

Come Follow Me  
Elo Viz Production  
Week 18  
John 7-10

The beginning story in John 8 is one of my favorites. It's only 10 verses but it is so powerful in its doctrine. Sometimes we tend to focus heavily on the justice of God. His strictness on keeping the commandments and the penalties of sin which is death. This is important because God can not look upon sin with the least degree of allowance. On other occasions we focus heavily on the grace of God. His mercy and compassion for those that are humble and repentant. How He is so easy and quick to forgive and welcome us with open arms. Both of these are very important and there can be a balance. This story shows us the perfect balance of God in his mercy and strictness on sin.

“2 And early in the morning he came again into the **temple**, and all the people came unto him; and he sat down, and taught them.

3 And the scribes and Pharisees brought unto him a **woman** taken in **adultery**; and when they had set her in the midst,

4 They say unto him, Master, this woman was taken in adultery, in the very act.

5 Now Moses in the **law** commanded us, that such should be stoned: but what sayest thou?

6 This they said, tempting him, that they might have to accuse him. But Jesus stooped down, and with *his* finger **wrote** on the ground, *as though he heard them not*.

7 So when they continued asking him, he lifted up himself, and said unto them, He that is without **sin** among you, let him **first** cast a **stone** at her.

8 And again he stooped down, and wrote on the ground.

9 And they which heard *it*, being convicted by *their own* **conscience**, went out one by one, beginning at the eldest, *even* unto the last: and Jesus was left alone, and the woman standing in the midst.

10 When Jesus had lifted up himself, and saw none but the woman, he said unto her, Woman, where are those thine accusers? hath no man condemned thee?

11 She said, No man, Lord. And Jesus said unto her, Neither do I **condemn** thee: go, and **sin** no **more**.” (John 8:2-11)

Let's break this down and look at this story from as many angles as we possibly can. First let's start with the facts. Those things that we know for sure.

First- in verse 2. It was custom of that day, that when a Rabbi would come to the temple to teach the people, He would sit and everyone else would stand around Him as he taught. It is kind of

the opposite of what we do today. We all sit and the teacher stands in front of the room. But it did have its positives. It would deter a sleepy student during a boring sermon from dozing off if he had to stand during the teaching. And, it makes for an interesting dynamic for this next part.

The scribes and Pharisees brought unto him a woman taken in the very act of adultery. I'm sure we have all asked the all important question: Where is the guy?

According to the Mosaic law that they are referring to in Leviticus 20 it clearly states that: "the man that committeth adultery with *another* man's wife, the adulterer and the adulteress shall surely be put to death.(Lev 20:10)

Most scholars believe that this was some sort of set up and that the man was in on it. Which is messed up. These religious men, these leaders of their religious sect were willing to sacrifice this woman for the sake of condemning Jesus. What we don't know is who this woman was. It is unclear what her life decisions had been up until this point. And it swings from one end of the spectrum to the other. She could have been a prostitute, or a woman that was having an affair or she could have been the victim of a heinous crime conceived by these evil men. When we ponder on each one of these. It changes the story and how we feel about this woman. But what does not change with any of these scenarios is how Jesus feels about the woman, how He responds to this daughter of God placed before Him.

Please take note that Jesus did not have the opportunity to forgive or teach the man involved in this scene. We are unclear how long the man had to live with the pain of this sinful act because of his unwillingness to be exposed in his sin like this woman was forced to do.

It was obvious that the scribes and Pharisees were attempting to catch Jesus with their plot. For them it was the perfect plan. If He forgives the woman publicly then he would be defying their law and they would have grounds to condemn Him. However, if He is to judge her and stand on the side of the law it would discredit all that He had been teaching as He spent most of His time with sinners, the sick and those they referred to as unclean.

But Jesus's response is perfect. It shows us His perfect balance of Justice and mercy. His infinite goodness and perfect judgment.

"He that is without [sin](#) among you, let him [first](#) cast a [stone](#) at her."

