

# Drop Your Rocks

March 5 – John 8:1-11

BiAY.org | Daily Reflections NT  
Day 64 – 301 Days to Go

## Today in Your Reading

While Jesus was teaching in the Temple, the religious leaders brought an adulterous woman. According to the Law of Moses, both the man and the woman were to be put to death (*Lev. 20:10; Deut. 22:22*). However, the man was missing from the picture, which is an indication that these leaders were not seeking justice, but rather they were looking for a reason to accuse and arrest Jesus (*Jn. 8:6*).

If Jesus did not condemn the woman to death, He would be violating the Jewish Law. Jesus' response caught everyone by surprise. First, "He stooped down and with His finger wrote on the ground" (v.6). Second, He said, "**He who is without sin among you, let him be the first to cast a stone at her**" (v.7). As always, Jesus knew their motives and diffused an intense situation in a simple way. He had obeyed the Law and condemned the woman to death, yet He also freed her from her accusers.

While we don't know exactly what Jesus wrote on the ground, we do have some clues. First, notice the Bible specifically states that Jesus wrote something with His finger. The other times in the Bible where God wrote something with His finger was when He gave Moses the tablets with the commandments (*Ex. 31:18*) and when He judged King Belshazzar for his evil actions (*Dan. 5:5, 24-28*). It is possible that Jesus reminded bystanders of the law of God, that they fell short of that law, and that they deserved judgment and death.

It is also possible that Jesus wrote down a passage from the Old Testament, perhaps *Hosea 4:13, 14*, which condemns the men of Israel for their adulterous affairs. The Bible says that Jesus stooped and wrote twice on the ground. Perhaps He was writing the names of the men who were guilty of the same sin as the adulterous woman. Notice that they left the scene one by one, from the oldest to the youngest. Perhaps, they had all been with her.

Jesus may have been fulfilling prophecy by writing on the ground. *Jeremiah 17:13* says, "All who forsake You will be put to shame. Those who turn away from You will be written in the earth, for they have forsaken the Lord, the fountain of the living water" (ESV). Notice the timing of the story. It follows Jesus describing Himself as "living water" (*Jn. 7:37, 38*).

## Daily Reflection

Whatever Jesus wrote that day does not matter. It was effective, especially when connected to His statement, "He who is without sin, let him be the first to cast a stone." After everyone walked away, Jesus was left alone with the woman. The picture is clear. No man is without sin, and Jesus, the only one who is without sin, forgave the woman.

**We are professional rock-throwers.** We know how to zing them and hurt others badly. We are also quick to point fingers, to spotlight others' failures and shortcomings. However, that same finger is pointed at us.

Why are we so eager to "pick up stones and throw them" at other people? Perhaps, it is because we think or believe that we are better than them. But our standard for comparison is not to be other people. Our standard is Christ, of which we fall considerably short.

With whom do you identify in the story? So often, we are the people in the crowd ready to pummel the sinner, when we are really the woman who stands condemned. In truth, God's law dooms each of us. We will stand before Him, condemned by our many failures, but because of Christ, He will look at us and say, "Where are your accusers? I do not condemn you."

**Do you have rocks in your hands today?** Are you ready to throw them at someone in particular? Imagine Jesus writing your sins in the dirt, then saying to you, "Go ahead and throw your rocks, if you are not guilty of these."

# I Am

March 6 – John 8:12-59

BiAY.org | Daily Reflections NT  
Day 65 – 300 Days to Go

## Today in Your Reading

Jesus debated the religious leaders about His identity. It was an epic showdown that started the ball rolling towards His betrayal, arrest, and crucifixion. They had been looking for charges to raise against Jesus, and today He gave them plenty of ammunition to aim at Him when the time came for His trial.

The conflict started when Jesus called Himself “the Light of the world” (v.12). With this statement, He fulfilled Isaiah’s prophecies, that “the people who were in darkness would see a great light” (9:2; 42:6, 7). Simply put, Jesus was claiming to be the way out of spiritual darkness. “He who follows Me,” He said, “will not walk in darkness but will have the Light of life.” It didn’t take long for the religious officials to recognize that Jesus was claiming to be the promised Messiah, and thus the battle began.

“You are testifying of Yourself,” they said. “But your testimony is not true” (v.13). According to the Mosaic law, to make such a claim as Jesus was, He had to have the statement of two men, so the Pharisees asked for Jesus’ second witness (v.17). When Jesus told them that His second witness was His heavenly Father, the situation intensified (v.18-30).

But then, Jesus made another explosive statement, “If you will continue in My word... you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free” (v.31, 32). But the people asked why they needed to be set free? They had never been enslaved. This allowed Jesus to explain mankind’s enslavement to sin, which leads to death (v.34). He said, “If anyone keeps My word, he will never taste of death” (v.51).

The Pharisees’ answer to this claim was to point to the fact that they were descendants of Abraham (v.39). But Jesus told them it didn’t matter who their forefathers were. That alone did not release them from the bondage of sin. Only faith in Him as the Savior could do that.

