

The Gospel of John
Week Thirteen
John 8:1-30

Day One

1 But Jesus went to the Mount of Olives. 2 At dawn he appeared again in the temple courts, where all the people gathered around him, and he sat down to teach them. 3 The teachers of the law and the Pharisees brought in a woman caught in adultery. They made her stand before the group 4 and said to Jesus, "Teacher, this woman was caught in the act of adultery.

v. 1 – We ended last week’s study by acknowledging that this story in John may have been added at a later time than when John wrote. I, however, am treating this story as if it belongs in the Bible if not at this particular place in John’s gospel. I like its message, just not its placement. Jesus often stayed in Bethany, which is in the general direction of the Mount of Olives. Housing would have been tight in Jerusalem during the festival, so Jesus obviously stayed in the home of friends.

v. 2 – Jesus was in place at dawn, ready to teach the people and the people were ready to listen and learn. What a commitment on the behalf of the people to study God’s word and law. **Do you have a commitment to learn the Word? What are you doing at dawn?** For Jesus to be in the Temple at dawn, He had to arise much earlier to eat and travel. Notice that it was the custom of the teacher to sit and for the students to stand when the Law was taught and discussed.

v. 3 – The leaders had to work all night to search out and find a sinning woman! This story leads me to wonder to what lengths they went to discover this woman in the act of adultery. Of course, they did not bring the man, only the woman. This woman had broken one of the Ten Commandments and the leaders dragged her from where she was to the Temple Mount to find Jesus and confront Him with this situation. These men were mean and determined to rid Israel of sinners – and Jesus!

v. 4 – The leaders made their simple case: she was caught in the act of adultery. They called Jesus the teacher and they were correct in that sense. He was now about to teach them something about grace and mercy and do it creatively. Let’s see how He did it.

Day Two

5 In the Law Moses commanded us to stone such women. Now what do you say?" 6 They were using this question as a trap, in order to have a basis for accusing him. But Jesus bent down and started to write on the ground with his finger. 7 When they kept on questioning him, 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." 8 Again he stooped down and wrote on the ground.

v. 5 – The Law did say that this woman should be put to death, but that isn't all it said:

" 'If a man commits adultery with another man's wife—with the wife of his neighbor—both the adulterer and the adulteress are to be put to death' (Leviticus 20:10).

The Law stated that both the man *and* woman were guilty and were to be put to death. These leaders were enforcing the law but doing it selectively and with prejudice. They were holding the woman responsible while exonerating the man. It is interesting that they asked Jesus what He said after they quoted what the Law said. Jesus' word superseded the Law but it was not contrary to the Law. He brought superior insight to the Law, which is why He was a Teacher first and foremost in the minds of the people.

v. 6 – The leaders thought that they had Jesus trapped by the Law that He purported to teach and follow. They called Jesus teacher but they were hypocrites. They were trying to trip Him up so they could accuse and destroy Him. What fools they were to think that they could trap Jesus! Yet they were convinced that they knew enough about the Law to trap and fool God into a mis-statement.

Jesus took some time to reflect on His answer by stooping down to doodle on the ground. Jesus was perhaps listening for the wisdom of the Father, so He would know how to answer.

The heart of the righteous weighs its answers, but the mouth of the wicked gushes evil (Proverbs 15:28).

Does not wisdom call out? Does not understanding raise her voice? On the heights along the way, where the paths meet, she takes her stand; beside the gates leading into the city, at the entrances, she cries aloud (Proverbs 8:1-3).

Wisdom is always talking. **Are you listening?** This is what Jesus was doing at this moment in the story; He was listening for the Father's voice. When you read how the story concluded, you have to say He heard it for sure!

v. 7 – These leaders were relentless. They pressed Jesus for an answer and finally He arose and gave an answer that would be quoted for the next 2,000 years. He urged any man who was sinless to cast the first stone. He did not address the issue of the Law as they requested, but rather addressed the issues of mercy and grace, which were also components of the Law. What a brilliant response Jesus gave! What wisdom in action!

v. 8 – Jesus did say any more than He had to. He allowed the question to “sink in” and then waited for their response. They peppered Him with questions, but He made only one statement. They used many words; He used but few. Jesus went back to doodle on the ground while He waited for them to respond. Silence can be awkward and we can attempt to talk or do something while the silence does its job. Here Jesus did not try to end the silence, but rather He used it for His purposes.

