

Faith Builder Series

THE THE GOSPEL GOSPEL OF JOHN



Life changing and impacting studies through the Gospel of John – with the *soul* purpose of strengthening and building your faith and trust in God!

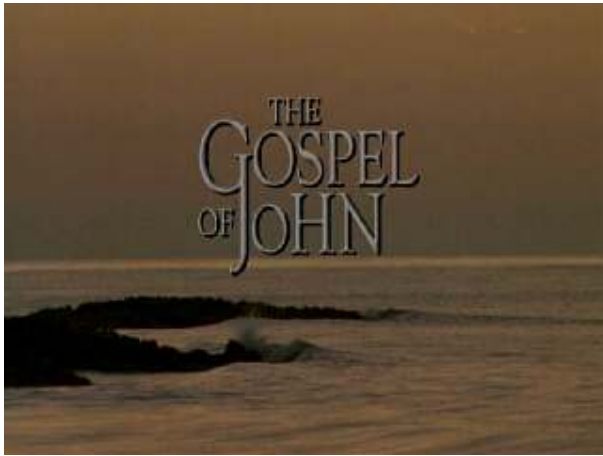
Message 10. John 7:53 8:11

Ps Roger Spackman

Entire series of Bible Workshops freely available from

www.TeAtatuBaptist.com

Slide # 1 - Video – Gospel of John 7:53 – 8:11
Start file: VTS_01_2.VOB @ 19:54
Stop file: 23:00



Slide # 2



Original Meaning
What it meant 2000 years ago!

In the early church – sexual sins – especially *adultery* – were considered to be the most serious of all.

In fact, the early church believed adultery to be the *unforgivable sin* mentioned elsewhere in the NT.

And although this story of Jesus was circulating around the churches only years after it occurred,

...it was not actually included into the New Testament until hundreds of years later!

The reason for this, is that the first Christians found it *too hard* to believe that Jesus would actually forgive this woman for her heinous sin!

So around 400 years later, when Basil of Caesarea was Bishop over much of the church –

...the penalty for adultery was lowered from strangulation if you were married,

...or stoning if you were engaged, to a mere 15 years of imprisonment and torture for anyone caught in the act.

The Greek language that this story was written in,

...has many nuances and constructions that indicate the charge that the religious leaders were bringing against this woman,

...was a legitimate and *legal* accusation.

The evidence required in such as case, was for two or more people – preferably men – to actually have *witnessed* and *watched* the act.

What this tells us, that in order for this law to be applied, it really needs to have been *set up* – to be a trap!

And anyway, if you were intent on watching such an act take place, that perhaps you purposely set it up, and hid to watch-

...then doesn't the NT also teach that such inquisitiveness and intentional viewing of such acts –

...is *also* sinful – even *just as much* as the act in itself?

The Mishnah – which was the book of rules and laws that the Jews had set up to accompany the Bible –

...also stated that if a Jew witnessed a person who was about to perform a deliberate sin –

...then they were bound by compassion to step in and lead that person *away* from the temptation that was confronting them!

These religious leaders were guilty just as the woman was –

...it's just that their sins were a bit different!

So – this woman must have been engaged – as her punishment was to be *stoned* to death.

But, the focus of the accusations is *not* the woman, it is Jesus.

The religious Jews wanted to see Jesus earn displeasure with the crowds by smashing stone into her flesh.

But instead, Jesus *writes* in the dust.

Historically, the Jews believed He wrote Jeremiah 17:13;

‘The names of those who turn away from God shall be written in the dust, because they have forsaken the Lord, the spring of Living Water.’

And Jesus responded with one of the most well known verses of the Bible.

‘Let him among you, who has not sinned – cast the first stone!’

Jesus was referring to Deuteronomy 13:9 or 17:7 which says that:

...those who witness a crime, and bring a successful accusation, they are the ones who must throw the *first* stone.

And why is this so important?

Because straight away – it would be evident to all (by who would throw the first stone) –

...who the ‘peeping toms’ were – and those who had set up the trap.

It seems obvious that this was the religious priests – and if it was the case,

...they too would be judged – for being a false witness –

...for setting up the crime - and possibly stoned as the verdict!

And so – here we have Jesus – alone with a woman caught in adultery.

And he speaks *tenderly* – calling her by the same word that He later calls to His mother while He hung dying on the cross.

‘Woman, are there *any* left who accuse you?’

To which she replied, ‘No one, Lord.’

And in doing so – she got the answer wrong, completely *wrong*.

There was One before her – that was sinless, and yet condemned her not.

Slide #

Bridge over time
Timeless Truths
Universal Principles



This Biblical story is absolutely *infected* with the harsh judgments, criticisms and elite spirituality of religious people.

