

John 7:53-8:11

CG Discussion Guide// Week of March 5, 2023

INTRODUCTION

- Icebreaker: What is your least favorite candy and why?
- Take some time to pray for one another's needs and requests (refer to Prayer Guide as needed)
- Pray for Harbor Network sister church: Grace Hill Church, Buena Park, CA (Pastor: Thomas Hwang)
- Choose discussion questions, prayer guide, or abide time questions depending on your group's needs

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- Disclaimer: With the textual debate surrounding this passage, explanatory notes for John 7:53-8:11 are provided on the next page.
 - Even though there is much debate on the canonicity/authenticity of the passage and whether it is original to the gospel of John, what is not debated is whether the representation of Jesus in this passage, His words, character, and actions in the story cohere with the rest of the Scriptural witness. ***In fact, what we see of Jesus and what hear from Him in this passage lines up very well with what we know of Jesus from the rest of the New Testament.*** With that in mind, we can still helpfully discuss the passage without delving deeply into the debate.
- The Pharisees tried to entrap Jesus with this seemingly thorny case of adultery, asking Jesus whether or not to render a verdict of capital punishment on a woman caught in the act of adultery. What would be the trap here?
 - Judging from passages like Deuteronomy 22:22 and Leviticus 20:10, is the Pharisees' case up to snuff? What does it reveal about the Pharisees?
- Much ink over the centuries have been spilt over Jesus' non-verbal response of writing on the ground with His finger: "WHAT DID HE WRITE?". Why not join in the fun and speculate!
 - Per St. Augustine, what is not usually discussed is the significance of Him writing with His finger in front of experts of the Law and Pharisees. Who else in the Scriptures wrote with His finger in conjunction with the Law? What could Jesus be hinting here?
- Jesus' final response to the Pharisees is unforgettable: "Let he who is without sin among you be the first to throw the stone at her." The Pharisees drop their case and leave the woman with Jesus. What are your thoughts on Jesus' final response and the Pharisees dropping the issue?
 - Judging from Deuteronomy 17:7 and the requirements for capital punishment there, what does it imply that the mob didn't stone the woman?
- What do you make of Jesus' compassion towards the woman (similar to Luke 7:36-50) and His encouragement to her to live a life of holiness from that moment on (similar to John 5:14)?
 - How do we experience (or how have you experienced) the compassion of Jesus and His call for us to be holy in our day-to-day lives today?

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- Explanatory notes:
 - Notes on this passage from ESV Study Bible: “There is considerable doubt that this story is part of John’s original Gospel, for it is absent from all of the oldest manuscripts. But there is nothing in it unworthy of sound doctrine. It seems best to view the story as something that probably happened during Jesus’ ministry but that was not originally part of what John wrote in his Gospel. Therefore it should not be considered as part of Scripture and should not be used as the basis for building any point of doctrine unless confirmed in Scripture.”
 - Excerpt from John Piper’s sermon on the text, regarding the evidence on why this passage is considered not original to John by the majority of even evangelical scholars:
(sermon in full: <https://www.desiringgod.org/messages/neither-do-i-condemn-you--3>)
 - The story is missing from all the Greek manuscripts of John before the fifth century.
 - All the earliest church fathers omit this passage in commenting on John and pass directly from John 7:52 to John 8:12.
 - In fact, the text flows very nicely from 7:53 to 8:12 if you leave out the story and just read the passage as though the story were not there.
 - No Eastern church father cites the passage before the tenth century when dealing with this Gospel.
 - When the story starts to appear in manuscript copies of the Gospel of John, it shows up in three different places other than here (after John 7:36; 7:44; 21:25), and in one manuscript of Luke, it shows up after 21:38.
 - Its style and vocabulary is more unlike the rest of John’s Gospel than any other paragraph in the Gospel.
 - Dr. William F. Cook, professor of New Testament Interpretation at the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary: “Despite the doubt of the authenticity of the passage it illustrates truths found elsewhere in the Gospel. Jesus’ heart for sinners to repent and turn to God is clearly evident in this passage and throughout John’s Gospel....Jesus’ words to the woman sound very much like His admonition to the lame man to sin no more. Jesus’ compassion should not be misunderstood as His excusing sin. While He did not condemn her, He did make it clear that her lifestyle was sinful and called her to turn away from it. While we are left in the dark as to how the woman responded to Christ’s words, many people throughout the ages who have been trapped by sin have found this story to give them hope. While the authenticity of the passage is debated, the story illustrates the message of the gospel: in Christ new life is possible. On the other hand, we are reminded by the religious leaders that living according to the law without God’s grace in the heart leads to hypocrisy and condemnation.”
 - For further reading:
<https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/themelios/article/text-criticism-and-the-pulpit-should-one-p-reach-about-the-woman-caught-in-adultery/>

