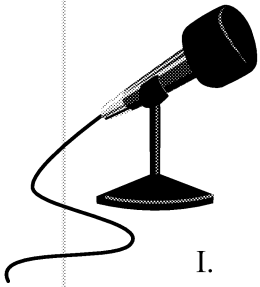


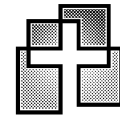
# The Gospel of John



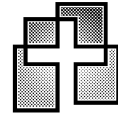
## Notes From the Podium

*These notes are intended to augment your own reading and study of the lesson. Please use as an aid to help you incorporate the main message of the lesson into your lecture.*

- I. This text will be approached a bit differently than from our previous approaches.
  - a. First, we will begin with some background that we might understand both the dialog and what is happening at the moment.
  - b. Second, we will explore the pastoral motives behind its inclusion in John's gospel.
- II. First Approach – Background.
  - a. Immediate Context – Jesus has been accusing the scribes and Pharisees of being sinners and hypocrites because they themselves do not abide by the law of Moses.
    - i. Recall John 7, “did not Moses give you the law? Yet none of you keeps the law.”
    - ii. The scribes and Pharisees do not regard themselves as sinners or hypocrites. They are what our Lord calls, self-righteous.
  - b. Mosaic Law
    - i. According to Mosaic law, this woman's adulterous offense is punishable by death.
    - ii. Furthermore, such a judgment requires two or three witness to obtain a conviction.
    - iii. Capital offenses in Mosaic law could not be exacted because it was considered and act of insurrection under the current civil authority.
- III. Second Approach – what is happening in this text?
  - a. The scribes and Pharisees set out to trap our Lord – verse 6 states such.
    - i. They are angry. They were accused by our Lord as being sinners and hypocrites who do not follow the law of Moses.
    - ii. They set a trap for our Lord by presenting an adulterous woman – the trap is this: to their minds there are only two possible outcomes.
      1. If our Lord is faithful to the law of Moses, then He will have to condemn her and call for her execution which would lead Him to be accused of insurrection under the civil law – an offense which is punishable by death.
      2. If our Lord does not call for her death then He, now, is the hypocrite – by not obeying Mosaic Law.
  - b. Our Lord is presented with the trap.
    - i. He turns the trap back upon them. By responding, “let him who is without sin among you be the first to throw a stone at her” He not only foils their trap but catches them in their own trap.
      1. First, our Lord is being faithful to the Law of Moses. He implicitly agrees with the application of Mosaic Law.



2. Secondly, the manner by which our Lord calls for her to be executed is stoning – particularly by those who are without sin.
  - a. The scribes and Pharisees in their own mind are without sin. They are self-righteous. Therefore, by their own reasoning they can pick up the stones.
3. However, once they begin to think about it they recognize that their trap has been set upon them.
  - a. If they kill her, they would turn around as planned and turn in our Lord for enforcing a capital punishment – thus leading to His arrest and death sentence.
  - b. However, once they are asked how it is that our Lord called for this woman’s execution they would then say, “He said ‘let he without sin cast the first stone.’” The civil official would be respond, “you are the ones who killed her, and according to your own testimony Jesus didn’t incite you to kill her because you know very well he considers you all sinners – so He couldn’t have been speaking to you.”
  - c. The scribes and the Pharisees would then be in the position of being the ones to be charged with enforcing a capital punishment and insurrection – which would lead to their own deaths.
  - d. In one verse our Lord not only foils their plans but catches them in their own trap. They are the ones who have to choose between following Mosaic Law thereby sacrificing their own lives – or, not following Mosaic Law thereby proving themselves to be hypocrites.
- c. The scribes and Pharisees prove themselves to be hypocrites and not followers of Mosaic Law.
  - i. They walk away – beginning with the oldest and wisest – having been the ones to first figure out what just happened.
  - ii. None of her accusers remain.
- d. She is left with no one but Him to accuse her.
  - i. He does not accuse her.
  - ii. To further demonstrate our Lord’s perfect adherence to Mosaic Law, two or three witness are necessary to communicate just such a capital punishment. Now that her accusers are all gone, she is not only acquitted by our Lord but by Mosaic Law as well.
- e. Our Lord writes with His finger in the dirt (twice this is explicitly mentioned).
  - i. First, this communicates a close eye witness account.
  - ii. Second, this communicates the imperturbability of our Lord in the face of such schemes, snares and traps.



## *Notes From the Podium (cont.)*

- IV. Third Approach
- a. What are the pastoral points?
    - i. Be wise as serpents and innocent as doves.
    - ii. The continuity and fulfillment of Mosaic Law in the works and teachings of our Lord.
    - iii. The mercy of Our Lord is at the service of bringing about our conversion.
      1. He says, “neither do I condemn you; go, and do not sin again.”
      2. He did **not** say, “neither do I condemn you; go, and it’s ok if you do it again because nothing you can ever do will separate you from me.”
        - a. This is a common misunderstanding.

---

*Notes From the Podium are written by Fr. Patrick Winslow. All rights reserved. No portion of these materials may be reproduced without written permission. Proper acknowledgement should be given to the author if these notes are read in a lecture.*