

People Jesus Met, part 39 – The Woman Taken in Adultery (Judging Others)

God puts things in the Bible not for us to paint about, but to teach us spiritual truths that will change our everyday lives.

#1 – The overwhelming majority of ancient New Testament manuscripts do contain John 8:1-11

#2 – We have writings from church fathers before the 4th century A.D. that quote from John 8:1-11

I can assure you that John 8:1-11 belongs in every copy of the New Testament!

“Then Jesus went to the Mount of Olives. And early the next morning, Jesus came again into the Temple courts and all the people gathered around Him. And He sat down and began to teach them.” John 8:1, 2

“Then the scribes and Pharisees brought in a woman caught in adultery and they made her stand in the middle of the group.” John 8:3

“And they said to Jesus, ‘Teacher, this woman was caught in adultery, in the very act.’” John 8:4

Questions:

#1 – How did these rabbis catch this woman “in the very act” of adultery?

#2 – Where was the man who had been with her?

#3 – Where had this woman been all night?

Answers:

#1 – The rabbis had obviously set this woman up

#2 – The rabbis had let the man involved go free

#3 – The rabbis had clearly kept this woman in custody all night waiting for Jesus to show up in the morning

These rabbis were not interested in justice – they were interested in trying to trap Jesus.

“‘Now in the Old Testament Law,’ they said, ‘Moses commanded us to stone such women, but what do you say?’” John 8:5

“The rabbis were using this question as a trap in order that they might have grounds to accuse Jesus.” John 8:6a

If Jesus said, “No” – they could accuse Him of denying the Old Testament Law (which would obviously mean He was not the Messiah).

If Jesus said, “Yes” – they could accuse Him of treason against the Roman government (which had forbidden the Jews to impose the death penalty on anyone).

“But Jesus stooped down and started writing on the ground with His finger.” John 8:6b

What matters is not what Jesus wrote – but what He was about to say.

“But when the rabbis kept pressing Jesus for an answer, Jesus straightened up . . .” John 8:7a

“And Jesus said to them, ‘Let Him who is without sin cast the first stone at her.’ Then He stooped down again and wrote on the ground.” John 8:7b, 8

Jesus had entrapped these rabbis in their own scheme.

“And when they heard this, they were convicted by their own consciences, and one by one, they began to go away, beginning with the oldest even to the youngest, until only Jesus was left, with the woman still standing there.” John 8:9

“The only person left now is the one person who really is qualified to cast the first stone – the sinless Son of God.” Augustine

“Then Jesus stood up straight and said to her, Woman, where are your accusers? Has no one condemned you?” John 8:10

“And she said, ‘No one, Lord.’ Then Jesus said ‘Neither do I condemn you. Go and sin no more.’” John 8:11

#1 – Jesus did not pronounce this woman “innocent” – He pronounced her “guilty but forgiven.”

#2 – Jesus did not condone this woman’s sinful behavior – He showed her mercy and called her to begin a new life of obedience to God.

So What?

Question: “What was the main point that Jesus wanted to drive home to these rabbis in John 8?”

Answer: “You guys are in no position to judge, condemn or find fault with this woman.”

Our issue for today = the judgmental spirit we all have which causes us to ruthlessly judge and condemn other people (just like these rabbis in John 8).

Not talking about:

#1 – Our passing judgment on people’s theological teachings

“Dear friends, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world.” 1 John 4:1

Not talking about:

#2 – Governments passing judgment on people’s illegal/criminal actions

Talking about:

Making personal judgments about other people’s actions and motives . . .

- Then condemning them in our hearts*
- And slandering them with our mouths*
- This is a deep-seated blemish that affects every member of the human race.*

“Do not judge others lest you be judged yourselves.” Matthew 7:1

Jesus is talking about this tendency to make personal judgments about other people . . .

- Not just disagreeing with them on issues*
- But passing judgment on their character, motives and intentions*

#1 – Because things are often not what they seem

Because things are often not what they seem, we need to be so careful about judging other people’s motives and actions.

#2 – Because only God knows what is really in a person’s heart

“Man looks on the outward appearance, but the LORD looks on the heart.” 1 Samuel 16:7

“I, the LORD, search the heart and test the mind.” Jeremiah 17:10

Only God is capable of judging the human heart and we would be wise to stay off His turf!

#3 – Because judging others causes lots of hurt

Most of the hurt we have suffered in our lives – and caused in our lives – has flowed from the same evil source: judging others!

#4 – Because judging others exposes us to harsher treatment by God

“For in the same way you judge others, you will be judged (i.e., by God); and by your standard of measure, it shall be measured to you.” Matthew 7:2

Here in Matthew 7:2, Jesus warns us that, when it comes to our treatment and judgment of other people, He expects us to show them the same mercy that God so graciously shows us.

#1 – Things are not often what they appear

#2 – People’s hearts are so complex that only God is able to judge them correctly

#3 – We always hurt people when we start judging people’s hearts

#4 – Judging others exposes us to harsher by God

“Why do you look at the speck that is in your brother’s eye and ignore the log that is in your own eye?” Matthew 7:3

“Or how can you say to your brother, ‘Let me take the speck out of your eye,’ when all the time, there is a log in your own eye?” Matthew 7:4

“You hypocrite, first take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly enough to take the speck out of your brother’s eye.” Matthew 7:5

Jesus: “If you want to do less judging of other people, then do more judging of yourself.”

“Search me, O God, and know my heart; and see if there be any wicked way in me.” Psalm 139:23

The more honest I get about judging myself and my sin, the kinder I get about judging other people’s faults and their sin.

“You, then, why do you judge your brother? Or why do you despise your brother? . . . For each of us shall give an account of himself to God.” Romans 14:10, 12

If we would expend the same amount of energy working on our own faults as we do criticizing the faults of others – the world would be a much better place!