

The Gospel of John

Session # 14

We left off last week with ch. 8: vs. 21-30 Jesus and the Pharisees are having a dialogue about Jesus claim to be the “light” of the world. Jesus claims to be “not of this world” and the Pharisees do not understand. Jesus tells them, you will know who I am, and who it is who sent me, when I have been “lifted up” (vs. 28). After the cross you will know I am the Messiah. Vs. 30 – John tells us that many who listened to him, now believe.

Today we pick it up with 8:31-59 (Read)

Vs. 31-32 – Jesus speaks to those Jews who have come to believe in him. “If you continue in my Word, you be my disciples and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free”. To be in God’s Word, brings us freedom. This was true then, and it is still true today, “in the beginning was the Word. And the Word was with God, and the Word was God.” So began the first statement in chapter one of St. John’s Gospel. God’s Word liberates us from our bondage to sin.

Vs. 33 – Begins a dialogue about Abraham, the first Patriarch of the Jews. The father of Judaism. In vs. 33 the Jews place their security in being “sons of Abraham” They dispute Jesus and claim they have never been in bondage to anyone. So “how is it Jesus that you say you will set us free?”.

Vs. 34-35 – Jesus tells them they are slaves to sin.

Vs. 36 – Jesus, claiming to be God’s son, claimed to be the one who will set them free from sin.

Vs. 37 – Jesus says he knows they are descendants of Abraham, yet you are seeing to kill me, because my words find no place in you.

Vs. 38 – “I speak of what I have seen from my father, but you (the Jews) do what you have heard from your father” Even though Jesus is a Jew himself, he is claiming that his ancestral ties are not to Abraham, but to God the Father. He in effect is claiming to be God.

Vs. 39 – The Jews, as Jesus said – claim that Abraham is indeed their father. But Jesus disputes this claim because he says – “If Abraham really was your father, you would do what Abraham did”.

Vs. 40 – Jesus says: “now you are seeking to kill me, because I have told you the truth, which I heard from God, this is not what Abraham did.”

Vs. 41 – The Jews claim again to be the children of Abraham. God is our Father

Vs. 42 – Jesus disputes this – “If God were your father, you would love me, for I came from the Father. I did not come of my own account, but the father sent me. Why don’t you understand? It is because you cannot bear to hear my words”.

So this raises the question for us all – Why don't people want to hear God's Word today? I believe they do not want to hear God's Word, because it does convict us of our sins. God's Word seeks to change our lives. So most people do not want to be changed. We are comfortable with our sins. Many would rather die in their sins, than to bend the knee to Jesus, the Son of God.

Vs. 44 – Jesus really offends the Jews. He says: “you are the children of the devil and you do his works. The devil is a murderer and speaks no truth. He is a liar and the Father of lies.

Vs. 45 – But because I speak the truth, you do not believe me.

Vs. 46 – Which of you convicts me of sin? If I tell you the truth, why don't you believe me? (that is a great question). Why don't people believe in truth?

Vs. 47 – Jesus says: “if you are of God, you hear God's words. The reason you do not hear my words, is because you are not of God”.

Vs. 48 - The Jews infuriated respond - that Jesus is a “Samaritan” and “demon” possessed. They claim Jesus is demon possessed, there is not much worse they could say about Jesus.

Vs. 49 – Jesus tells them, I am not demonic. I honor my heavenly Father, and you dishonor me.

Vs. 50 – Yet I do not seek my own glory. God the Father seeks it, and He will be the judge.

Vs. 51 – Jesus says – he who keeps my word will never die..

Vs. 52 – The Jews respond: “now we know you have a demon, because father Abraham died, along with the prophets”.

Vs. 53 – “are you greater than our father Abraham who died and the prophets who died?

Vs. 54 - Jesus responds: “If I glorify myself, my glory is nothing. It is my Father who glorifies me, of whom you say that he is your God.

Vs.55 - but you don't know him. I do know him. If I say I do not know him, I would be a liar like you. But I do know him and I keep his word”

Vs. 56 – Your father Abraham rejoiced to see this day. He was it and was glad.

