

UPPER ROOM ADULT BIBLE STUDY

"The Gospel of John"

Pastor Jim Otte

Spring – Fall, 2019

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Lesson 34: John 7:40 - 8:11 "What You Think You Know Can Blind You!"

<sup>40</sup> When they heard these words, some of the people said, "This really is the Prophet." <sup>41</sup> Others said, "This is the Christ." But some said, "Is the Christ to come from Galilee? <sup>42</sup> Has not the Scripture said that the Christ comes from the offspring of David, and comes from Bethlehem, the village where David was?"

<sup>43</sup> So there was a division among the people over him. <sup>44</sup> Some of them wanted to arrest him, but no one laid hands on him.

- a. "really is the Prophet...This is the Christ" – Everyone knows that Jesus is special. But what is He, really? The prophet Elijah was supposed to be the forerunner of the Messiah coming. Maybe that is who He is. Or perhaps He is the Messiah!
- b. "So, there was a division among the people over Him." – ironically prophetic!

<sup>45</sup> The officers then came to the chief priests and Pharisees, who said to them, "Why did you not bring him?" <sup>46</sup> The officers answered, "No one ever spoke like this man!" <sup>47</sup> The Pharisees answered them, "Have you also been deceived?"

<sup>48</sup> Have any of the authorities or the Pharisees believed in him? <sup>49</sup> But this crowd that does not know the law is accursed." <sup>50</sup> Nicodemus, who had gone to him before, and who was one of them, said to them, <sup>51</sup> "Does our law judge a man without first giving him a hearing and learning what he does?" <sup>52</sup> They replied, "Are you from Galilee too? Search and see that no prophet arises from Galilee."

- a. "Why did you not bring Him?" – the arrest order had gone out from the Sanhedrin. Yet when the officers arrived back at the Council, Jesus was not with them.
- b. "Have you also been deceived?" – the temple guard had been so impressed with Jesus' words (not to mention the fact that the people visiting Jerusalem for the Feast were wondering if Jesus was the Messiah). The scribes and Pharisees raged that even the officers had been duped by Jesus. The evidence, in their minds, is that none of the religious elite have been converted.
- c. "But this crowd, that does not know the law, is accursed." – the scribes and the Pharisees react in a very prideful manner, looking down on those who have fallen for Jesus' spell. "This crowd" is literally "This rabble."
- d. "Nicodemus...Does our law judge a man without first giving him a hearing?" – In refutation of the claim, that none of the Sanhedrin has converted, Nicodemus courageously speaks up for Jesus' right to be treated fairly and with due process.
  - a. Exodus 23:1. "You shall not spread a false report. You shall not join hands with a wicked man to be a malicious witness."

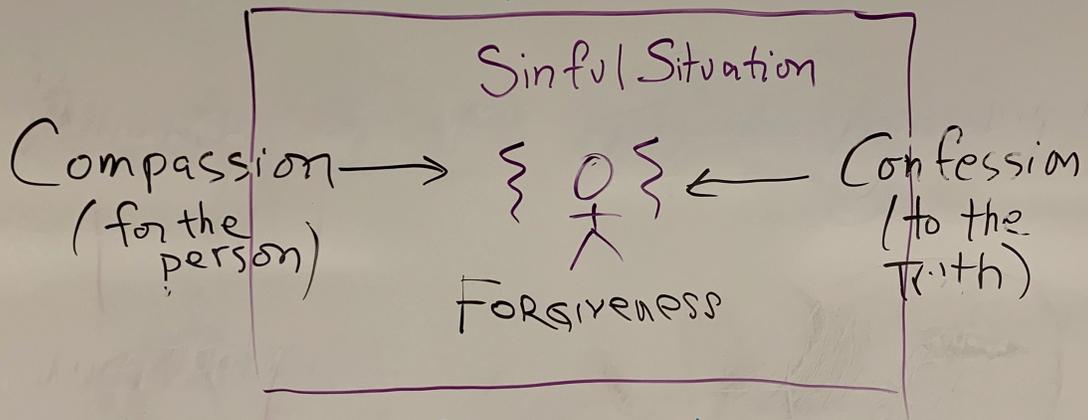
- b. **Deuteronomy 1:16.** *And I charged your judges at that time, 'Hear the cases between your brothers, and judge righteously between a man and his brother or the alien who is with him.*
- e. **"Are you from Galilee too? Search and see that no prophet..."** – In their blind rage, they turn on one of their own: Nicodemus, with an insulting remark about Galileans. They also misspeak regarding the prophets, namely Jonah, Nahum, and probably Hosea were, in fact, from Galilee.

