Jesus doesn't condemn us.
 That might surprise you but John 3.17 says,
*“For God did not sent his son in the world to condemn the world,
 but to save the world through him.”*

The message says it this way,
*“God did not go to all this trouble of sending his Son
 merely to point an accusing finger, telling the world how bad it was.
 He came to help, to put the world right again.”*

His finger, the finger of God is to show us where we are wrong
 whether it writes in stone or on our hearts.

The accusing finger is not to condemn...to convict-yes...to condemn-no.

Listen to these life giving words to this woman, John 8.10-12
**Jesus straightened up and asked her, 'Woman, where are they?
 Has no one condemned you? No one sir. (she said)
 Then neither do I condemn you, Jesus declared.
 Go now and leave your life of sin.'**

Ah, this embarrassed, exposed,
 and exploited woman CAN BREATHE A SIGH OF RELIEF.

She started the morning in the arms of an adulterous lover,
 and then found herself in the hands of angry religious leaders.

Hopefully she'll find herself protected by the outstretched arms of Jesus
 and maybe even held in and healed by his bloodied hands nailed to a cross.

I John 2.1 echoes that image of protection,
*"My dear children, I write this to you so you will not sin.
 But if you do sin, we have a mediator and advocate with the Father,
 Who is Jesus Christ. He is a propitiation for our sins..."*
 Propitiation is a churchy word for covering-Jesus is that covering.

Note that Jesus does not excuse her sin. Jesus does not excuse her sin.
 She has sinned, she is broken, and she has broken God's law.
 She bears some responsibility for breaking up her family as well as others.
 She bears some responsibility for tempting others, hurting herself, and hurting others.

But in Jesus she found forgiveness for that sin.
 In Jesus she found freedom from condemnation.

In Jesus no matter what you or I've done or didn't do,
 we can find forgiveness for our sin and freedom from condemnation.

Paul tells us in Romans 8.1, *"Now there is no condemnation in Christ Jesus."*

*The Message says it this way, "There is a new power in operation.
 The spirit of Christ, like a strong wind has magnificently
 cleared the air of the low flying black cloud
 freeing you from a lifetime of brutal tyranny of sin and death."*

That's GOOD NEWS!! That's GREAT NEWS!!!

So let's not forget, that we will be convicted of our sin,
 welcome it, the finger of God is our friend.
 Let's not forget that there is CONDEMNATION WITHOUT JESUS
 BUT NO CONDEMNATION WHEN WE TRUST JESUS.
 And let's not forget, we're to be ambassadors of reconciliation.

LET'S PRAY!!!