Jesus went a step further and told them that they were not of their father Abraham, but of the devil, because they sought to kill Him (v.44). Then He told them that Abraham looked forward to the day when the promised One would come and deliver them from sin and death. Now that He was here, Abraham’s descendants sought to destroy Him.

The climax of the debate came when the Pharisees finally asked, “Who do You make yourself out to be? Have you seen Abraham?” (v.53). When Jesus replied that before Abraham was born, “I Am,” they picked up stones to kill Him. With those words, **Jesus was claiming to be the great I Am, God in the flesh**, but in their minds, that was taking matters too far.

## Daily Reflection

When we read a conversation like this one, John’s prologue at the opening of his book begins to make more sense. “Jesus was in the world, and the world was made through Him, and the world did not know Him. He came to His own, and they did not receive Him” (1:10, 11).

The world does not understand spiritual issues. Read *1 Corinthians 2:12-14* and *2 Corinthians 4:3, 4*. How does Paul explain this truth?

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Notice that Jesus only presented two options — light or darkness, slavery or freedom, life or death, truth or lies. There is no middle ground. There is no gray area. We are either with Him or against Him. Without Him, we are trapped forever in our sin. **With Him, we have the delight of knowing that we will spend eternity with the great I Am.**

# Lambs Treading on Serpents

March 7 – Luke 10:1-24

BiAY.org | Daily Reflections NT  
Day 66 – 299 Days to Go

## Today in Your Reading

Jesus sent out 70 messengers to cities that He would soon visit, perhaps to prepare the way for His final trip to Jerusalem. We are not sure why He chose 70. Perhaps this number was another connection to Moses, who also chose 70 leaders (*Num. 11:16*). However, Jesus sent these witnesses in pairs as the Law prescribed (*Deut. 17:6*). His instructions to them were like those given earlier to His disciples (*Matt. 10*).

They were not to take with them extra money, clothes, or shoes (*Lk. 10:4*). Rather they were to rely upon the hospitality of the people in the towns they visited. They were to travel with urgency, not to delay with long greetings (*v.4*). They were to repay hospitality with a blessing of peace over the house and to heal anyone who was sick (*v.5-9*).

These messengers were not to force Christ on anyone. If they were rejected, they were to shake off the dust of their feet and move on, leaving those who rejected Christ to their judgment (*v.10-16*). Here is another reminder that as we “fish for men” or souls to save, we never do it forcefully. We faithfully cast our line, and those whom God has called to Himself will “bite.” If the fish do not respond, we simply move on to another fishing spot.

We don’t know how long the 70 were given to complete their task, rather Luke skipped to the time of their return. Evidently, they were so excited to tell Jesus all that happened (*v.17*). Imagine a team returning from a mission trip. No doubt, every pair had stories to tell of what God was doing in the lives of people.

Even Jesus was encouraged by the reports. He told His disciples that they were privileged to witness these events, for kings and prophets longed to see this day (*v.23, 24*). Israel’s redemption was here, and God was restoring His people through His promised Messiah.

## Daily Reflection

This record of the 70 messengers was a glimpse of what it will be like when the church is empowered and released by the Holy Spirit in the book of *Acts*. Messengers in the name of Christ will invade the kingdom of Satan and destroy his strongholds in the lives of individuals, families, and whole communities.

In fact, though Jesus sent His messengers out like “lambs in the midst of wolves” (*v.3*), **He gave them “authority to tread on serpents and scorpions and over all the power of the enemy”** (*v.19*). Here is a partial fulfillment of *Genesis 3:15*, when those followers of the Promised One will crush the head of the serpent. Of course, the final fulfillment of this prophecy will occur with Jesus’ death on the cross.

With Christ’s Spirit dwelling in us, we have incredible spiritual power to overcome strongholds that the enemy has built. But do we recognize this truth? We are not to be lambs who run from danger or who cower in the face of the enemy. We are to be courageous, fearless warriors, facing the enemy with the power of God, **lambs treading on serpents!**

Read *2 Corinthians 10:3*. What fortresses have you seen torn down, ways in which the Spirit in you has overcome the enemy?

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This spiritual power should not make us prideful. We are only capable of great things because Christ is in us, working through us. Rather, we are to be thankful, as Jesus said, that our names are recorded in heaven in the Lamb’s Book of Life (*Lk. 10:20*).

# Won't You Be My Neighbor?

March 8 – Luke 10:25-37

BiAY.org | Daily Reflections NT  
Day 67 – 298 Days to Go

## Today in Your Reading

Jesus told the parable of the Good Samaritan. However, we often overlook the story before the story. The parable was His response to a lawyer (i.e., scribe or Pharisee) who was there to test Jesus. He was trying to find an offense of which to accuse Him (v.25). As always, Jesus turned the interrogation into a way to reveal the man's evil intentions and depraved heart.

