

John 8

This is Jesus

- The Gospel will always be offensive, because the Gospel demands a response.
 - When it comes to people having to make a choice, someone will always be offended and controversy will be sparked
 - It's human nature
 - Now so far throughout the Gospel of John, we've seen more excitement around Jesus than anything else.
 - The people are captivated by His teachings and His miracles
 - But toward the end of Chapter 6, things around Jesus start to get a little uncomfortable
 - People want to know the works that they need to do, to do the works of God, to obtain eternal life, to be spiritually well
- And Jesus gives some hard teachings, He says the only work you need to do is believe
 - And at one point He says it in a confusing way, He says, Unless you eat My flesh and drink My blood you cannot have eternal life
 - (For us we have the picture of communion to make this make sense to us, but they didn't have that)
 - He's saying unless you place complete dependance, confidence, faith, and belief in Me you cannot be saved
 - And they even tell Jesus, this is a hard teaching
 - And He responds, "Does this offend you?" He says, "The Spirit alone gives life, human works accomplish nothing,"
 - At this point, the bible says, many people deserted and abandoned Him
 - Because they got to the point where they had to make a choice

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- It wasn't about spectating miracles any more, it was about whether or not they would surrender their lives to Him
 - That choice was too hard for some, but for other's like Peter it was easy,
 - Jesus asks them if they're gonna leave too... Peter says, "Where are we gonna go?? Only You have the words of eternal life!"
 - But then in chapter 7, we get a glimpse into the hot topic of debate in the culture, and it's all about Jesus
 - Some say, He's a prophet, some say He's the Messiah, some say He's a good man, other's say He's a fraud, some say He's demon possessed! His own brothers didn't believe in Him.
 - And the religious leaders hate Him.
 - He's already interrupted their system in the temple, He's a more popular teacher than any of them are, and He's publicly
- embarrassed the one's who have challenged Him
- And it got to the point where most people are scared to say anything positive about Jesus in public because they're afraid to get in trouble with the Pharisees and Sanhedrin
- And in the midst of all of this controversy and debate, Jesus stirs the pot even more.
- It's the height of the celebration of a festival in town, and Jesus stands up and starts shouting among the crowd:
 - "Anyone who is thirsty may come to Me! Anyone who believes in Me may come and drink! For the Scriptures declare, 'Rivers of living water will flow from his heart.'"
- So the conversation get's stirred up again... some people believed saying, this is definitely the Messiah! Who could ever do more signs and miracles than Him!

- Others say, “No way, don’t you know where He is from? No prophet has ever come from there!”
 - The Pharisees send temple guards to arrest Him...but they don’t
 - When they return the Pharisee’s ask them, “Why didn’t you bring Him in?”
 - They say, “We’ve never heard anyone talk like that!”
 - The Pharisees get mad, says that they’ve been fooled. They pretty much call anyone who believes Him an idiot and God’s curse will be on them
- And then our friend Nicodemus from chapter 3, kinda calls them out and says, “Isn’t it illegal for y’all to have Him arrested without giving Him a proper trial?”
- They say, “Pffff what are you taking His side now??”
- These guys are angry, they’re mad, they’re jealous of Jesus...they want Him out of the picture
- Now, I’m not saying with certainty that this is how the situation went down...but I want to help us set the scene and really put ourselves in the situation
- The next day, the members of the Sanhedrin gather together. Remember these are the 70 most powerful Pharisees that serve as sort of the supreme court for the Jewish people
 - And one of the cases brought before them that day, is a woman who has been caught in adultery.
 - Now at that time, the punishment for adultery was death by stoning
 - But it took a lot to actually be convicted. You had to have multiple eye witnesses, that actually saw the act of adultery take place. Not just see them together, not just see the woman leave the mans house, not even just

see them in bed together, they had to actually see the act taking place.

- And if the testimony of the witnesses turned out to be fabricated or untrue, or any holes found in their testimony, THEY would be stoned, which deterred a lot of accusers
- But also, both the man and woman, would be stoned for the adultery
- So the case comes before them, “This woman was caught in the act of adultery,”
- “Ok are the witnesses present? Did they actually see the act take place? Do they agree on their testimony? Ok, walk us through what you saw...”
- “Ok, the witnesses testimony seems to hold up...but where’s the man she was with?”
- “Oh we didn’t bring him in...”
- Now I don’t know if this guy was a prominent figure in town that would have caused a lot of controversy if he was brought in and stoned, or if this is something that they just

didn’t want to have to deal with, or just didn’t think about....

