

26-0201p Transcript

26-0201p - *What Are You Looking At?*, John Nousek

Bible Reader: Tom Freed

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What Are You Looking At?

Scripture Reading

Scripture Reading (0:05 - 0:53): Tom Freed

John 8:2-6: (0:05) I'll be reading John 8, 2-6. (0:10) Early in the morning he came again into the temple, and all the people were coming to him. (0:16) And he sat down and began to teach them. (0:20) The scribes and the Pharisees brought a woman caught in adultery, and having set her in the center of the court, (0:25) they said to him, Teacher, this

continued

woman has been caught in adultery in the very act. (0:35) On the law, Moses commanded us to stone such a woman. (0:41) What then do you say? (0:43) They were saying this, testing him, that they might have grounds for accusing him. (0:49) But Jesus stooped down, and with his finger wrote on the ground. (0:53)

Transcript (0:05 - 29:32), Preacher: John Nousek

(0:58) Well, good evening. (1:00) Well, this evening you heard God's Word in John 8. (1:10) I'd like to back up for just a moment and sort of set the stage, if you will, (1:18) to give you an understanding, if you don't have it already, (1:22) of what was going on in the backdrop behind this event. (1:30) See, who's asking the question, first of all, where it says, (1:41) Now Moses, in the law, commanded that such should be stoned.

(1:45) But what do you say? (1:49) Oh, it's the Pharisees. It's the crowd. It's the scribes.

(1:52) They're bringing this woman, and they're asking Jesus Christ. (1:59) So, and who are these Pharisees? (2:04) In our words, today, we might call them the religious establishment. (2:11) They're who are, per se, in charge.

(2:15) Okay? (2:18) Let me read to you in Matthew, sort of where the scribes and the Pharisees are at, (2:24) mentally, with Jesus Christ. (2:28) It says in Matthew 7, starting in verse 21, (2:34) Not everyone who says to me, Lord, Lord, this is Jesus speaking, of course. (2:41) Not everyone who says to me, Lord, Lord, shall enter the kingdom of heaven, (2:45) but he who does the will of my Father in heaven.

(2:50) Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in your name, (2:57) passed out demons in your name, and done many wonders in your name? (3:01) And then I will declare to them, I never knew you. (3:07) Depart from me, you who practice lawlessness. (3:14) He goes on in verse 28.

(3:18) And so it was, when Jesus had ended these sayings, (3:21) all the people were astonished at his teaching. (3:24) For he taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes. (3:31) These

are the same scribes that are bringing this woman caught in adultery before him.

(3:38) See, he wasn't making any friends with the establishment. (3:43) Matter of fact, not only is he not making friends with the scribes, (3:50) he's actually talking against the scribes. (3:56) He's telling the scribes, it's not enough.

(4:03) See, in Matthew 23, 23 is actually, the whole chapter is devoted to, (4:14) woe to you scribes, over and over. (4:18) Woe to you scribes, woe to you scribes. (4:21) There are verses after verses, the whole thing, and it ends this way.

(4:28) It says, Matthew 23, 23. (4:32) Woe to you scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, (4:36) for you pay tithe of mint and anise and cumin, (4:46) and have neglected the weightier matters of the law, justice and mercy and faith. (4:54) These you ought to have done without leaving the others undone.

(5:03) See, today I brought this little prop. (5:07) This is a bottle. (5:08) It says on the outside, simply organic.

(5:12) That's lovely. (5:13) I've seen it at McCormick, the place that sells this stuff. (5:18) I'm sure others do too.

(5:20) But here it is. (5:22) See, the scribes and the Pharisees were bringing these three things, (5:26) mint, which you might know as a plant, a little parsley-looking plant, (5:32) grows wild if you let it, (5:37) and then this other thing called anise and then cumin. (5:42) Very similar, all from the same family of plants, parsley.

(5:47) And they would bring them in as their tithe. (5:50) See, they didn't have little green pieces of paper with (5:53) presidents of the United States' faces on this paper. (5:59) They had this.

(6:01) This was a source of value. (6:05) And they would bring it in as a tithe and say, (6:08) there you go, now we're good. (6:11) Paid up, if you will.

(6:15) But that's not what he's talking about. (6:17) Christ is telling them, (6:19) you have neglected the weightier matters of the law. (6:23) Yeah, you did that.

(6:24) Okay, that's great. (6:26) But you've neglected the weightier matters of the law. (6:29) Justice, mercy, and faith.

(6:33) You should have, these you ought to have done without leaving the others undone. (6:40) So I couldn't help myself. (6:43) I'm familiar with mint and barely familiar with this cumin stuff.

