Lesson 9 [Chapter 8]”Drop the stone”

Remember:

Last lesson, we looked at John chapter 7, where Jesus went to Jerusalem for the Feast of Tabernacles despite threats on His life. We saw how He taught openly in the Temple, declared Himself as the source of living water.

Lesson Goal:

Jesus is our Savior. The chapter opens with stones raised against a sinful woman, yet it ends with stones lifted against Jesus Himself—the One who took our place and bore our sins.

Lesson opener:

Have you ever made a trap, perhaps to trick a friend, or catch an animal?

Here is an example: “A little boy once set a trap for his sister as a joke. He carefully balanced a cup of juice on the top of a slightly open door. He called his sister into the room so that when the door was pushed open the water would fall on her head. His trap worked flawlessly, except for one thing. It was not his sister that entered at the door; it was his mom! As you can guess, this story did not have a very happy ending.”)

Today we are going to read how the Jews tried to trap Jesus.

Lesson Body:



The Adulterous Woman 8:1-12

The scribes and the Pharisees brought to the Lord Jesus Christ a woman who had been caught in the act of adultery. They asked whether He would condemn her. They pointed out that, according to the Law of Moses she was to be stoned to death. They asked Him what He said about it. If Jesus does not condemn this woman to death under Mosaic Law, the Pharisees will condemn Jesus to the people as a false Messiah.

However, if He condemns her to death, they can report Him into the Roman authorities as a traitor to Rome because He fostered rebellion by taking Roman powers unto Himself.

The man who was with her should be condemned too if they really care about following the law but all what they really wanted was to trap Jesus.

The Lord did not oppose the sentence stated in the law. However, He inquired to expose the accusers' hypocrisy, and moral condition, He said: “He who is without sin among you, let him throw a stone at her first,” 8:7.

Jesus skillfully removed Himself from the Pharisees' trap while placing the accusers in a trap by exposing them. No one knows what Jesus was writing.

The oldest one among them was the first to leave the place, and then the others followed him out. In the meantime, the Lord kept writing on the ground. The adulterous woman was the only one left standing before the Judge of the whole world. He had not come to condemn, but He had come to save. Therefore, the Lord asked her not to return to sin again. He alone had the right to condemn her. However, He opens the door of hope to sinners so that they might repent. He offers Himself as the Liberator of the soul, for He is the Divine Truth.

He condemns the sin, but He has given the woman the chance to repent her sin just as He gives us all the same mercy.

Verse 12:

“I am the light of the world…” [12]. ➔ Without Him everyone would remain in darkness, despair, and death. The Pharisees challenged His words because by saying that, the Lord was indicating that He is the awaited Messiah, since the prophets had used the symbol of light when they spoke of Him.

Jesus Defends His Self-Witness 8:13-20

“You bear witness of yourself; your witness is not true” [13].

When the Pharisees challenged Jesus' statement, "I am the light of the world," He affirmed three facts:

1. First: His divine identity. He came from the Father and is returning to Him.
2. Secondly: their inability to judge Him because they lacked spiritual understanding
3. Thirdly: His testimony for Himself is confirmed by the testimony of the Father for Him.

"You judge according to the flesh, I judge no one."[15]

Jesus explained that the Pharisees judged Him according to the flesh, seeing Him merely as a man rather than recognizing Him as the divine Word and promised Messiah. His teachings, miracles, and coming Cross testified to His identity.

"I am one who bears witness of Myself, and the Father who sent Me bears witness of Me"[18].

He also emphasized that He and the Father work together in perfect unity, sharing one divine essence. The Father bears witness to the Son, and rejecting the Son is also rejecting the Father who sent Him.

The Lord says: "you cannot know the Father without Me." For he who blasphemes against the Son, does not do so against Him alone, but also against the One from whom He comes. St. John Chrysostom.

Didn't Jesus say in 7:28 that they know Him, now in verse 8:19, He says you don't know me, is there a conflict?