- but nevertheless, they now have a conundrum on their hands
- “Do we go ahead with the stoning, with the other half of the accused party not here, which it could be argued that if the man isn’t here she should be let go as well....but if we let her go, it could be seen as we aren’t adhering to the law of Moses and are being soft on sin. Could this encourage more adulteries??
- This is tough! And one of the members of the Sanhedrin sarcastically says, “Why don’t we let Jesus decide....”
- But then another says, “You know what? That’s not a bad idea...on one hand, if He tells us to let her live, He can be accused of contradicting the Law of Moses, but if He says to have her stoned, He could be seen as un-compassionate and both ways the people will begin to discredit Him!

- The other guys says, This might just work!... They say, "Where is Jesus now?" "He's teaching in the temple...." "Of course He is....but this is perfect...let's take this to Him and see what He does..."
- ***"Then the scribes and Pharisees brought to Him a woman caught in adultery. And when they had set her in the midst, they said to Him, "Teacher, this woman was caught in adultery, in the very act. Now Moses, in the law, commanded us that such should be stoned. But what do You say?" This they said, testing Him, that they might have something of which to accuse Him. But Jesus stooped down and wrote on the ground with His finger, as though He did not hear. So when they continued asking Him, He raised Himself up and said to them, "He who is without sin among you, let him throw a stone at her first." And again He stooped down and wrote on the ground. Then those who heard it, being convicted***

by their conscience, went out one by one, beginning with the oldest even to the last. And Jesus was left alone, and the woman standing in the midst. When Jesus had raised Himself up and saw no one but the woman, He said to her, "Woman, where are those accusers of yours? Has no one condemned you?" She said, "No one, Lord." And Jesus said to her, "Neither do I condemn you; go and sin no more." -John 8:3-11 (NKJV)

- PRAY
- Getting defensive is an epidemic. Have you noticed this? And we are all very very very prone to get defensive if we are called out, put on the spot, disagreed with or embarrassed somehow
- And if you're sitting there thinking, "No I don't, I don't do that..." You're just getting defensive about being defensive and you're proving my point.

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- There is something within us, that despises being humbled
- Come on, I know how bad I am about this. I grew up the youngest of 5 children, I spent my entire life trying to prove myself
- And then I finally graduated college, I had a bachelors degree, I was an official ordained minister of the Gospel of Jesus Christ...but I couldn't get a church to hire me and I found myself bagging groceries at BiLo with 16 year olds...talk about getting humbled
 - And best believe everything within me wanted to make sure that people knew I wasn't some teenager, no, I was a grown man with ministry aspirations, I'm just working the same job with a bunch of kids who don't even remember who the backstreet boys were
 - *There's now way to explain that and not look dumber!*
- But then I finally had made it, years later, I went from working for free at the church, to getting part time minimal pay, and finally worked my way up to a full-time vocational youth pastor. I can get some respect on my name
 - *A real pastor*
- There is no way to get defensive about that and argue without looking worse!
- Sometimes you just have to take the hit, and allow yourself to get humbled...
- Now Jesus did not have to be humbled, but He definitely knew how to humble other people who needed it, and did so in such a calm and controlled way
- Jesus is in the middle of giving a word from God to a congregation, and right in the middle of the sermon, they drag this woman in, put in the middle of everyone in the room, declare her transgressions in front of everyone, and demand a response from Jesus. But verse 6 says,

- ***“But Jesus stooped down and wrote on the ground with His finger, as though He did not hear.” -John 8:6b (NKJV)***

- Now there's much debate and speculation about what Jesus actually wrote on the ground, there is some context to it in the original greek language...but what strikes me more is not what He may or may not have written, what grabs my attention is Jesus' position, the way He postures Himself.

- **JESUS LOWERED HIMSELF**

- Jesus, was the only person in the world that ever would have had the right to get defensive, blatantly rebuke them, and openly reveal their hypocrisy and wrong motives in front of everyone!
- Jesus would have been well within His rights to not just stand toe to toe with them, but to raise Himself up above them, and crush them for the dishonesty in their hearts

- But Jesus instead, lowers himself down to the ground and remains silent.
- I can't help but think of the verse in James when He says, ***“My dear brothers and sisters, take note of this: Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry.” -James 1:19 (NIV)***
 - Man, what would our lives look like if we were quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow to become angry
 - What would our marriages look like, if we were quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow to become angry
 - What would parenthood look like, if we were quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow to become angry
 - What would our church community look like, if we were quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow to become angry

