



One Page Sermon

By Pastor Robb McCoy

February 25, 2024

Judgement of others

Recap of sermon from February 25, 2024

Scripture: John 8:1-11

“Don’t read the comments,” is a popular refrain online. It is a warning that if you see a cartoon, image, announcement, or video that you enjoy, you should not venture into the comments section. This is the place where anyone can share their thoughts, and almost every time, the comments section gets ugly.

It doesn’t matter the subject matter. It could be a video of a puppy playing with a kitten, and someone will make a rude, judgmental, or even cruel comment. It could be a congratulatory note for a team that wins a championship or an athlete or has an incredible accomplishment, and the comments will be full of criticism, comparisons, and tearing down the team or athlete.

People, emboldened by the distance and anonymity of the internet, lose all compassion or grace. If the post is about something controversial, forget about it. Abandon all hope of nuance, debate, logic, or even facts. Misinformation, lies, and insults will rule in the comments section as these Keyboard Warriors work to win arguments by any means necessary, but seldom seek to learn anything.

The “Keyboard Warrior” is a new moniker for an old phenomenon. Mob mentality and the power of shame have long been tools of division and suppression of community. In this moment in the Gospel of John, the legal experts were setting a trap for Jesus. They weren’t interested in dialog, nuance, or conversation. They were an angry mob who wanted simply to win and didn’t care who they hurt in the process.

They were no different from the keyboard warriors of today who do harm from a distance while never engaging in relationship or dialog. They were setting a trap for Jesus, one in which he would be forced to choose either the Jewish Torah or Roman Law. Adultery was not a capital offense under Roman authority. And while it was un-

der Deuteronomy, they were missing something important—the other person! Deuteronomy says that both participants in adultery should be put to death (it is unclear if adultery was ever enforced as a capital crime). The leaders were trying to force Jesus’ hand, and they didn’t care who they harmed in the process.

When Jesus knelt and drew in the dirt, he was engaging in a very practical form of de-escalation. They were demanding action. They were demanding outrage, and he refused to play into the outrage machine. He didn’t take the bait. Instead, he asked them to see the woman. He forced them to look at her, and in so doing, look at themselves.

To “Do Unto Others,” means that you take time hear, listen, and learn. The leaders opposed to Jesus wanted to win a battle. Jesus didn’t just win the battle, he showed that the battle was pointless. He exposed the inhumanity of the trap they were trying to set.

The outrage machine rages on and the comments section is a cesspool because people are more interested in winning than they are in each other’s humanity. Jesus didn’t give an answer to this difficult question. He called for reflection and self-assessment.

He turned the temperature down. He forced people to see the woman before them. He stripped the keyboard warriors of their power and revealed humanity. If we are going to move forward as a society and toward the Kingdom of God, perhaps we can do the same.



**Next Week: The Third Sunday of Lent
John 4:7-15, The woman at the well**