(6:49) I never use it. (6:51) I enjoy it, but I never cook with it. (6:53) I barely cook with it as it is.

(6:57) But I wasn't familiar with this stuff, anise. (7:02) So I had to look it up. (7:04) What are they bringing in? (7:06) So apparently it's also of the parsley family.

(7:12) And it's also called aniseed and rarely anise. (7:19) Okay, and it's native to the Mediterranean region. (7:25) Imagine that.

(7:26) So it was readily available or semi-available, (7:30) and they would bring it in after collecting it. (7:32) These very, very small seeds, like caraway seeds, real, real small, grind it up. (7:37) Now

you have a product that would be used for spices (7:40) or it would be used for medicinal reasons that had real value.

(7:47) The anise, look at this. (7:51) The flavor and aroma of its seeds have similarities with some other spices (7:55) and herbs such as fennel, tarragon, or licorice. (8:04) Licorice.

(8:05) So it's used in candy. (8:09) And anise is a sweet and aromatic distinguished by its characteristic flavor. (8:17) And this is something that relates to me.

(8:20) I don't really like it, but it says, (8:23) as well many regional and ethnic confectionaries including black jelly beans. (8:31) Yuck. (8:33) Don't like them.

(8:34) Doesn't matter. (8:35) That's what they use, apparently. (8:38) So this is a little, you know, sidebar.

(8:44) So after Matthew chapter 23, and I'll take you to John chapter 7, (8:58) 7.25 says, this is further giving you the sense of what the Pharisees (9:05) and the Sadducees and the scribes were thinking and seeing Jesus as. (9:12) In John 7.25 it reads, now some of them from Jerusalem said, (9:18) is this not he whom they seek to kill? (9:26) You know what? (9:27) With that backdrop, we read the very next chapter, John 8, (9:32) the woman caught in adultery. (9:35) They wanted him dead.

(9:38) They were willing to go through just probably just about anything, including murder. (9:43) You see this man taken from the face of the earth. (9:48) You see, this is not just a random question.

(9:52) They're trying to set him up very clearly. (9:59) I like to read, reread verses 2 through 6, but also continuing through 11. (10:09) Maybe a better picture yet.

(10:12) Early in the morning he came again into the temple, (10:15) and all the people came to him. (10:18) He sat down and taught them. (10:20) Then the scribes and Pharisees brought to him a woman caught in adultery.

(10:25) And when they had set her in the midst, they said to him, (10:29) Teacher, this woman was caught in adultery. (10:33) In the very act, now Moses in the law commanded that such should be stoned. (10:41) But what do you say? (10:44) This they said, testing him.

(10:48) That's the trap. (10:50) Then they might have something of which to accuse him. (10:56) But Jesus stooped down and wrote on the ground with his finger, (11:01) as though he did not hear.

(11:03) Verse 7. (11:05) So when they continued asking him, he raised himself up and said to them, (11:13) He who is without sin among you, let him throw a stone at her first. (11:21) And again he stooped down and wrote on the ground. (11:24) And then those who heard it, being convicted by their conscience, (11:30) went out one by one, beginning with the oldest, even to the last.

(11:37) And Jesus was left alone and the woman standing in the midst. (11:44) And Jesus had raised himself up and saw no one but the woman. (11:49) He said to her, Woman, where are those accusers of yours? (11:56) Has no one condemned you? (11:58) She said, No one, Lord.

(12:00) And Jesus said to her, Neither do I condemn you. (12:06) Go and sin no more. (12:11) You know, this passage I selected because it has a lot of different layers to it.

(12:19) There are some unexpected things as I read this. (12:27) There's a lot going on. (12:30) See, I said the Sadducees, the scribes, they're attempting to set a trap for Christ.

(12:37) Okay. (12:40) Jesus ignores the question posed to him. (12:45) Just ignores it.

(12:49) We were in a situation face to face with someone who wanted to kill us. (12:56) Eh, just ignore them. (12:59) Really? (13:01) I don't know.

(13:04) The Sadducees and the scribes wanted nothing less than this man to fall from the face of the earth, (13:12) even if it meant murder. (13:16) So Jesus ignores the prodding from the Sadducees and the scribes. (13:21) Jesus is being persecuted by these people.

(13:25) Yet he stoops down before them, completely exposing himself. (13:34) They're bullying him. (13:36) They want to push him around.

(13:38) They want to do anything they want to him. (13:41) Yet he stoops down to the ground, begins to write with his finger. (13:48) Ever heard about standing up to a bully? (13:53) Yeah, because bullies only accept force.