- What would our country or political scene look like, if we were quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow to become angry
- Well this might be one of the most counter cultural truths in the New Testament
 - No no no, we want to be quick to get angry, quick to speak, and slow to listen
 - But that is not the heart and the spirit of our Savior, even tho He would have been in the right to do so
 - He instead leaves an example for us
- Peter tells us, ***“For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you might follow in His steps. He committed no sin, neither was deceit found in His mouth. When He was reviled, He did not revile in return; when He suffered, He did not threaten, but continued entrusting Himself to Him who judges justly.” 1 Peter 2:21-23 (ESV)***
- James says there is only ONE law maker and Judge, and its not you, it’s not me...and it definitely wasn’t these Pharisees
- Jesus just lets them make their spectacle, He lowers Himself, and allows them to stand there alone in their arrogance
- And no doubt, it starts to get a little awkward for them and then they begin to demand that Jesus respond. And then, and only then,
- ***“He raised Himself up and said to them, “He who is without sin among you, let him throw a stone at her first.” And again He stooped down and wrote on the ground. Then those who heard it, being convicted by their conscience, went out one by one, beginning with the oldest even to the last. And Jesus was left alone, and the woman standing in the midst.”- John 8:7-9 (NKJV)***
- Now to be clear, Jesus is not excusing her sin, rather He wasn’t allowing the false witness to prevail. It wasn’t that He was against the law,

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He wasn't allowing the distortion of the law to take place

- He pointed out, so gracefully I might add, the hypocritical nature of the situation and allowed them to be convicted by their own conscience
- And in doing so, here we see...

- **JESUS DISARMS THE ACCUSERS**

- Jesus disarms our accusers, and he also disarms us AS the accuser
- First, the greatest new of all time. You have had two main accusers in your life....sin and satan
 - Your sin, your faults, your failures, brought an accusation against you before God. But because Jesus came, lived, died on that cross, and rose from that grave, the accusation of sin no longer has any power over your life!
 - Jesus paid the price you couldn't pay and took the punishment that you deserved.

- He took your accusations upon Himself so that now if you would just call on His Name you become a New Creation and There is NO condemnation for you when you are in Christ Jesus
- But then satan still comes along to continue to try and accuse you
 - He tells you that "There is no way you could ever be a Christian, there's no way you could be forgiven, I know what you've done, I know the things you still struggle with, I know the last time you cussed out a person, I know what you did when no one else was around to witness it"
 - Satan will do everything he can to make you think that you are stuck in your sin, stuck in your guilt, and there is no way out
- But Jesus has disarmed that accuser as well
- He has no real power! You see satan is the father of lies, and the only power a liar has is getting someone to believe a lie. That's why the truth sets you free

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- And the Truth is: Jesus has made satan his footstool
- The Truth is: There is nothing you could ever do to make God love you any more or any less
- The Truth is: Whenever you come to Jesus, you become hidden in Christ. That means when God looks at you, He doesn't see your sins and your fault and your failures, He see the perfection of His son
- The Truth is: You are not defined by your sins and your shortcomings, you are defined by the work of Jesus Christ, you are God's child, and there is nothing satan can do about it...unless you allow him to
- He has no power, he has been disarmed
- However, how many times do we stand in the freedom of our accusers, just to become accusers ourselves
 - I know wayyyy too many Christians that have done this, I know I have done this myself
 - And you know we as Christians have a reputation from the majority of unbelievers of being nothing but accusers
 - And we don't really have a good track record of changing the narrative, so can we really blame them?
 - How quick can we be, to pick up our rocks, ready to throw and accuse?
- And you know, to be fair, in our context, I think the majority of us do a pretty good job of loving the people in front of us
 - Yea there are those guys are the street corners screamin at people but they're the minority not the majority
 - Our confrontation normally isn't direct, but rather from a distance
- Because we'll meet people on the street, in the restaurant, or even someone in church and we'll do a pretty good job loving them, caring for them, and making them feel welcome. At least I hope so

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- But then they'll follow us on social media, and there may be a particular issue that they are struggling with, trying to form an opinion on, maybe even trying to be quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow to become angry
- But all they see is Christians throwing stones. Writing accusational novels about something their not really directly involved in, or about people they'll never even know...what does that do for the reputation of the church?
 - Now some would argue, we're standing up for the truth!
 - Yea, but we're supposed to speak the truth in love, and its really hard to love well from a distance.
 - We're supposed to bring people close, not keep them at arms length
 - Tone makes all of the difference in speaking the truth in love, and you have no idea what tone someone will read your social media rant in.
- Now I'm not saying that we should never get on social media, or post on social media.... even though sometimes I would like to.
- But we just have to keep ourselves in check and make sure we're not the one's throwing stones.
- Again, there is only one Law Maker and Judge, and you and I are not Him.
- Let me give you an example:
 - At the beginning of January, Damar Hamlin, football player of the Buffalo Bills had a freak accident on the field, his heart stopped after a hit and nearly died...yall familiar with this?
 - And I remember watching ESPN and being very encouraged by how many athletes, analysts, coaches and media members talking about how they were praying for Him.
 - Faith was brought up a lot...and even some players described the worship services they were holding in each others homes to lift Damar up

