
CBC WEEKLY RESOURCES



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NOVEMBER 2, 2025
COMMUNITY BIBLE CHURCH
3645 Cashiers Rd, Highlands, NC 28741

I. SERMON RECAP

In his sermon, Pastor Gary explores the ancient and brutal practice of stoning, connecting it to an episode from the Bible where a woman caught in adultery is brought to Jesus by the Pharisees. He paints a vivid picture of the fear and vulnerability this woman must have felt, as her life hung in the balance due to the strictures of the Law of Moses. By referencing John 8:2-11, Pastor Gary illustrates Jesus' revolutionary approach to the situation. Despite the Pharisees' attempt to trap Him, Jesus demonstrates profound wisdom by inviting anyone without sin to cast the first stone, a challenge that ultimately disarms the crowd and leads to the woman's deliverance without condemnation.

Pastor Gary uses this scriptural account to address the human propensity to judge and condemn others, drawing a parallel to the stones we metaphorically carry and throw at each other today. He discusses how verbal and mental judgments can be as damaging as physical stones, urging the congregation to reflect on their own motives and actions. Through personal anecdotes and a candid admission of his own struggles with judgment, Pastor Gary encourages a pause, a "time-out", so to speak, to assess our willingness to forgive and love others as Jesus does.

The sermon culminates in the message of grace and redemption available through Christ. Pastor Gary emphasizes that while believers are freed from condemnation in Jesus, they must still maintain a sensitivity to sin, understanding its destructive potential in their relationship with God. He reminds the congregation that it is only through Christ that true love, joy, and peace can be found, and he invites those who have not yet accepted Christ to do so. The message concludes with an invitation to the Lord's table, open to all who believe in the grace and salvation offered by Jesus's sacrifice.

Chapters

Chapter 1: The Brutality of Stoning and the Woman Caught in Adultery

We examine the historical practice of stoning, and the story of the woman caught in adultery, exploring the intense moment when she faced death and Jesus intervened.

Chapter 2: The Timeout: Jesus Writes in the Dirt

We discover the significance of Jesus pausing to write on the ground, creating space for reflection and challenging those without sin to cast the first stone.

Chapter 3: Dropping Our Rocks: The Weight of Judgment

We confront our own practice of throwing verbal and mental stones at others, recognizing the weight and destructiveness of carrying judgment in our hearts and words.

Chapter 4: No Condemnation, But Leave Your Life of Sin

We learn the balance between receiving Christ's freedom from condemnation while maintaining sensitivity to the destructiveness of sin in our relationship with God.

Chapter 5: The Table of Freedom and the Call to Belief

We are invited to the Lord's table where we remember that Christ took our condemnation, offering us complete freedom, grace, and the source of all true life.

II. STUDY GUIDE

Key Points:

The historical and contemporary practice of stoning represents humanity's harshest judgment and condemnation

We carry "verbal stones" in modern culture, throwing judgment at others through words, thoughts, and attitudes

Jesus calls a "timeout" in the crisis, modeling the need for reflection before judgment

The challenge "let any one of you who is without sin be the first to throw a stone" exposes universal human sinfulness

Adultery typically stems from emotional needs for significance, understanding, and meaning rather than physical desires

Obedience to God flows from love, not mere duty or respect for authority

The world's pattern encourages throwing stones; Christians are called to resist this conformity

Mental and verbal stones can be as destructive as physical ones, killing spirits and relationships

"Neither do I condemn you" demonstrates grace, while "go and leave your life of sin" maintains sensitivity to sin's destructiveness

Jesus becomes the recipient of violence on behalf of sinners, absorbing condemnation at the cross

The law of the Spirit (love) sets us free from the law of sin and death

Rejecting Christ means rejecting the source of love, grace, mercy, joy, and all spiritual fruit

Communion represents the broken body and shed blood that purchases our freedom from condemnation

Key Scripture:

John 8:2-11 At dawn he appeared again in the temple courts, where all the people gathered around him, and he sat down to teach them. 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 women. Now what do you say?" 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. When they kept on questioning him, he straightened up and said to them, "Let any one of you who is without sin be the first to throw a stone at her." Again, he stooped down and wrote on the ground. 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. 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."

