

(John 8:3-11, NIV84)

The teachers of the law and the Pharisees brought in a woman caught in adultery. They made her stand before the group and said to Jesus, "Teacher, this woman was caught in the act of adultery. In the Law Moses commanded us to stone such women. Now what do you say?" They were using this question as a trap, in order to have a basis for accusing him. But Jesus bent down and started to write on the ground with his finger. When they kept on questioning him, he straightened up and said to them, "If any one of you is without sin, let him be the first to throw a stone at her." Again he stooped down and wrote on the ground. At this, those who heard began to go away one at a time, the older ones first, until only Jesus was left, with the woman still standing there. Jesus straightened up and asked her, "Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?" "No one, sir," she said. "Then neither do I condemn you," Jesus declared. "Go now and leave your life of sin."

There is an old saying: "Those who live in glass houses shouldn't throw stones." The metaphor of the glass house has nothing to do with the transparency of the glass, but rather the fragility of it. You start slinging stones in a glass house, and very likely you will destroy the house and everyone in it.

We all live in "glass houses." Not a one of us has any business demanding the condemnation of someone else. That's not to say that condemnable acts are never committed, or that people will never be condemned for committing them; they certainly are. But as in the case of the woman caught in the act of adultery, Jesus says to her accusers (and to us), "If any one of you is without sin, let him be the first to throw a stone at her."

Perhaps those who brought the adulterous woman to Jesus never succumbed to the sin of adultery, and so were righteously indignant with her. But Jesus was writing something on the ground with His finger. Is it possible that Jesus was listing some of the sins they had committed, like greed, unfaithfulness, laziness, hatred, envy, covetousness, anger, pride, selfishness, disobedience... just to name a few? Perhaps these men needed such a reminder. Notice how the older ones went away first; they had been around long enough to recognize the mountain of sinful failures they had accumulated in their lifetimes. But even the younger ones came to the same realization -- they were not without sin and therefore were in no position to judge.

Today there is a lot "stone throwing" going on, both figuratively and literally. Before we start slinging stones, let's first recognize our own sins (and the mercy God has so graciously shown us in Christ). Then we will be able to drop our stones in the dust and leave all just judgments to the One who judges justly. Instead of throwing stones, let us pray that God

will bring sinners to repentance, so that, rather than being condemned, they may hear the gracious words of Jesus: "Neither do I condemn you. Go now and leave your life of sin."

Graciously spared with you in Christ,
Pastor Golm

June 16

The Pardoned Life

In love . . . thou hast cast all my sins behind thy back. Isaiah 38:17

The deepest hunger of the human heart is the hunger for God's love. When the psalmist exclaimed: "As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God", he gave expression to his longing for the assurance of God's love.

The God who has made himself known to man in the Holy Scriptures is the God of infinite compassion and pity, of everlasting mercy and grace. It is such a God as this for whom the human heart (despite all protestations to the contrary) is searching: a God who in love will reach down to man; a God who in love will quiet the haunting accusations of a guilty conscience; a God who in love will find a way to temper justice with mercy; a God who in love will come out to meet his prodigal sons and daughters with a message of pardon and peace.

Such a God is revealed to us only in the Scriptures. It was he, and he alone, who conceived a plan of salvation which made such pardon possible. God's pardoning love was made possible in Christ.

St. John devotes much of his first letter to the revelation of God's love and to the purpose of this revelation. He says: "In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that HE loved US and sent his Son to be the propitiation [atoning sacrifice] for our sins."

It was in Christ that justice and mercy met. He died to atone for the guilt of all mankind. By his death, he paid the penalty of justice and opened up the gates of mercy. In him, and in him alone, we have Heaven's pledge of full and free forgiveness.

Lord, how can I ever thank You for Your wondrous love and mercy!

(Devotion from: Daily Walk With God - Meditations for Every Day, by Herman
W. Gockel)