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- But then I saw on social media, so many posts and novels going around from Christians, throwing stones and talking about how hypocritical they all were to talk about God, faith, and prayer now when they gave Tim Tebow so much hassle about how open he was with God, faith, and prayer all of those year ago
- And I'm thinking "SERIOUSLY! God's Name is being talked about on a national level, and instead of appreciating that, we gotta find a rock to throw??"I couldn't believe it!
- Then the super bowl came along, (still a sore subject for me)....and Damar Hamlin was recognized, and he wore **THIS JACKET**
- And as you could imagine, a lot of people were outraged, even former players were calling him out on social media, saying this like, "How many people were praying for you and now you're openly mocking Jesus and the Cross during the most watched televised event of the year!"
- And I agreed with them. I was thinking, "Man, satan is always going to find a way to try and make a mockery of Jesus just when something good happens...how could he do that? Come on Damar..." I thought to myself.
- And I didn't make a post or anything, but in my heart and my mind, I was throwing rocks...
- But then a few days later, Damar Hamlin posted **THIS TWEET**
 - *And I felt like an idiot... I was convicted and I needed to repent*
- But I still tried to justify myself a little bit...and I asked Rachel if she had seen the jacket and story or any of that, and she hadn't
- So, if I'm honest, I was trying to set her up... judge me if you want, I don't care
- So I was going to show her the jacket, let her have her initial reaction like mine, and then show her the tweet
 - Let her go through the spiritual roller coaster that I went through

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- So I showed her the picture of the jacket, and she said, *“Oh that’s awesome!”*
 - I was like, *“Really?? You don’t see that as him making a mockery of the cross??”*
 - She said, *“No? He’s wearing something about Jesus at the super bowl, that’s awesome.”*
 - I was like, *“Man! She’s so much more spiritual than me!”*
- But how many of us are quicker to throw a stone before we say a prayer?
- Are we allowing God to check our hearts before we make an accusation?
- How many of us are quick to make more of satan and his schemes than God and His movements?
- Just like during the grammy’s where so many of our most famous celebrities and artists were openly having **satanic celebrations** on national television
- One news outlet lauding it as worship in a positive manner
- And we got so discouraged and outraged, believing that our nation has completely forsaken God and we just need to huddle our families together, separate ourselves from the world, and just look for Jesus to come back
- But then exactly 3 days later, a **revival breaks out** on a small college campus in Kentucky that garners national and international attention
- Within days **people line up by the thousands**, waiting hours upon hours, to get into **this little chapel** so they can experience a glimpse of the **power and presence of God!**
- MAKE NO MISTAKE! THE ENEMY HAS BEEN DISARMED
- GOD IS ON THE THRONE
- JESUS IS STILL KING

- And we can echo the words of Paul who said, “For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither things present or to come, nor any powers, or anything in or out of this world, will be able to separate us from the love of God!”
- And I know there are still some Christians that want to throw rocks at even that revival, just stop
- Whether in pretense or in truth, we celebrate that Jesus is being preached
- Because He can work through and in anything because the He’s disarmed the accusers and He is in control!
- After Jesus disarms this woman’s accusers verse 10 says:
- ***“When Jesus had raised Himself up and saw no one but the woman, He said to her, “Woman, where are those accusers of yours? Has no one condemned you?” She said, “No one, Lord.” And Jesus said to***

her, “Neither do I condemn you; go and sin no more.” -John 8:10-11 (NKJV)

- Now Jesus does a few things here, first when He says, “Woman, where are those accusers of yours” He isn’t being disrespectful to her
 - Because if you remember back to the wedding of Cana Jesus addresses His mother in the same manner when He said to her, “Woman, what does this have to do with me?”
 - We pointed out that in that time, culture, and context, that was actually a term of endearment to be addressed that way
 - So Jesus here, is actually giving this woman, who has been excruciatingly publicly humiliated, a piece of her dignity back.
- He asks her, where are you accusers, has anyone condemned you??
- She says, No one, Lord
 - And at this moment we know that something is happening in her heart