(14:02) Why does Jesus stoop down? (14:08) You stand up. (14:10) When you're in the world, you stand up. (14:14) But he doesn't have to.

(14:17) He knows that. (14:20) I just thought that was interesting. (14:24) This morning we heard Proverbs 21, verses 30 and 31.

(14:29) I found that interesting as well. (14:32) See, there is no wisdom or understanding or counsel against the Lord. (14:37) The horse is prepared for the day of battle, but deliverance is of the Lord.

(14:45) God didn't need to stand up to the scribes. (14:48) He was already up. (14:51) He's always been up.

(14:54) He's always on top. (15:00) Now there's another thing going on that I'm reading into this a little bit, (15:06) trying to think about what's being communicated here. (15:12) And I suppose Jesus is actually giving the Sadducees, the scribes, just a moment, just a pause, a cool.

(15:28) I don't know if that's exactly part of what's going on, but it seems like that is happening. (15:38) And Jesus is giving the woman a moment to really grasp the severity of what initially looks like the inevitable consequences of her actions. (15:48) She's come before the establishment, caught in the very act.

(15:52) Can't deny this one. (15:54) What's the consequence? (15:56) Hope I get off easy. (15:57) No, the law says stone, death.

(16:00) This is the end for you. (16:02) He's giving the woman, in a sense, a moment to grasp what's about to happen, where she is, what her condition is. (16:15) Very similar to our own condition before Christ comes into our life.

(16:26) But there are a lot of things in this passage that are not told to us. (16:30) And I think sometimes what's not said sometimes can be just as interesting and powerful as what is said. (16:39) From a worldly perspective, you'd expect more details.

(16:44) You'd expect to be given more information. (16:50) What isn't said or what isn't going on? (16:54) Consider this. (16:55) I suppose we could ask, well, isn't the woman greatly humiliated? (17:03) We might assume that.

(17:07) We don't know. (17:10) We don't know her thoughts. (17:12) For all we know, she might be like the woman we read about in Proverbs 30, verse 20.

(17:19) This is the way of an adulterous woman. (17:22) She eats and wipes her mouth and says, I've done nothing wrong. (17:30) We just don't have that information about this woman.

(17:36) We also don't know, for instance, where's the man that she was with? (17:41) Where's he? (17:44) Isn't he guilty? (17:46) Why isn't that guy up here? (17:51) And where's the woman's husband? (17:53) He's not mentioned. (17:57) If we assume she's married and maybe the man she was with was the married one, (18:10) and maybe she was married and maybe the man she was with was also married. (18:15) We just don't have this level of information.

(18:18) None of that is available. (18:21) And we're not told what Jesus was writing on the ground. (18:25) Isn't that interesting? (18:27) You know, I've heard this question.

(18:28) What is he doing writing on the ground? (18:29) What is that? (18:30) What's being said? (18:31) There must be some sort of information, something going on there. (18:37) And what about the woman? (18:38) What does she look like? (18:41) I'd imagine she's probably a pretty girl, probably a young woman, very pretty. (18:46) They seem to attract men, what women do.

(18:56) And yet we're not told also what does the woman do after she is told, (19:02) go and sin no more. (19:04) Many of the accounts in the New Testament were told, okay, (19:10) Jesus approaches this person and heals them and they go and tell, (19:15) or he says go and tell, or he says don't go and tell, (19:19) and then they do things like that. (19:23) And yet in this one, it's just left hanging.

(19:27) No information. (19:32) But see, and I didn't give this to you, I titled this sermon, (19:37) What Are You Looking At? (19:43) Because we're not given a lot of information because I believe God gives us (19:49) the information he wants us to be looking at. (19:55) So instead, let's not consider all the things we're not told about.

(20:00) Apparently that's not what we should be looking at. (20:03) Let's consider what we are given. (20:06) Instead, consider this.

(20:10) See, by pausing and then providing a response, Christ has demonstrated (20:16) or he's modeled for us the weightier things that he's talking about. (20:23) Justice, mercy, faithfulness. (20:26) See, justice because in this case, not one person spoke up for that woman.

(20:37) She's guilty just like we are, right? (20:42) She's guilty like we are. (20:46) But nobody said a peep. (20:48) There's no record of anyone.

(20:50) Excuse me, over here is my advocate. (20:55) Oh, mercy. (20:59) See, her guilt was removed.

(21:03) Christ said, neither do I condemn you. (21:09) And finally, faithfulness. (21:11) She's told to remain faithful.

(21:14) Go and sin no more. (21:20) That's what he's modeled in this account. (21:26) So doesn't Christ do the same with us as he did with this woman? (21:32) Of course he does.