No contradiction, both refer to different things. In John 7, Jesus refers to His human identity and earthly origins, which the people knew, He was born in Bethlehem from St. Mary. As for the saying: "you know neither Me nor my Father" 8:19. He refers to His divinity, which they failed to recognize, and therefore they did not truly know Him or the Father.

Jesus Predicts His Departure 8:21-30

The Doom of Unbelievers:

Here, the Lord tells them that He was going to leave, that in leaving them they would die in their sin rather than have life. If they seek the help of the Messiah whom they have rejected and crucified, He will not be found according to their whims.

"…where I go you cannot come"[22], because when someone dies in sin, he/she cannot go to the place where the Lord Jesus Christ reigns.

They misunderstood His words about His departure.

They must make a decision about Him before it is too late. Jesus issues a warning to unbelievers. Their denial will propel them to eternal suffering. The warnings He directs to unbelievers are terrifying since there would be no time to repent.

Jesus told His apostles "…I chose you out of the world" (John 15:19). Therefore, those who were from beneath [earthly] were transformed into persons who were not from beneath. They began to belong to the Lord Jesus Christ who created the world. As for those (the Jews) who continued to be from beneath, they were told that "…(they) will die in (their) sin"

Jesus has clearly asserted His divinity with the reference to Himself as "I AM" in verse 24. That is why they sought to kill Him.

Verse 25: It is as though the Lord was telling them: "You are totally unqualified to hear My words or even learn who I am. For everything you say is with the purpose of testing Me, and you have not considered anything of My teachings. I could use all these matters as testimonies against you." This is the implication of this verse.

It is only when "He is lifted up on the cross" they will realize that they have crucified the Lord of Glory. This reality will be revealed to them because of the signs that will occur during and after His crucifixion, as well as at His resurrection after that.

"…I do nothing of myself…" [28]. What does this mean? That I am not alone for the Son is God and He proceeds from the Father.

The Truth Shall Make You Free 8:31-36

A person who knows the truth and abides in it, who knows the Lord Jesus Christ and embraces Him- becomes liberated from the slavery of sin.

They considered His invitation to enjoy freedom an insult to them. For they were the children of Abraham who was free. But this is not true.

Were they not slaves to the Egyptians and liberated by Moses? Had they not been enslaved several times by neighboring nations in the era of the Judges? Were they not in bondage in Babel for seventy years? And finally, were they not paying taxes to the Roman Caesar?

Jesus was not seeking to reveal that they were slaves to people; but that they were slaves to sin. This is a dangerous slavery, and no one can liberate them from that except God alone.

Who would not tremble before these words? May our Lord and God grant us-you and I- to speak properly about such freedom. May we seek it and avoid such bondage.

Abraham's Seed 8:37-59

It is good for the Jews to boast that they are descendants of Abraham, but why have they not followed in the spirit of their father in his faith and obedience to God? Why did they not confirm their lineage through their deeds rather than seeking to kill the Lord Jesus Christ?

The Jews realized that the Lord was not talking about their physical lineage from Abraham. They knew He was referring to their deeds.

Claiming Abraham as their father means they should imitate Abraham's faith, righteousness, and obedience to God. Although they claimed to be God's children and denied being guilty of fornication or idolatry, their rejection of Christ revealed that they were not following the spiritual example of Abraham.

By resisting and seeking to kill the Lord Jesus Christ, they demonstrated that their actions contradicted their claim to be true children of God.

Verse 51: Here the Lord Jesus Christ offers eternal life and victory over death to those who keep His word: physical death cannot dominate the soul of a true believer.

Abraham and the prophets had died. However, their death was not the kind of death that the Lord wished them to understand. These had died and yet were alive. Whereas those seeking to kill Him were dead [in sin]; even though they believed they were alive.

Verse 56: "My day' refers to the day of the Crucifixion which Abraham saw in the symbol and offering of the lamb and Isaac.