- She calls Him, **Lord (Kyrios)**
- This specific word means, **“He to whom a person or thing belongs”**
- She says, you set me free from my accusers, my life now belongs to you
- Then Jesus, for our last point:
 - **JESUS GIVES DIRECTIONAL GRACE**
 - He tells her neither, do I condemn you, Go and sin no more
 - He acknowledges that her actions were sinful, he doesn't brush over that, He let's her know that she was in fact guilty, but He doesn't condemn her
 - It's the only religion in the world that will tell the guilty they are not condemned
 - Every other religion, teaching, or philosophy, apart from Jesus will say No, the guilty are condemned, and only the not guilty are not condemned
- But Jesus says, you may be guilty, but I do not condemn you, why? Because He would be condemned for us!
- But Jesus doesn't stop at you're not condemned!
- He gives DIRECTIONAL GRACE
- Forgiveness has a target. The Goodness of God LEADS to repentance.
 - He says, you're free from your accusers, you're free from condemnation, you're free to GO, move forward!
 - But as you do! SIN NO MORE!
 - You're freedom from accusers and condemnation won't mean a thing if you just keep living the way you were, you'll end up right back here where you started
 - There has to be a change
 - Like my Pastor Jeff Marburger used to say, “If your faith hasn't changed you, your faith hasn't saved you.”

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- Go and sin no more
 - Is that possible??
 - It's not like we wanted to be in this situation
 - It's not like this woman grew up thinking, you know what I want to do when I grow up?? Commit adultery...
 - But sin creeps into our lives, and we can try everything we can to be better and do better but we always seem to fall short, we always end up messing up somehow
 - So how are we supposed to really, Go and Sin No More???
- 99/100 Free Throws
 - It makes me think about whenever I was in high school playing for the basketball team. I wasn't by any means anywhere near being the best player on the team, but what I could do better than anyone else, was shoot the ball. I would get in the game and the coaches would either just put me in the game to shoot free throws, or they would tell

me, you just shoot if you're open, don't dribble, don't try any fancy passes, and just try your best to now get dunked on when you're on defense.

- And one day my senior year, we had a practice completely dedicated to free throws, so this was my time to shine. And that practice I shot 100 straight free throws, and I made 99 of them. DO YOU HAVE ANY IDEA HOW FRUSTRATING THAT WAS?! I'll never forget it, I missed #56. And it haunted me. And I can still hear the sweet words of my sweet mother telling me, "Well practice makes perfect, sweetheart." But how much more could I practice?? How much closer could I get to perfection?? It was so frustrating to work that hard, be that locked in for that long, and come up just one short. It probably would have been easier if I just missed 10 or 20, or just stopped after 56, and say I hot 55 in a row and celebrate that!
- But that's how life goes! We can practice as hard and as much as we want, and we can

have a few good days, a few good weeks, months, even years, but inevitably we're going to miss at least one

- And we fall into the danger of just giving up all together because no matter how hard we try we will still end up missing at some point.
 - We feel stuck in our sin
 - We feel stuck in our accusations
 - We feel stuck in weakness and insufficiencies
 - Stuck falling into doing the things that we don't want to do!
 - No matter how hard we try, no matter who much we work, no matter how much we practice....
- *But here's the reality....in the Kingdom, practice doesn't make perfect*
 - Trying to rely on your own strength and your own wisdom and your own talents to try and

live a godly life will never result in anything but utter disappointment and frustration

- Practice will never make perfect,
- *No, In the Kingdom...The Perfect makes Practice*
- It's only whenever we come to and look to the perfection of Jesus that we actually get the wisdom, strength, and endurance to begin to practice a righteous life
- And we're never going to achieve perfection, but that doesn't mean we don't try
 - Because like I love to say, if you pursue perfection you will achieve excellence
- And its not that we're pursuing the perfection of ourselves, we're pursuing the perfection of Jesus
 - Saying, I want my mind to be more like the mind of Jesus
 - I want my eyes to be more like the eyes of Jesus

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- I want my heart and my desires to be more like that of Jesus
- And when the time comes when I inevitably miss number 56 again...I don't have to be consumed with guilt and shame and give into the accusers
- I just have to keep my eyes on Him and keep going and keep pursuing Him
- Like the proverb says, "***For the righteous falls seven times and rises again.***" -***Proverbs 24:16 (ESV)***

ministry of the Pregnancy Care Center of Catawba Valley together.

What's up Hope HKY, Pastor Kenny here. Don't forget your Project 1:5 donations are due THIS SUNDAY! If you forgot or lost your shopping list, don't worry, we're gonna have it posted for you up here on the story...So make sure to get your shopping done this week, and bring your donations to our 10am service so we can celebrate together and bless the