It's about picking on the weak to strengthen the strong.

A society that had oppression, prejudice and domination as its foundations.

As we survey the last 2000 years, but especially the last few hundred years of *living* memory –

...I am reminded of several *other* significant events or people who have either promoted or demoted prejudice, judgment and oppression in the world.

I wonder if you can think of any?

Hitler comes instantly to mind.

What about the abolition of slavery

Gender discrimination (although this still exists in many churches today)

There is *one* person or theory that I believe has done more damage to equality, and has promoted oppression more than any other event or person in living history.

The person who created this theory wrote a few books – one of which is *The Origins of the Species*.

His name is – Charles Darwin!

One of his most famous and influential theories was called - *Survival of the fittest*.

You see – the revolution in the mid 19th century that this evoked – was the mass oppression of workers by their employers – of men over woman, and of husbands over their wives.

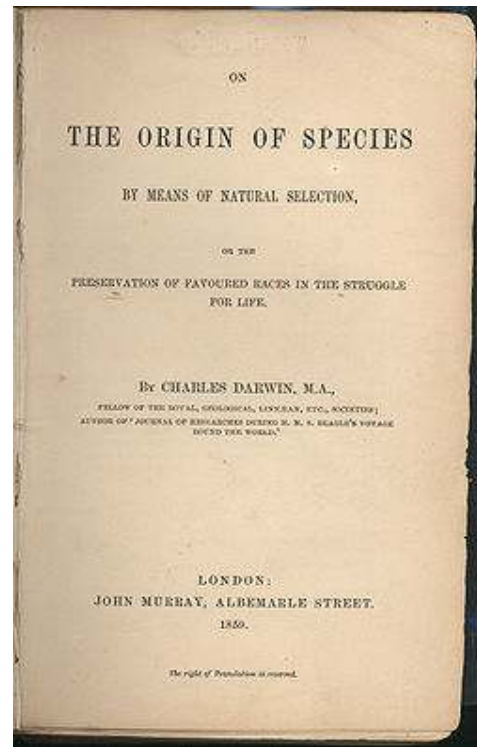
Why?

Because it was all justified by this new philosophy – the survival and dominance of the fittest, strongest and most aggressive – over the weak.

Pretty much – just the same as our story of the woman caught in adultery!

So – just maybe the author of oppression, harsh judgment and criticism isn't Darwin or even from the heart of religious men.

Maybe its origins go a lot *further* back than that...



Because what the teaching of Darwin, and the minds of these religious rulers had forgotten –

...was that the heart of God and man finds true freedom, love and compassion –

...*not* when they oppress or judge the weak and vulnerable –

...but when they *nurture*, when the *care* for –

...and when they *protect* those who are at the hands of evil oppressors.

Even oppressors who think they are doing God's will.

This woman was *disposable*.

She is a *means* to meet an end.

It's simply about *climbing the corporate ladder* –

...getting things done *my way* –

...and sometimes people just get hurt in the process.

And here's the thing.

These religious leaders *honestly* believed they were in the will of God to accuse and murder – both this woman *and* Jesus!

It wasn't just the woman who had been set up in a trap.

They were doing the same thing to Jesus.

Either Jesus had to *condemn* the woman – and thereby sacrificing His commitment to grace.

Or, He had to *forgive* her – thereby sacrificing His commitment to the Law of God.

Here she is – encircled by hostile men,

...like wolves to a lamb –

...willing to sacrifice her in order to uphold their unyielding commitment to rules and laws.

Certainly – she must have thought, this man known as Jesus –

...this man known as Rabbi –

...this masterful teacher of the law –

...surely He too will condemn me and uphold the moral purity and ethical requirements of the law!

And then –

...Jesus *sets her free* -

...in a way she never would have expected.

But – not only was Jesus willing to set the woman free.

His desire was to set the religious ones free from the harshness of their judgemental hearts and minds as well.

Interesting equation here.

Religious people,

...people who were devout followers of God -

...*come* to Jesus –

...and leave *more* hardened and *more* distorted in their understanding of God.

In contrast we have this *sinful woman*,

...worthy of death –

...she *comes* to Jesus,

...and then she leaves forgiven and free –

...having met the Author of Life,

...with streams of living water flowing in and through her.

Sadly, as I have learnt from studying history,

...and from being involved in churches all my life –

...the church sometimes has little to offer sinners who come to her for mercy.

Or if it does, sometimes it is more like the priests than like Jesus.

It takes an enormous amount of maturity and personal awareness-

...to look at the list of characters in this story, and humbly admit before God.

I am *not* the person – that I *should* be.

Slide #



Application to today!
What it means to you and
me – right now!

I want to *reset* this Biblical story into a contemporary setting and true story.