"…before he was (Abraham was created, was made) I AM." 'I AM' refers to the Divine Essence. The Lord did not say 'Before Abraham was created, I was created' in order to allow us to distinguish between the Creator and the created. Before Abraham, He always existed.

Lesson Delivery Idea:

It's time to drop the stones:

I imagine the sense of urgency and the heightened emotions of the crowd swarming in on Jesus as He taught in the temple. They put this woman in front of the crowd. The Pharisees used her as an item, an object, a thing to entrap Jesus.

Notice Jesus's response. He stooped down. He said nothing. He didn't ask for more information. He didn't put His hands up, palms out, and say, "Whoa, slow down. I need more information." Nor did He begin preaching hellfire and brimstone. We expect Him to talk, to say something, anything! The Pharisees kept badgering Him with questions, and finally Jesus stood up, only to deliver His legendary line, "Let any of you who is without sin

be the first to throw a stone at her" (v. 7). Immediately, Jesus stooped down again and continued writing until every accuser had left.

Using social media to make disciples means, **it's time to drop stones**. Technology is about relationships. Build friendships with people and let the truth be spoken in appropriate forms of love and gentleness between you and them. Let us learn 3 points from Jesus:

1. Slow to be provoked:
   Too often we allow a group's emotions to become our own in heated situations. We can learn a lot from Jesus's silence. This was no emergency. Jesus models the humility and self-control of a leader who is quick to listen, slow to answer.
   Just as Jesus paused before answering His critics, pause before posting a status or replying to someone who disagrees with you. Will what you post build trust? Will it shine a light or make a lot of noise?
2. Jesus dealt respectfully with both parties and had a different response to the crowd than the woman because He knew them. He only used words that were helpful to the situation. With the woman, He confronted her sin one-on-one not publicly. If you need to confront someone, do it in person, a phone call, or Zoom, and only if you have the relationship and it is done through prayer.
3. Neither Do I Condemn You:

   Imagine the sounds of stones beginning to drop onto the tiles of the temple courts, one by one. Finally, Jesus and the woman were left alone together.

   The silence must have been awkward and deafening in that moment—while the woman stood still and Jesus was stooped down, drawing in the dust. Should she go? Was she allowed to? Should she say, "Thank you" or simply back away quietly? Before she committed to any response, Jesus stood again and asked, "Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?" (v. 10).

   Ah—she was a person now! Jesus turned her from a **thing into a person**, merely by asking her a question about her condition. Jesus asked her no detailed questions regarding the real story or her side of things. He questioned her privately, but it was only to reveal an evident truth. At her simple reply—"No one, sir"—He added His two cents: "neither do I" (v. 11). Regardless of her story and how she came to be at that unfortunate scene on that day, Jesus' response was a call for repentance.

   Why did Jesus let her go? 1) He never denied her guilt, and 2) He never excused her sin. He did not condemn her because she stood condemned already. He didn't condemn her because He came to be condemned on her behalf.

We should not be quick to condemn or write people off because of their errors. We shouldn't be fault finders, always scanning for the mistakes of others and blowing them out of proportion. Far too often, we focus on the speck in our neighbor's eye while ignoring the plank in our own. (Matthew 7:3-5)

Jesus calls us to a higher standard. He wants us to deal with our own flaws first before we highlight the flaws of others. When we understand our own imperfections, we are more likely to extend grace and compassion to those around us.

Let's strive to be more like Jesus - loving, compassionate, and merciful. Let's support each other in our journeys, encouraging each other to grow and improve.

Memory Verse: Jesus said to her, "Neither do I condemn you; go and sin no more." 8:11

References: Bishop Youssef: https://www.suscopts.org/diocese/bishop/bible-study/new-testament/holy-gospel-according-to-st-john

Fr. Tadros: https://drive.google.com/file/d/1USxNacY0RpvkchQRIe1mq9bQwrhld3cn/view?pli=1