This wisdom is reminiscent of the wisdom that Solomon displayed in 1 Kings 3 when a baby was brought to Solomon by two women, both saying they were his mother. Wisdom is practical and necessary for everyday life. **Do you have it? Do you know where to get it when you need it?**

Day Three

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 still standing there. 10 Jesus straightened up and asked her, "Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?" 11 "No one, sir," she said. "Then neither do I condemn you," Jesus declared. "Go now and leave your life of sin."

v. 9 – Perhaps the older ones left first because they were more aware of their sinful history than the younger ones. Yet no one could possibly throw a stone because all of them were acknowledged sinners, something that they had perhaps forgotten. The Law was given to do just what Jesus had done: make people conscious of sin. It could not deliver them from sin, but it could make them mindful of their sinfulness. Jesus came not only to make them mindful but also to set them free.

Therefore the Law has become our tutor to lead us to Christ, so that we may be justified by faith (Galatians 3:24).

The woman was frozen in place and Jesus was doodling on the ground. When it comes to sin, it is not the group before God, it is one person before God. This woman was face-to-face with her maker after her accusers had fled the scene. **What would He say and do? What would she say and do?**

v. 10 – Jesus asked where her accusers were. That is the question that asks even today about you and me. Where are our accusers? God has set us free and declared Himself for us.

What, then, shall we say in response to this? If God is for us, who can be against us? (Romans 8:31).

v. 11 – The woman said only three words to Jesus as far as we know and those were to answer His question. No one stayed to condemn her, so Jesus declared that He would not condemn her either. What a picture of grace in action! Jesus had the power to judge her sin, but He did not do so. He has made the same decision for you and me.

Jesus added one warning as He dismissed the women. He told her to leave her life of sin. Jesus acknowledged that she was indeed sinning so He was not ignoring or looking past her sin as He refused to condemn her. He simply chose to offer her grace that would lead her to repent.

Day Four

12 When Jesus spoke again to the people, he said, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life." 13 The Pharisees challenged him, "Here you are, appearing as your own witness; your testimony is not valid." 14 Jesus answered, "Even if I testify on my own behalf, my testimony is valid, for I know where I came from and where I am going. But you have no idea where I come from or where I am going. 15 You judge by human standards; I pass judgment on no one.

v. 12 – John’s gospel continues with Jesus speaking to the crowds once again. Jesus declared that He was (and therefore is) the light of the world. He promised that His followers would never walk in darkness. That’s right, Jesus said *never*. That is quite a promise. One must have great power and confidence in that power to make such a promise. My point is that Jesus was no ordinary man; He was God as well as man. He had promised earlier in the gospel that He would never lose anyone the Father gave Him. Now He was promising that no one who followed Him would ever live in darkness. He was the only source of spiritual light for the world.

It is interesting to note that Satan tries to replicate this light, but it is a false light:

And no wonder, for Satan himself masquerades as an angel of light (1 Corinthians 11:14).

v. 13 – The Pharisees tried to dismiss Jesus’ claims on a legal technicality: He was giving testimony on His own behalf. While that was true, the works that Jesus did to “back up” His claims gave Him credibility. Plus there was the work of the Spirit, although not as full as it would be until after Pentecost, but present nonetheless to bear witness to the truth that Jesus spoke.

The Pharisees were no longer interested in what was true or not. They wanted to prove that Jesus was wrong and, if they could not do that, then they would simply kill Him. **That’s not a very objective way of dealing with the things of God, now is it?**

v. 14 – Jesus claimed rightly that His testimony of Himself was true, for He knew the truth of where He had come from and where He was going. Jesus was light and truth. Repeatedly He said, “Verily or truthfully I say unto you.” He told the people over and over again that He spoke truth and assured them that this was all He was capable of doing! The Pharisees did not believe Him, so that meant they considered Him a liar. The Son of Truth thought by sinful man a liar. **How bizarre is that thought?**

Jesus knew who He was. **Do you know who you are? Do you know where you going, or at least the general direction? Where would you like to be in five years? Ten years?** You may answer, “Wherever the Lord wants me to be” and there is nothing wrong with that. **Why can’t God reveal to you today where you will be in the future? What do you “see” yourself doing? Why can’t He show you that today?** Often it is because you are afraid of seeing that. It makes you accountable to become what you see and it invites a whole host of pressures and problems that don’t come when you simply say, “Lord, I’ll do whatever You want.”