Matthew 7:1-2 "Do not judge, or you too will be judged. For in the same way you judge others, you will be judged, and with the measure you use, it will be measured to you.

Romans 8:1-2 Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit who gives life has set you free from the law of sin and death.

Romans 3:23 for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,

Romans 6:23 For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Psalms 139:23-24 Search me, God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.

Matthew 28:18-20 Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

Galatians 5:22-23 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law.

Other Scriptural References:

Alluded To:

2 Samuel 11-12 - King David's adultery and murder (mentioned in the sermon)

Acts 7:58-60 - Stephen's stoning near Damascus Gate

Matthew 10:32 - "Confess me before men and I'll confess you before my Father"

Luke 6:45 - "Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks"

Matthew 7:3-5 - Remove the plank in one's own eye

Romans 12:2 - "Do not conform to the pattern of this world"

1 Corinthians 11:23-26 - Institution of the Lord's Supper (referenced in communion section)

Relevant Verses for Main Themes:

James 1:19 - "Be quick to listen, slow to speak, slow to anger" (theme of reflection before speaking)

Ephesians 4:29 - Wholesome speech (theme of verbal abuse)

John 14:15 - "If you love me, keep my commands" (love and obedience connection)

1 John 4:8 - "God is love" (theme of God as source of love)

III. DEVOTIONAL MATERIAL

Day 1: The Weight We Carry

Question: In what ways do we carry 'verbal stones' in our daily lives, and how might we be participating in a form of spiritual stoning without realizing it?

Reading: Matthew 7:1-5

Devotional: We walk through life carrying stones we never intended to pick up: judgments, criticisms, and condemnations aimed at others. Jesus confronts this tendency directly: "Do not judge, or you too will be judged." Before we examine the speck in another's eye, we must acknowledge the plank in our own. Today, consider what stones you're carrying. Are there mental rocks you've hurled at others? Verbal stones thrown in moments of frustration? The weight of judgment exhausts us spiritually, making us weak rather than strong. Christ invites us to lay down these burdens. Examine your heart honestly.

Where have you been quick to condemn? The freedom Christ offers begins when we release our grip on the stones we've been holding, recognizing we, too, are sinners in need of grace.

Day 2: The Pause That Transforms

Question: Why do you think Jesus called a 'timeout' by writing in the dirt, and what does this teach us about responding to crises in our own lives?

Reading: John 8:2-11

Devotional: In the chaos of accusation, Jesus does something remarkable. He pauses. He writes in the dirt, creating sacred space for reflection. This timeout isn't confusion, it's compassion. How often do we rush to judgment without pausing to consider our own hearts? In our relationships, especially in conflict, we need these pregnant pauses. Before responding in anger, before launching criticism, before cementing our opinions about others, we need to stop and write in the dirt. Use these moments to ask: What is my motivation? Am I speaking from arrogance or ignorance? Am I building bridges or walls?

The power of the pause allows the Holy Spirit to redirect our hearts from condemnation to compassion. Today, practice the sacred timeout. When tempted to judge, pause and let God search your heart first.

Day 3: Love and Obedience

Question: How does the connection between love and obedience challenge your understanding of following Christ, especially when compared to simply following rules?

Reading: John 14:15-24

Devotional: "If you love me, you will obey what I command." Love and obedience are inseparable in the Christian life. This woman caught in adultery sought significance and connection in the wrong place, a reality many of us understand. We often pursue fulfillment apart from Christ, only to find emptiness. True obedience to God's ways flows from love, not mere duty or fear. When love wanes, so does our covenant

commitment, whether in marriage or our walk with Christ. Don't attempt to live the Christian life apart from loving Jesus and His love. It's impossible and was never meant to be that way. Today, reflect on your motivations.