Abide Time: Psalm 40

- Due to the debates on John 7:53-8:11, this week's Abide passage will be from Ps. 40, which hits on similar themes from our passages this week.
- What realities are you facing this week? What is occupying your thoughts? How do you feel?
- Read the passage and let God speak to you in you reality through his Word. Write down your reflections as God shepherds you:
 - What does the text say is true about God and his character?
 - What does it say about the world around you?
- How do your reflections above speak to your reality?
- What did you experience in your heart and soul as God spoke to you and your reality?
- What did you experience in your body, given your reflections and what you experienced in your heart and soul?
- How is God inviting you to live differently?
- What does all of what you shared above say about God and his relationship with you?

WEEKLY PRAYER GUIDE

The Bible promises that anything we ask for in Jesus' name – that is according to His will – shall be granted to us (John 14:13-14). In view of this great promise, the prayer requests are all grounded in Scripture. When we pray Scripture, we can be certain that we are praying according to God's will.

That does not mean God will grant our requests in our preferred time or according to our frail wisdom; but it does mean that we can pray confidently knowing that God delights to answer these requests, for they are His words.

Use the accompanying Scripture verses to shape and inform your prayers.

PRAY FOR YOURSELF & YOUR FAMILY:

- That your daily life will bring honor to the name of Jesus – (2 Thess. 1:11-12)
- That you will cast all of your anxieties on God – (1 Peter 5:6-7)
- That you will consider your trials as an opportunity for joy – (James 1:2-4)

PRAY FOR OUR CHURCH:

- That the power of Christ will rest on our church and ministries [Worship Gathering, Community Groups, Men/Women, Youth, Children, etc.] – (2 Cor. 12:9-10)
- That God will give us the wisdom and faith that we desperately need to continue in faithful mission – (James 1:5-8)
- That God will make us fruitful in ministry – (John 15:1-2) – and bold in witness – (Eph. 6:18-20)

PRAY FOR OUR CITY:

- That God will give wisdom to our government (local, state, and national) that we may lead peaceful, godly lives – (1 Timothy 2:1-2)
- That the Lord will continue to provide open doors of gospel ministry in IU and the Bloomington community – (1 Corinthians 16:9)
- That the work of God will be displayed in the lives of the members of our sister churches – (John 9:3)

PRAY FOR OUR WORLD:

- That the persecuted church will find fellowship with Jesus as they share in his sufferings – (Philippians 3:10-11)
- That the Lord of the harvest will send out more workers to unreached people groups because they have been gripped by Paul's missionary logic in Romans 10:13-17 – (Matthew 9:37-38)
- That Christ will return bringing the fullness of salvation with him – (Revelation 22:20)

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

- March 24-25: Gospel Culture Conference with Drew Hunter
- March 26: Child + Family Dedication and Redeemer-in-10
- April 1: Membership Class
- April 2: Palm Sunday
- April 5: Redeemer Women
- April 7: Good Friday Service
- April 8: Easter Egg Hunt
- April 9: Easter Sunday

Reminder: All events are listed in the Events tab in our Redeemer app. You can RSVP for specific events by going to the Events tab, clicking on an event, and following the link to register.