<sup>1</sup> but Jesus went to the Mount of Olives. <sup>2</sup> Early in the morning he came again to the temple. All the people came to him, and he sat down and taught them. <sup>3</sup> The scribes and the Pharisees brought a woman who had been caught in adultery, and placing her in the midst <sup>4</sup> they said to him, "Teacher, this woman has been caught in the act of adultery. <sup>5</sup> Now in the Law, Moses commanded us to stone such women. So what do you say?" <sup>6</sup> 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. <sup>7</sup> 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." <sup>8</sup> And once more he bent down and wrote on the ground. <sup>9</sup> 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. <sup>10</sup> Jesus stood up and said to her, "Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?" <sup>11</sup> She said, "No one, Lord." And Jesus said, "Neither do I condemn you; go, and from now on sin no more."

- a. **"The scribes and Pharisees brought a woman who had been caught in adultery."** – On the heels of the Pharisees' failure to arrest Jesus, and stop Him from influencing the people away from them, they see an opportunity to make Jesus look bad in front of the people. In other words, they did not see in her a sinner in need of forgiveness; they used her as an object of scorn to get at Jesus.
- b. **"this woman has been caught in the act"** – presumably, the woman was publicly known to have sex with married men; or she herself was married. At any rate, to have "caught" in the act was more than coincidental.
- c. **"in the Law, Moses commanded us to stone such women."** – Technically, and to the letter of the Law, the scribes and Pharisees were correct! Having said that, notice that they only bring the woman, not her partner, before Jesus!
  - a. **Leviticus 20:10.** *If a man commits adultery with the wife of his neighbor, both the adulterer and the adulteress shall surely be put to death.*
  - b. **Deuteronomy 22:22-24.** *"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. <sup>23</sup> "If there is a betrothed virgin, and a man meets her in the city and lies with her, <sup>24</sup> 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.*
  - c. **The Mishnah (rabbinical teachings):** Death by stoning was the punishment for a girl, who was betrothed, and then commits adultery.

- d. **“So, what do you say? This they said to test Him...charge to bring against Him.”** – Their plot is to attempt to put Jesus into a ‘no-win’ situation.
- a. If Jesus agreed with them, that the woman should be stoned, His reputation as a man of mercy and grace would be seen as hypocritical. Also, He could be accused of sedition, for encouraging the death penalty, when that was reserved for the Roman courts.
  - b. If Jesus disagreed with them, He could justly be accused of ignoring God’s revealed Law, and perhaps, encouraging marital infidelity.
- e. **“wrote with His finger on the ground.”** – literally “katagraphein” = to write a record against someone. It’s possible that Jesus, knowing the hearts of the accusers, was writing of the sins of the those wanting to condemn her.
- f. **“Let him who is without sin among you be the first to throw...”** – “without sin” included both the act and the desire to sin. Jesus moves the confrontation, from an abstract argument over the letter of the law – to something more personal: the integrity of the one who is administering the letter of the law.
- g. **“they went away one by one, beginning with the older ones”** – the older ones immediately got Jesus’ point and were convicted by His accusation.
- h. **“Neither do I condemn you”** – Though the letter of God’s Law would have allowed for them to stone her, the obvious inequity in their judgment (i.e. not dragging the adulterous partner in front of Jesus) revealed their lack of integrity. Jesus would not condemn her, on the basis of their intent.
- i. **“Go, and from now on, sin no more.”** – However, He would not condone her sin, either! He called sin a “sin.” He had given her new life; now she should live the life of it.
- a. **Based on this story, how ought believers respond to ‘social sin,’ to which society/culture may turn a blind eye, but is still sinful in a Biblically conservative mindset?**
    - i. Jesus warns against your failure to judge others’ behavior without considering your own need for repentance and forgiveness.
    - ii. As Jesus protected the woman from an indignant mob, so ought we be willing to stand up for, and protect, those who cannot stand for themselves.
    - iii. Jesus responded to the accusers in a wise and non-violent manner.
    - iv. Jesus kept His focus on the spiritual state of the accusers and the woman being accused – with love for both!
    - v. Jesus called the sin a “sin,” regardless of the excuses which may have been part of the society’s justifications of her lifestyle.
      1. She might have been a widow, with no other means of financial support.
      2. She might have been victim of rape, and thereby shunned by family or neighbors.
      3. She might have been a foreigner, a captive, or a fugitive
      4. She might have been an orphan, growing up on the streets
    - vi. Jesus would have welcomed her into His fellowship; not condoning her sin, but loving her into living her new life.

"Love the LORD  
Your GOD..."



"Love Your Neighbor  
as (you love) yourself."