(21:36) See, in Romans 5-8, God says, (21:39) but God demonstrates his own love for us (21:42) in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. (21:51) Wow. (21:53) So I'd like to ask, can each of us see ourselves in this account? (22:02) And I'm going to make the case, I'm making the statement that (22:06) I suppose we should be able to see ourselves, if we're truthful, (22:11) probably in each one of the layers in this account.

(22:18) See, a member of the crowd is eager to condemn the woman. (22:25) Have we not been members of a crowd that's been eager to condemn someone else? (22:30) How rude of that person. (22:33) How awful is he? (22:37) Of course, each one of us in our own way is a leader in our community.

(22:46) Like those older people that initially threw down the stone when he asked the question. (22:54) He told the folks, (22:57) he without the sin throws the first stone. (23:05) The sinful woman, obviously, was actively committing rebellion.

(23:10) I've been there. (23:16) I know what that is. (23:18) I know what that feels like.

(23:20) And I know it's wrong. (23:24) But the flip side is the forgiven woman, seconds later, (23:28) wow, she's off the hook. (23:30) She was about to be stoned to death.

(23:32) She was facing a huge crowd, aggressive, rock in hand, ready to go. (23:40) And all of a sudden the crowd's gone. (23:44) And he says, go and sin no more.

(23:51) Can we see ourselves attempting to be faithful followers in Christ's instructions to go and sin no more? (24:01) I hope so. (24:04) That's what I try to do. (24:10) Not successful every time.

(24:15) And sort of like we're asked to be little Christians, little Christs, copying Jesus's modeling for us. (24:29) See, he provided wisdom in the moment of confrontation. (24:33) He ignored the demands of the world.

(24:37) And instead demonstrated mercy to sinners. (24:43) One sinner in this moment. (24:48) And of course the elders, they saw themselves and they just walked away.

(24:54) They saw it right away. (24:57) So we should all remember this. (25:01) I'm going to ask you to try to remember this.

(25:03) Commit this to your memory if you haven't already. (25:05) See, it says in Romans 3.23, for all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God. (25:15) And so we need to be able to look in the mirror.

(25:20) But not to bring judgment upon ourselves, but instead simply recognize there is a standard. (25:29) We don't meet it. (25:31) That's it.

(25:34) We don't meet it. (25:35) So then I ask again, what are you looking at? (25:43) Are you looking in the mirror? (25:48) In Matthew 7. (25:50) This is the Sermon on the Mount. (25:52) It's coming to a close.

(25:53) The Sermon on the Mount. (25:55) Matthew 7, verses 3 through 5. (25:59) It reads, (26:02) Why do you look at the speck of sawdust in your brother's eye and pay no attention to the plank in your own eye? (26:11) How can you say to your brother, let me take the speck out of your eye? (26:16) All the time, there's a plank in your own eye. (26:20) You hypocrite.

(26:22) First, take the plank out of your own eye, and then you'll see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye. (26:33) Once we do that, once we see clearly, (26:39) looked in the mirror, we know our condition. (26:45) We know God's forgiven us for those that are in Christ.

(26:51) But once we do that, are we willing to act in a manner as God calls us? (26:57) See, it's not about the cumin or the mint or the anise day. (27:04) You don't bring a \$5 bill and you're good to go. (27:08) That's not how it works.

(27:13) The weightier matters. (27:15) Rightly seeking justice. (27:19) Rightly seeking justice.

(27:22) Being merciful to others and living faithful to his word. (27:28) We need to recognize our condition. (27:32) There are those outside of God's people, his church.

(27:37) There are those outside who need to be brought to repentance in order to avoid the everlasting pain of separation from God. (27:50) Separation from one who loves us. (27:54) Total darkness, weeping and gnashing of teeth, all these dreadful, horrible things for eternity.

(28:00) Which is a long time, by the way. (28:07) And those inside God's church, those in Christ, who have decided, once hearing the good news, to repent of their sins. (28:24) To confess Jesus Christ as Lord.

(28:28) To be baptized in accordance with his instruction. (28:34) You know, under the water and the whole thing. (28:37) And then to go and sin no more.

(28:44) Regardless of that, regardless of which group we're in, God's given us straightforward instructions on how to do that. (28:57) And I'm just grateful that he has put those words in our hands. (29:03) Because without that, we would be lost.

(29:06) We would be doomed. (29:06) We would be, where should I go? (29:11) Who else has the words of everlasting life? (29:15) I think Peter said once, it's Jesus Christ. (29:20) And for that, I am just grateful.

(29:23) And I'm glad I brought my cumin to demonstrate. (29:27) So, if there's anything that's needed, please step forward.