Are you obeying from obligation or from love? Ask God to deepen your love for Him, knowing that genuine obedience springs from a heart captivated by His grace.

Day 4: No Condemnation

Question: Jesus told the woman to 'go and leave your life of sin' after declaring no condemnation. How do we balance receiving grace while maintaining sensitivity to the destructiveness of sin?

Reading: Romans 8:1-4

Devotional: "Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus." These words should wash over us like healing water. The woman stood moments from death, surrounded by accusers, yet Jesus declared, "Neither do I condemn you." This is the gospel's power, complete freedom from condemnation. But notice Jesus adds, "Go and leave your life of sin." Grace doesn't minimize sin's destructiveness; it empowers us to walk away from it. We must maintain sensitivity to sin while resting in the assurance of no condemnation. This balance is crucial. Sin still damages intimacy with God, still has consequences, but it no longer defines us. The law of the Spirit, love, conquers what we cannot fulfill through effort alone.

Today, receive afresh the truth: you are not condemned. Then ask God to help you preserve sensitivity to anything that distances you from His presence.

Day 5: Search Me, O God

Question: How might the practice of praying 'Search me, O God, and know my heart' transform the way we approach conflict and disagreement with others?

Reading: Psalm 139:23-24

Devotional: "Search me, O God, and know my heart." What vulnerability! What courage! David invites divine examination of his deepest places, the basement, the crawl spaces of his soul. This prayer feels lighter than carrying stones of judgment. When we open ourselves completely to God's searching light, we move from contest to communion, from hiding to healing. We're not concealing sin but inviting cleansing. This posture transforms us. Instead of judging others, we judge our own approach, our motivations, our effectiveness at loving people despite disagreements. We build bridges rather than launching rocks at those we've never met, harboring resentment toward people based on secondhand opinions.

Today, make this your prayer: "Search me, God. Try me. See if there be any wicked way in me and lead me in the way everlasting." Let Him have complete access. His searching brings freedom, not condemnation.

IV. SMALL GROUP RESOURCES

Small Group Guide: "Drop the Stone"

Based on John 8:2-11

Opening Prayer

Icebreaker Question

What's something you've changed your mind about as you've grown older? What helped you see things differently?

Scripture Reading

Have someone read John 8:2-11 aloud. Then take a moment of silence to reflect on the passage.

Key Takeaways from the Sermon

The Power of the Pause - Jesus called a "timeout" in the midst of crisis, creating space for reflection rather than reaction.

We All Carry Stones - While we may not physically stone people, we carry verbal and mental "rocks" we're ready to throw at others through judgment, gossip, and criticism.

Love Enables Obedience - Our ability to follow Christ flows from love, not merely duty or fear of consequences.

No Condemnation, But Sin Still Matters - Jesus offers complete forgiveness without condemnation, yet we must maintain sensitivity to how sin damages our relationship with God and others.

The Violence Jesus Absorbed - Jesus positioned himself to receive the violence intended for the woman, foreshadowing the cross where he would take our condemnation.

Discussion Questions

Understanding the Text

Why do you think Jesus wrote on the ground twice during this confrontation? What purpose did those pauses serve?

The religious leaders caught the woman "in the act" of adultery. What's conspicuously missing from this story? What does that tell us about their true motivations?

Jesus said, "let anyone of you who is without sin be the first to throw a stone." Why do you think the oldest left first? What might that suggest about age and wisdom?

Personal Reflection

The pastor asked: "Do I walk around with rocks in my hand?" Be honest—what "stones" do you tend to carry? Are they:

- Mental judgments?
- Verbal criticisms?
- Gossip or talking behind people's backs?
- Predetermined biases about certain people or groups?

Have you ever been on the receiving end of someone's "stones," their harsh judgment, or verbal abuse? How did it affect you? How did you respond?

- The sermon mentioned that adultery often stems from a need to be heard, understood, or feel significant. What does this reveal about the deeper issues behind visible sin? How might this change how we approach people struggling with sin?