I have spent the last 25 years of my life preparing to do what I am doing today. I “saw” it before it ever happened, but then once I saw it, I set on a course to prepare for it to happen. **What steps can you take today to make your tomorrow a reality?**

v. 15 – The Pharisees were guilty of using a faulty standard by which they judged. They used a human standard, so what was important to God would not fit into any of their priorities. **So by whom would you rather be judged, God or man? If you say God, then why do you fear what men say about you and your purpose?**

Day Five

16 But if I do judge, my decisions are right, because I am not alone. I stand with the Father, who sent me. 17 In your own Law it is written that the testimony of two men is valid. 18 I am one who testifies for myself; my other witness is the Father, who sent me.” 19 Then they asked him, "Where is your father?" "You do not know me or my Father," Jesus replied. "If you knew me, you would know my Father also." 20 He spoke these words while teaching in the temple area near the place where the offerings were put. Yet no one seized him, because his time had not yet come.

v. 16 – Jesus did not come to judge but to “seek and save the lost” (Luke 19:10). If He did judge, there would be perfect agreement between Him and the Father, so His judgment would be accurate and righteous. Jesus continued to tell them that the Father had sent Him, but the Jews could not grasp this truth.

v. 17 – Jesus was saying that God can bear witness to the truth, and He certainly did in the life and ministry of Jesus. He did that through the miracles and through those who identified what Jesus said as truth (which they could only do with God’s help). Since the Law said that a testimony was valid if given by two, then Jesus’ word was reliable because the Father backed it up.

v. 18 – The Father does bear witness to Jesus through two means. One way was the miracles that He did, which validated His message. The second was the witness of the Spirit, which many had when Jesus spoke. They knew He spoke truth and the Father through the Spirit opened their hearts to that truth.

v. 19 – The Jews did not know what Jesus was talking about. Of course, you and I have 2,000 years of history that helps us understand what Jesus was saying. At the same time, the Jews were on a “Messiah Watch” yet they had no idea who the Father was or what He was doing through Jesus. They were looking for God’s will but were blind to God’s will. **How do you know that you aren’t doing the same thing?** You can only be sure by putting your trust in Jesus that He is revealing the truth to you.

Anyone who knew Jesus already knew the Father, for they understood that Jesus was on a divine mission from the Father. As we look back on this, we can also now clearly see the truth of the Trinity, which is a mystery yet not at the same time!

v. 20 – The previous day, the leaders had tried to seize Jesus. On this day, no one attempted to arrest Him. This is because the Father had set the time when He would be seized and killed. John reiterated this truth so that no one thought the Jews were in charge of this process. They were not. They were merely players in God’s “game” of redemption, for they would kill Jesus and, by so doing, open the way to God that had been promised to their forefathers.

Day Six

21 Once more Jesus said to them, "I am going away, and you will look for me, and you will die in your sin. Where I go, you cannot come." 22 This made the Jews ask, "Will he kill himself? Is that why he says, 'Where I go, you cannot come?'" 23 But he continued, "You are from below; I am from above. You are of this world; I am not of this world. 24 I told you that you would die in your sins; if you do not believe that I am the one I claim to be, you will indeed die in your sins." 25 "Who are you?" they asked. "Just what I have been claiming all along," Jesus replied.

vs. 21&22 – Jesus had said this earlier in the gospel and they thought He meant He was going on a mission to the dispersed Jews. On this occasion, they assumed that He was going somewhere to kill Himself. They certainly arrived at a bizarre conclusion! Yet Jesus was saying that Jesus would fulfill His mission, the Jews would keep looking for Him as they had for centuries and die in their sins because they would not “find” Him through faith.

Are you arriving at any “bizarre” conclusions from what Jesus said? Any strange end times interpretations? Any strange doctrines that tickle your intellect? You may want to ask the Spirit to reveal any you may have to you.

v. 23 – Jesus went on to explain Himself to the Jews although they could not comprehend what He was saying. Jesus was doing this because it was part of His mission and because He was speaking to future generations yet to come. I wonder if there was a stenographer close by who was recording what Jesus said. That is possible, you know. Of course, the Spirit was inspiring John’s writings, so there was certainly the element of the miraculous inspiration in these words being written. They could have been produced, however, as John copied from another transcript. That is just a thought to consider.