This response speaks not only to the evil men there to trap Jesus. But it spoke to every person there and every person here. What I mean by that is, There was a crowd around Jesus before these men brought the woman among them. Let's call them members of the church that were there to learn from the Savior as He taught at the temple. After this encounter we read that everyone which heard what was going on "being convicted by their own conscience, went out one by one. The oldest to the youngest even until the last and Jesus was left alone."

This implies that as this woman was paraded before them, these members of the church, these “good” people bent down and picked up a rock in anticipation for the justice that was about to take place. They were ready and seemingly eager to condemn and kill this woman who had sinned. It seems that they forgot their own sin for a moment, as this opportunity to judge passed in front of them.

And are we any different? How quick are we to forget our own private sin, and place ourselves in a position to cast judgment on others for their more public sin? It seems easy. Justice is always more favorable when the spotlight is on others. But, how quickly this changes when the spotlight turns to us and our sin is exposed.

These next two bits of information were life changing for me as I came to understand them. In verse 8 it tells us that Jesus stooped down and wrote on the ground. There have been many that have speculated or guessed what it is that Jesus was writing on the ground. And we don't really know what He wrote. However, There are two other instances in the scriptures where we see the finger of God writing something. One is in Deuteronomy when God wrote the 10 commandments on the two stone tablets. (Deut 9:10) And the other is in Daniel when the evil king Belshazzar drank out of the sacred temple vessels as a mockery to God. It says that as they partied the finger of God wrote on the wall and what he read caused his countenance to change and his knees trembled, and his joints became weak.

So this event of Jesus writing in the dirt is not something to pass over or brush aside. Everytime we see the finger of God writing something it is a significant event to be studied and pondered on. But here is what I found fascinating: Jesus does something that no other Jewish man would have done in that time.

If you can imagine the crowds standing around him and this woman brought to stand in front of Him. If you can put yourself in Jesus's shoes; What would be your reaction to this sinful woman standing in front of you? Would you stand to face her? Stand and turn away? Remain sitting? Pay close attention: At the moment that this woman caught in adultery was brought to Him, He stoops down to write in the dirt. The action of bowing before her is the image we get. Before He opens His mouth to teach them anything, He teaches them with His actions. No man at any time in that day would ever bow to any woman that was not royalty. Jesus bows before this woman not once but twice. Showing that this was not a coincidence but a deliberate act to show these people gathered around Him, that He knew who she was and what she was worth. An act of supreme humility and love.

The crowd didn't really understand until His words pierced their hearts; “He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her.”

Those words are to the crowd then and to us now. Because if you can hear Him, it will convict you in your conscience, and you will not only want to drop the stone from your hand, but the Spirit will move you that it will be your every desire to never take the stone up again. That is the purpose of the story. That is the lesson we are to learn. Not just to forgive as Jesus did but to

have that change of heart that we have no more disposition to do evil, but, to shun evil and become as He is.

The conclusion of this story is where God shows his balance of justice and mercy. Once everyone had left, and just Jesus and the woman stood there alone. He asked her: Woman, (which was a term of endearment. It is the same respectful title He called His mother) Women, Where are those thine accusers? Hath no man condemned thee? She responds "No man, Lord."

Then this phase of freedom, this act of mercy and grace: "Neither do I condemn thee; go, and sin no more". Few words could describe the feelings that must have washed over her as she looked into the Savior's eyes. What peace, What acceptance.

In the Late 1700s a sailor by the name of John Newton was a slave trader. By his own admission he was an abuser, a rapist and a murderer. He would do brutal and awful things to the slaves that he bought and sold. He was a dark, evil man. Till one day he heard of one, Jesus Christ. The spirit burning in his soul to change and forsake his life of sin. In 1772 John Newton penned the lyrics:

Amazing grace how sweet the sound  
That saved a wretch like me  
I once was lost, but now I'm found  
Was blind but now I see  
'Twas grace that taught my heart to fear  
And grace my fears relieved  
How precious did that grace appear  
The hour I first believed

In his later years John lost his memory. As he lay on his deathbed, although his thoughts were limited, he said he could remember only two things. "That I am a great sinner, and that Christ is a great Savior"

I testify that if we can remember those two things we will truly understand the grace and mercy of God and His beloved son.

In the name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

