**WITH JESUS** (Week 6, February 14, 2018)

**Getting to Know Jesus Through the Gospel of John**

**John 8:1-20**

**Background for the Passage**

1. The earliest surviving copies of the gospel of John do not contain v. 7:53-8:11. This section doesn’t appear in any Greek versions until the 400’s, but was rather a fixture in the oral recitations of the gospels in the early Church. The evidence is conclusive that John did not include this account in his first draft of the gospel, as the language and vocabulary are not consistent with the other writings of the apostle.

2. HOWEVER, the story is still considered by many experts and scholars to be true, and actually did occur as written. The words, actions and attitudes of Jesus are consistent with His character and how Jesus is described elsewhere. The episode is representative of the ongoing struggle as the religious leaders and Pharisees try to trap Jesus.

3. The story found in John 7:53-8:11 is another trustworthy picture of the character, actions, attitudes and teachings of Jesus that the Holy Spirit has kept in the photo album known as the gospel of John. But we do know that John did not snap the picture. Another disciple added it in, so that it would not disappear from the very early Church oral retellings, but by the Holy Spirits’ inspiration, would be included in the Holy scriptures.

4. It was common for the scribes and teachers of the law to gather in the outer courts of the temple to teach the people and share the scriptures. Jesus would have spent many hours in the outer courts, teaching, sharing, and explaining the scriptures to anyone who would listen.

5. The religious leaders did not bring the woman to Jesus to promote justice, but rather as yet another trap for Jesus. They didn’t actually care much about what happened to the woman, as long as Jesus was ensnared and His reputation damaged in the process.

6. The wrong motives of the religious leaders were exposed immediately by a question that Jesus did NOT even need to ask….”Where’s the dude?” (Or KJV = Whereth be the rascally scoundrel?”) Even in first century Israel, it usually took two people to commit adultery, and if the woman was “caught in the act,” so was the man. Justice demanded that both partners be held accountable. The religious leaders devalued the woman so much, all while seemingly letting the male go free. This demonstrated their slanted view of justice and of the character of God.

7. The religious leaders had actually already ignored the OT law to which they referred when they challenged Jesus. (Lev. 20:10 required that both partners in adultery be put to death, not just the woman.) And, the Jewish leadership did not have any authority to put an individual to death regardless of what they had done. The religious leaders could put someone on trial and recommend death, but the Romans had the final decision. And, this death penalty for adultery was rarely carried out in first century Israel.

8. Jesus did not answer their question in the expected way. He essentially ignored them and their challenges, and simply wrote something in the dirt. His response made everyone in the crowd uncomfortable, and made the religious leaders both uneasy and furious.

9. After an awkward period of time in which Jesus ignored the religious leaders and their constant questioning, Jesus responded to the religious leaders with a powerful line that has echoed through the Church for generations. “Let the one who has never sinned throw the first stone!” (8:7) With these words, Jesus reminded us that it’s God’s place to judge and condemn, not ours. He reminded the crowd and us that from God’s perspective, there are no “little sins” or “BIG sins,” and that “All have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God.” (Rom. 3:23) We must never try to play this role, as it’s unhealthy for our relationships and is sinful for us to judge and condemn others.

10. True love is demonstrated by God’s loving kindness and commitment to us. While God hates sin, He loves sinners. Through Jesus, God accepted us as sinners, but loved us too much to let us stay in that sin. (Rom. 5:8, 15:7 (Jesus responded to this anonymous woman with forgiving words that would have freed her soul from pain, fear, and shame. Jesus through the completed work on the cross offers the same forgiveness to us. He can say to us as well, “I don’t condemn you. Now go and sin no more!”

11. Jesus declared Himself to be the Light of the world. (Remember, in the original John wrote, this verse 8:12 follows immediately 7:52) These conversations/debates/confrontations that Jesus had with the Jewish leaders at the temple courts in Jerusalem took place during the “Feast of Tabernacles.” These public religious rituals were held to celebrate the holiday that was to help the Jews remember their years wandering in the wilderness.) Num. 9:15-23) As part of this celebration, huge lamps were lit in the outer courts of the temple to symbolize the pillar of fire that led them through the wilderness. With a giant man-made light nearby as background, Jesus was able to declare a Divine truth that “I am the light of the world.” (Is. 49:6)

12. The Pharisees challenged what Jesus was teaching by using a legal maneuver about a witness testimony. The law said that two witnesses were needed to affirm a truth, not just one. Jesus responded that He obviously had 2 witnesses, Himself and God the Father.

**Review Questions**

13. Why is it essential to know why this text is a bit different from the rest of the gospel of John? How is it a textual variant? How do we know that it’s still scripture?

14. (8:1-2) Where did Jesus go? How far was that? When did He return to Jerusalem and what did He do there? What does Jesus being seated while teaching indicate?

15. (8:3) What happened? Who appeared? Who did they bring with them to ensnare Jesus? What does it mean that she was “caught in the act?” (Remember, it’s a family show!)

16. (8:4-5) How did they treat the woman? What challenge did they give to Jesus? Did the “law of Moses” really say what they said it said? What’s the danger for Jesus in this situation?

17. (8:6-8) What were their motives? (Justice or not?) What was Jesus writing in the dirt? How did the Jewish leaders respond? What powerful statement did Jesus finally make? Why did this “nail them?”

18. (8:8-9) What happened? How did the religious leaders in the crowd respond? Who left first, and why? What was Jesus doing this whole time?

19. (8:10-11) What question did Jesus first ask the woman? How did she respond? How did she address Jesus? What key phrase did Jesus use to both forgive the woman and challenge her? What does this phrase communicate?

20. (8:12) In the original context, this verse followed 7:52. What difference does this make in the flow? What is Jesus doing by declaring Himself to be the “Light of the World?” How does context matter here?

21. (8:12-14) What’s the significance of Jesus declaring Himself to be the “Light of the world.” What do the events in Jerusalem have to do with His statement? How do the Pharisees respond? What does Jesus response indicate?

22. (8:15-16) How does Jesus defend Himself? What does He mean that He “doesn’t come to judge?” What’s His main purpose? When will He judge? What is the significance of who He is declaring Himself to be in 8:16?

23. (8:17-18) What is Jesus doing by reminding them of their own laws? What’s His point? What significance is in Jesus declaration about Himself? (8:18)

24. (8:19-20) How did the religious leaders get confused? How did Jesus take full advantage of this confusion? What did he basically accuse them of and why was this a significant point? Where did all of this take place? Why wasn’t Jesus arrested?

**So What?**

25. How do you respond to the reality that 8:1-11 was not written by John? If this section is true, and the Holy Spirit inspired a related disciple to include it later, does that disqualify it as scripture?

\*26. Why did the religious leaders bring the woman to Jesus? What was their attitude toward the woman? How do we treat people caught in sin? How do we think of them, and how do we respond to them? (Gal. 6:1-2, but do we do this?)

\*27. What character traits do you see in Jesus? How do you respond to those who are “caught in sin” in your life? Do your responses match up with those of Jesus? Why is it tough?

\*28. Why is it so important to understand Jesus as the Light of the World? What does this mean to you? Are you being a light also? (Matt. 5:14-16)