Jesus had come from the presence of God and the Jews were earthly minded. The same is true today for those who don’t grasp who Jesus is:

The mind of sinful man is death, but the mind controlled by the Spirit is life and peace; the sinful mind is hostile to God. It does not submit to God's law, nor can it do so (Romans 8:6-7).

v. 24 – Jesus told the Jews that their rituals and legalism were powerless to save them; they would die in their sins. Jesus was and is the only way to remove the sin barrier that stands between God and man. Jesus was not saying this to idolatrous Gentiles but rather

to covenant Jews! I can only imagine how incredulous they must have been, thinking, “Does He know who He is talking to? We have Abraham as our father and he says we will die in our sins.”

The way to Jesus was and is faith, pure and simple. It is faith in who He claimed to be – One from the presence of God. Let us not forget this basic truth:

And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him (Hebrews 11:6).

v. 25 – After all that Jesus had said, the Jews asked, “Who are you?” They didn’t understand a word He had said because His words were spiritual and their minds were carnal. Paul wrote about this phenomenon years later:

We do, however, speak a message of wisdom among the mature, but not the wisdom of this age or of the rulers of this age, who are coming to nothing. No, we speak of God's secret wisdom, a wisdom that has been hidden and that God destined for our glory before time began. None of the rulers of this age understood it, for if they had, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory (1 Corinthians 2:6-8).

Day Seven

26 "I have much to say in judgment of you. But he who sent me is reliable, and what I have heard from him I tell the world." 27 They did not understand that he was telling them about his Father. 28 So Jesus said, "When you have lifted up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am the one I claim to be and that I do nothing on my own but speak just what the Father has taught me. 29 The one who sent me is with me; he has not left me alone, for I always do what pleases him." 30 Even as he spoke, many put their faith in him.

v. 26 – Jesus was a faithful and reliable messenger, the one referred to in Proverbs:

Like the coolness of snow at harvest time is a trustworthy messenger to those who send him; he refreshes the spirit of his masters (Proverbs 25:13).

Are you a faithful messenger? Do you deliver the message that God has given you for those around you? Are you giving testimony and bearing witness to others of God’s goodness in your life?

v. 27 – The Jews did not understand that Jesus was talking about the Father, yet Jesus kept right on talking. That was His mission and that was what He had to do in obedience to the Father. **Can you be so faithful in the face of so much misunderstanding and dullness on the part of your target audience?**

v. 28 – Jesus made a reference to His death that was imminent, then only months away. Many more would see from that point forward the truth of His words and deeds. This

was an act of faith on Jesus' part, for He had to trust the results for His mission to the Father. He could not see the results from His ministry at that point in time, yet He remained faithful to the cause and call. **Can you be faithful and not focus on results but on your performance?** That is a difficult thing to do. Your results may not come until after you're gone!

I am writing these studies with such faith, for I have no idea of how God will use them. Yet I have written every day for the last eight years in faith and hope.

v. 29 – Jesus always did the things that pleased the Father and you and I have the same duty and privilege. Pleasing God is a theme that runs throughout the New Testament. Here are a few examples. Can you find more?

I have received full payment and even more; I am amply supplied, now that I have received from Epaphroditus the gifts you sent. They are a fragrant offering, an acceptable sacrifice, pleasing to God (Philippians 4:18).

But if a widow has children or grandchildren, these should learn first of all to put their religion into practice by caring for their own family and so repaying their parents and grandparents, for this is pleasing to God (1 Timothy 5:14).

{May God} equip you with everything good for doing his will, and may he work in us what is pleasing to him, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen (Hebrews 13:21).

v. 30 – As Jesus preached and taught, many put their faith in Him, just because of what He said. There is that dynamic of the Spirit bearing witness to the truth that I mentioned earlier. That is still the way that people come to faith in Christ: through His preached word.

How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them? And how can they preach unless they are sent? As it is written, "How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!" But not all the Israelites accepted the good news. For Isaiah says, "Lord, who has believed our message?" Consequently, faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word of Christ (Romans 10:14-17).

Are you preaching and teaching the Word? When and to whom? Are you discouraged with the results? If so, then encourage yourself today. The results are in God's hands and you can reap an abundant harvest if you don't give up.

A wicked messenger falls into trouble, but a trustworthy envoy brings healing (Proverbs 13:17).