Going Deeper

"Love and obedience go together." How have you experienced this in your relationship with Christ? When have you tried to obey without love? What was the result?

Jesus told the woman, "Go now and leave your life of sin." How do we balance:

- Complete forgiveness and no condemnation
- With maintaining sensitivity to the destructiveness of sin?
- Why are both important?

Pastor Gary said: "To reject Christ is to reject love, grace, mercy, forgiveness, compassion, and joy."

- Do you agree? How have you seen people try to find these things apart from Christ? What was the outcome?

Read Psalm 139:23-24 together. What does it mean to pray "Search me, O God" instead of searching others for their faults? Why is this so difficult?

Practical Application

This Week's Challenge: The Rock Exercise

Option 1: Physical Reminder

- Find a small rock and carry it with you this week (in your pocket, purse, or car)
- Each time you notice it, ask yourself: "Am I carrying judgment toward someone right now?"
- When you catch yourself about to throw a "verbal stone," pause like Jesus did

Option 2: The Pause Practice

- Before responding to something that triggers judgment or criticism, practice a 10-second pause
- Use that time to ask: "Am I without sin in this area?"
- Consider whether your response will build a bridge or throw a stone

Option 3: Psalm 139 Prayer

- Pray Psalm 139:23-24 each morning this week
- Keep a journal of what God reveals about your own heart
- Focus on your own areas of growth rather than others' failures

Reflection Questions for the Week

- Who am I most tempted to throw stones at? (Family member, political opponent, coworker, neighbor, people group?)
- What would it look like for me to "put down the rock" in that relationship?
- Where do I need to receive Jesus' words: "Neither do I condemn you"?
- What sin do I need to be more sensitive about in my own life?

Prayer Focus

Pray for one another in these areas:

- **Confession:** Ask God to reveal the stones we're carrying
- **Humility:** To recognize our own sin before judging others
- **Grace:** To extend the same mercy we've received from Christ
- **Sensitivity:** To maintain awareness of sin's destructiveness without falling into condemnation
- **Love:** To genuinely love those, we disagree with or find difficult

Closing Exercise

Go around the circle and have each person complete this sentence:

"This week, I'm putting down the stone of _____ and instead choosing to _____."

Close in prayer, asking God to help each person follow through on their commitment.

For Further Study

Romans 8:1-4 - No condemnation for those in Christ Jesus

Matthew 7:1-5 - The plank and the speck

James 1:19-20 - Quick to listen, slow to speak, slow to anger

Ephesians 4:29-32 - Building others up vs. tearing down

1 Corinthians 13:4-7 - What love actually looks like in practice

Leader Notes

- This topic may bring up painful memories of judgment received or given. Create a safe, non-judgmental space.
- Be prepared for people to get defensive. Model vulnerability by sharing your own struggles with judgment first.
- Emphasize that Jesus' grace doesn't minimize sin—it deals with it completely while freeing us from condemnation.
- If someone shares about being verbally or physically abused, validate their experience and offer to connect them with appropriate resources.
- The goal isn't guilt but transformation—moving from judgment to grace-filled truth.

V. ANNOUNCEMENTS

AS OF MONDAY, 11/3, THERE IS STILL NO WATER AT THE CHURCH.

Wednesday night activities are still on, including part two of Critical Conversations as well as Youth and Kids programs. Sunday is also not affected, **with or without** water. **PORTA-POTTIES ARE AVAILABLE FOR USE OUTSIDE THE CHURCH.**

IF YOU OR YOUR CHILD IS UNABLE TO USE ONE, PLEASE TALK TO A STAFF MEMBER FOR ACCOMMODATIONS

Operation Christmas Child is taking place this month. Get a shoebox in the back of the sanctuary, fill it, and return it **by November 23rd**.

Music and Mistletoe is happening again this year. It will be hosted at Five Apple Farm again this year.

For more information, or to register, for anything mentioned today email Info@cbchighlands.com or call the church office at (828)526-4685 Monday through Thursday.