The woman in our Bible passage today has a massive problem –
...it is literally a *life or death* situation.

According to the law of the land –
...she has been given the death sentence.

I want to briefly tell you the true story of Karla Tucker.



As a teenager, Karla and her boyfriend
broke into a house in order to steal –
...to fund their drug addiction.

They didn't know that an elderly man and
his beloved were at home there –
...resulting in Karla and her boyfriend

Daniel Garret murdering them both with a pick-axe and a hammer.

Following their trial and conviction,

...both Karla and Daniel were sentenced to death by lethal injection.

Daniel died in prison ten years later,

...but Karla remained on death row for many more years still.

Karla's story is *much more* than just a senseless homicide.

Three months after being imprisoned,

...a puppet ministry came to her prison,

...and just to escape boredom, Karla attended,

She stole a Bible – *as she didn't know they were free* –

...and later that night, she read John 3:16 and gave her life to Jesus

Let me read you the exact words she later wrote in her diary:

‘That night when I asked Jesus into my heart – the full and overwhelming weight and reality of what I had done to that elderly couple – came down upon me. For the first time in many years, I wept and wept in remorse. To this day, tears are a normal part of my life.’

The transformation of Karla/s life was tangible for all to see.

Christ was alive in her.

For over 14 years, Karla was a powerful Christian presence in that prison –

...leading many other prisoners and staff to Jesus.

In 1995 she married the prison chaplain.

A date was finally set for her execution – February 3rd 1998.

At once Karla was a media sensation.

Was her conversion real?

Was it just a ‘jailhouse’ conversion?

She was even interviewed by Larry King on CNN.

King tried to exploit the gruesome events of the 1983 murder,

...but Karla resisted –

...instead telling the world of her repentance, and her love for Jesus.

‘Surely God can’t help you through your death sentence!’ King asked.

‘Yes He can!’ replied Karla; ‘It’s called the Joy of the Lord!’

She spoke of the peace in her heart,

...and asked forgiveness from the families of the murder victims.

Her only regret was that she would no longer be able to continue with her prison ministry.

On February 3rd 1998 – Karla was executed by lethal injection –

...her final testimony spoke of God’s love, peace and forgiveness.

Karla Faye's conversion is poignant –

..because the power of her Christian life was directly tied into the power and depth of her sinfulness.

She didn't deny the gravity of her sin,

...any more than the woman caught in adultery did.

They were both confessed sinners.

In each case, the opportunity for freedom and forgiveness was the result.

God didn't condemn,

...He didn't throw the law at them-

... or quote Scriptures to their faces that spoke of their failures.

As He did with the woman caught in adultery,

...Jesus understood the power of grace – and released Karla from her sin.

The state of Texas – *could not*.

Christ's unmerited grace and forgiveness diminishes in our lives-

... if we loose touch of the *depth* of our own sinfulness.

When we no longer identify with either of these women,

...when we feel we are righteous and holy –

...we loose sight of the grace of God in our own lives.

I am no less guilty than the woman caught in adultery –

...or Karla as she faced the death penalty.

We are all guilty, before we come to Christ, **and** after.

The truth of the matter is this –

...each and everyone of us here today-

... has a death sentence hanging over our heads.

It's been said that the mortality rate for humans, is one per person.

Some of us here today will die of a ripe old age.

Others of us will enter eternity due to sickness or accident.

However, the Bible says that *after our death* comes judgement.

I wonder which character you align yourself with – from our passage today.

Each of us needs to bow our hearts in humility-

... before a holy and righteous God.

We need to come to Jesus - as the woman did - caught in adultery.

We got to kneel before Him and declare –

...Lord, I am a *sinner* in need of forgiveness.

But, in order to become like the woman who received the mercy of Jesus –

...we have to confess that our hearts are actually aligned-

... with those who condemned her.

Let's pray together.

Faith Builder Series

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| 2. | John 1:1-18 | God with skin on |
| 3. | John 1:19-51 | Learning to love God |
| 4. | John 2:1-25 | Party time |
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| 9. | John 7:1-52 | Standing up for Jesus |
| 10. | John 7:53 – 8:11 | Caught in the act! |
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| 14. | John 11:1-57 | Come forth! |
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| 18. | John 15:1 – 16:4a | Staying connected |
| 19. | John 16:4b – 33 | Led by the Spirit |
| 20. | John 17:1-26 | Inspirational prayer |
| 21. | John 18:1 – 19:16a | The Passion! |
| 22. | John 19:16b – 42 | Golgotha and Glory |
| 23. | John 20:1-31 | Unless I can touch Him... |
| 24. | John 21:1-25 | Breakfast on the beach! |



Part One
The Book of
SIGNS

Part Two
The Book of
GLORY