Vs. 57 – The Jews respond: “you are not even 50 years old and you claim to have seen Abraham?”

Vs. 58 – Jesus responds: “before Abraham was, I AM” (this of course is the name given to Moses by God at the burning bush, the sacred name of God). This is blasphemy to the Jews. He is claiming to be the great I AM. He is claiming to be God.

Vs. 59 – The Jews have heard enough. They immediately pick up stones to throw at Jesus until death. But Jesus once again escapes and thwarts their attempt to execute Jesus. For his hour has not yet come.

Chapter 8 has set the point of no return between Jesus and the Jews. Jesus claims to be the bread of life, the living waters, the Light of the world, and the great I AM. To the Jews these claims blasphemy, the height of arrogance – Unless of course they are true!

Now lets go back to the story of the woman caught in adultery, ch 7:53-8:11. These were clearly inserted within the story of the Feast of Tabernacles and many Bibles show this be separating these verses with special spacing to set them apart. (Read 7:53-8:11)

8:2 – the phrase “early in the morning” is noted by John. Jesus goes to the temple to teach. It is as if Jesus (and John) are making a dramatic point. Jesus goes at daybreak. This is very appropriate for what Jesus is about to do. Namely he is about to say by his forgiveness of the woman caught in adultery, that a new day is dawning, revealing the extent of God’s love and mercy.

Vs. 3 – the scribes and Pharisees bring a woman caught in adultery to Jesus, undoubtedly to test him. Everyone knew that the law said she should be stoned to death. So they put Jesus to the test and ask coyly “what should we do with her?”

Vs. 6 – Jesus does something very interesting. He bends over and starts writing something in the dirt. The Pharisees continue to press him on what they should do with her.

Vs. 7 – Jesus stands up and says those grace filled words – “let him who is without sin cast the first stone”.

Vs. 9 - One by one they all begin to depart, starting with the oldest (maybe the smartest ones or the ones who have sinned the most?).

Vs. 10 – Jesus is left alone with the woman. Jesus lifts his face, undoubtedly making eye contact with her. And he says to her “where are they? Has no one condemned you?”

Vs. 11 – she answers “no one Lord”. Notice her answer – she acknowledges Jesus as Lord. So it appears she might be someone Jesus knew, and a believer.

Jesus says to her: “neither do I condemn you, go and do not sin again.

This story is one of the most beautiful stories in all of Holy Scripture. If any story illustrates the eschatological in breaking of the new way of God, and revelation of where we stand with God this story does. God’s love and mercy know no limits, no boundaries. It is not that Jesus is saying adultery is OK. He is clearly not saying that when he says: “neither do I condemn you, but go and sin no more”. Sin is always an offense to God. What Jesus is saying is that my love, my grace, my forgiveness is my gift to all who believe.

It isn’t an accident that John notes when this forgiveness takes place. It occurs at daybreak, because it ushers in the dawn of our awareness of the extent of God’s love for us and His mercy upon us. A new understanding of God and His love is dawning with the advent of Jesus. God is ultimately for us, He is

with us, in our best moments and in our worst moments. Jesus is not saying that adultery is alright. He told the woman straight out that it is not alright. But even adultery cannot separate us from God's love. Jesus says:

1. I do not condemn you for your sins
2. But do not do them again

So why did Jesus break up the dialogue of the Feast of Tabernacles to insert the story of the woman caught in adultery smack dab in the middle of it:

Weill I believe he did so to confirm the truth that Jesus is indeed, the bread of life, the living waters, the light of the world and the great I AM. And what this means for us is that there is mercy available for even the worst of our sins and our fallen nature. We can be forgiven if only we believe and call upon the name of the Lord. God came not to condemn the world, but to draw us to himself. Even all our warts and bruises are within the saving embrace of Jesus Christ. That is how much God loves us and desires us to live with Him for all eternity. A new dawn is breaking in Jesus, and shining the path forward for us all.