

SCRIPTURE READING FOR FEBRUARY 20, 2022 @ CAPC OAKLAND

John 7:32, 7:37-8:11
COMMON ENGLISH BIBLE

³²The Pharisees heard the crowd whispering [about if Jesus was the Christ], and the chief priests and Pharisees sent guards to arrest him.

³⁷*On the last and most important day of the festival,* Jesus stood up and shouted,

“All who are thirsty should come to me!

³⁸ All who believe in me should drink!

As the scriptures said concerning me, Rivers of living water will flow out from within him.”

³⁹ Jesus said this concerning the Spirit. *Those who believed in him would soon receive the Spirit,* but they hadn’t experienced the Spirit yet since Jesus hadn’t yet been glorified.

⁴⁰ When some in the crowd heard these words, they said, “This man is truly the prophet.” ⁴¹ Others said, “He’s the Christ.” But others said, “The Christ can’t come from Galilee, can he? ⁴² Didn’t the scripture say that the Christ comes from David’s family and from Bethlehem, David’s village?” ⁴³ So the crowd was divided over Jesus. ⁴⁴ Some wanted to arrest him, but no one grabbed him.

⁴⁵ The guards returned to the chief priests and Pharisees, who asked, “Why didn’t you bring him?”

⁴⁶ The guards answered, “No one has ever spoken the way he does.”

⁴⁷ The Pharisees replied, “Have you too been deceived? ⁴⁸ Have any of the leaders believed in him? Has any Pharisee? ⁴⁹ No, only *THIS CROWD, WHICH DOESN’T KNOW THE LAW.* And they are under God’s curse!”

⁵⁰ *Nicodemus,* who was one of them and had come to Jesus earlier, said, ⁵¹ “Our Law doesn’t judge someone without first hearing him and learning what he is doing, does it?”

LANGUAGE NOTES & TEXTUAL CONNECTIONS

The gospel of John one of the four stories of the good news of Jesus (Gospel means good news) which tells his life, actions, words and mission. It’s believed that John’s account is the last one written as his retelling of the story reflects considerable theological reflection and uses metaphors and poetic language. One example is the play with light and darkness throughout the story. John’s account also contains only seven miracles – or signs as they’re called. A symbolic number in Jewish tradition that represents the divine and also recall the days of creation in the foundational story of Genesis.

Our reading today while not containing one of those seven signs, is a signal of Jesus as God remaking the world and brining completion to the scriptures.

the last and most important day of the festival :: This is the 7th day of the Feast of Tabernacles – an agricultural feast for the harvest which always included prayers for rain. On each of the 7 days of the feast water was brought in a special pitcher from the fountain of Gihon which supplied the pool of Siloam (see the healing in chapter 9) near the temple mount. And then it was poured over the ground along the altar in the Temple to pray for rain. Here on the last day of praying for rain – the water of life – Jesus stands up and says he is the living water.

Those who believed in him would soon receive the Spirit || THIS CROWD, WHICH DOESN'T KNOW THE LAW :: this contrast between spirit and law is present in all of John, starting in the prologue in chapter 1: 9-18

⁹ The true light that shines on all people was coming into the world.

¹⁰ The light was in the world, and the world came into being through the light, but the world didn’t recognize the light.

¹¹ The light came to his own people, and his own people didn’t welcome him.

¹² But those who did welcome him, those who believed in his name, he authorized to become God’s children,

¹³ born not from blood nor from human desire or passion, but born from God. ...

⁵² They answered him, “You are not from Galilee too, are you? Look it up and you will see that the prophet doesn’t come from Galilee.”

⁵³ They each went to their own homes,

¹ And Jesus went to the Mount of Olives. ² Early in the morning he returned to the temple. All the people gathered around him, and he sat down and taught them. ³ The legal experts and Pharisees brought a woman caught in adultery. Placing her in the center of the group, ⁴ they said to Jesus, “Teacher, this woman was caught in the act of committing adultery. ⁵ IN THE LAW, MOSES COMMANDED US TO STONE WOMEN LIKE THIS. What do you say?” ⁶ They said this to test him, because they wanted a reason to bring an accusation against him. Jesus bent down and wrote on the ground with his finger.

⁷ They continued to question him, so he stood up and replied, “Whoever hasn’t sinned should throw the first stone.” ⁸ Bending down again, he wrote on the ground. ⁹ Those who heard him went away, one by one, beginning with the elders. Finally, only Jesus and the woman were left in the middle of the crowd.

¹⁰ Jesus stood up and said to her, “Woman, where are they? Is there no one to condemn you?”

¹¹ She said, “No one, sir.”

Jesus said, “Neither do I condemn you. *Go, and from now on, don’t sin anymore.*”

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION & EXAMEN:

- What engaged you, enraged you, or surprised you in these texts?
- Jesus talks of living water and the spirit of God, that makes all things new. How and what things are made new in this scripture?
- Why are the religious leaders so set against Jesus?
- What invitation do you hear the Spirit of God speaking to you – or to us, as a church – to act, speak, be or change through this word of scripture?

LANGUAGE NOTES & TEXTUAL CONNECTIONS

¹⁴ The Word became flesh and made his home among us.

We have seen his glory, glory like that of a father’s only son, full of grace and truth.

¹⁵ John testified about him, crying out, “This is the one of whom I said, ‘He who comes after me is greater than me because he existed before me.’”

¹⁶ From his fullness we have all received grace upon grace;

¹⁷ as the Law was given through Moses, so grace and truth came into being through Jesus Christ.

¹⁸ No one has ever seen God.

God the only Son, who is at the Father’s side, has made God known.

Nicodemus:: We’re already seen Nicodemus in Chapter 3 when he comes to Jesus at night wondering about his authority.

the act of committing adultery :: the woman is caught in the very act of intercourse. According to Deuteronomy 19:15 there must have been at least two witnesses of the action, exclusive of the husband. Nothing is mentioned of them or of her lover, who must have escaped. (¹⁵ A solitary witness against someone in any crime, wrongdoing, or in any sort of misdeed that might be done is not sufficient. The decision must stand by two or three witnesses.)

IN THE LAW, MOSES COMMANDED US TO STONE WOMEN LIKE THIS :: ¹⁰ If a man commits adultery with a married woman, committing adultery with a neighbor’s wife, both the adulterer and the adulteress must be executed.” Leviticus 20:10 order the death penalty for such a sin, but doesn’t specific the manner of execution. Deuteronomy 22:21 specifies stoning as the punishment for unchastity on the part of a woman who is betrothed. Ezekiel 16:38-40 shows that stoning was the normal form of death penalty for all types of adultery.

Go, and from now on, don’t sin anymore :: This is the same exhortation to a new way of living as Jesus made to the healed paralytic in John 5:14 “Later Jesus found him in the temple and said, ‘See! You have been made well. Don’t sin anymore in case something worse happens to you.’”