The lawyer asked, "What must I do to inherit eternal life?" However, Jesus knew that he did not genuinely want to know the answer, but rather that he believed that he was already on his way to heaven because of his adherence to the law. So, Jesus asked him to summarize the law. How would the law answer this question? The lawyer answered Jesus correctly by saying, "Love God and love your neighbor as yourself."

Jesus' reply may surprise us here. He said, "Do this and you will live" (v.28). Was He teaching a works-based salvation, implying that if the man would follow the law, He would inherit eternal life? It would appear so. However, Jesus knew that no man could perfectly follow the law of God. The Lord gave us the law not as a means of salvation but to reveal our sinfulness, our inability to live up to His standard of righteousness. In other words, the law was meant to show us our need for a Savior.

The lawyer knew that he could not follow the law. Consequently, he would not inherit eternal life. Jesus' response worked. The man's conscience condemned him, and he sought to justify himself (v.29). His next question was a lawyer's dodge, deflecting the attention to another subject by asking, "Who is my neighbor?" What he was really asking was, "Whom can I exclude as my neighbor?"

The Jews had a narrow definition of neighbor. It did not include sinners (i.e., prostitutes), tax-collectors, Gentiles, or Samaritans (half-Jews). Thus, Jesus' parable was quite shocking.

## Daily Reflection

The first two men to see the wounded traveler were a priest and a Levite, religious people (like us). **However, they did not get involved.** If we were to interview them and ask why they didn't help, what might be some of their excuses?

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**The Samaritan had compassion for the injured man when he saw him. He cared for the man without asking who he was and without thinking of the cost. He also expected nothing in return.** If we were to interview the Samaritan and ask why he stopped to help, how might he answer?

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Record a time when you've received kindness from a stranger. How did that make you feel?

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With which of these men do you most identify? Have you ever used excuses to avoid helping others? The first two men thought, "What will happen to me if I stop to help?" The Samaritan thought, **"What will happen to this man if I don't stop to help?"** What kind of neighbor are you?

# Martha or Mary?

March 9 – Luke 10:38-42

BiAY.org | Daily Reflections NT  
Day 68 – 297 Days to Go

## Today in Your Reading

Jesus visited the home of Mary and Martha. To be transparent, I came close to lumping this short story with the next section, but I did not sense that was the right decision. While it may seem ridiculous to read and focus on only five verses, I believe there are some simple truths here that can have a big impact on our lives.

While Luke does not disclose Jesus' location, John later tells us that Mary and Martha live in Bethany, which is close to Jerusalem (*Jn. 11:1*). We also learn later that Mary and Martha have a brother named Lazarus (also *11:1*). These three become dear friends and followers of Jesus.

In just five verses, we can learn a lot about the two sisters. We can assume that Martha is the oldest (firstborn) as the story takes place in her home (v.38). Apparently, Martha has the gift of hospitality because she welcomed Jesus into her home and prepared a meal for at least fifteen people (Jesus, His disciples, and the sisters). To assume a task that large, Martha was a responsible, task-oriented person (a doer).

However, amid her preparations, Martha grew frustrated, and why not since she was doing all the work by herself? She may have even asked Mary to help, but to no avail. Unfortunately, her to-do list overwhelmed her, and her frustration boiled over. She even took it out on Jesus, claiming that He did not care that she was doing everything by herself. In essence, she was saying, "Do you not see all that I am doing for You, Lord? Could you send someone to help?"

But Jesus gently responded to Martha, pointing out that she had allowed her tasks to make her tense. Her sacrifice and desire to serve had caused her stress. Jesus said, "You are worried (anxious) and bothered (troubled) by so many things, but only one thing is necessary." He was referring to Himself. While He appreciated her service, she was missing the Savior. **Doing for Jesus took priority over being with Jesus.**

While we are not told how Martha responded, I imagine she stopped what she was doing and joined her sister Mary. Luke said, "Mary was sitting at the Lord's feet, listening to His word" (v.39). Apparently, she did not want to miss a minute with the Messiah. Everything else could wait. Her attention and affection were on the Lord. **She chose to worship Him instead of waiting on Him. She chose time with Jesus instead of tasks for Jesus.** Mary had made the better choice, as Jesus said, "The good part that shall not be taken away" (v.42).

## Daily Reflection

This simple story is about priorities. A priority is that which takes precedence in place or rank. While we may have many priorities, there will always be one that comes first. What is it? While there is nothing wrong with serving the Lord, sacrificing time and effort doing good for God, but **tasks for the Lord must never precede time with the Lord.** He is your first priority.

With which sister do you most identify? Why?

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We have so many loves in this life that they often overshadow our first love (*Rev. 2:4*). What are some of those distractions for you?

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**Are you Martha or Mary? It's a choice.** Choose the "good part." Sit at the Lord's feet and listen. Everything else can wait.

# How Much More?

March 10 – Luke 11:1-13

BiAY.org | Daily Reflections NT  
Day 69 – 296 Days to Go

## Today in Your Reading

Jesus taught the disciples to pray. His instructions were similar to the prayer that He demonstrated in the Sermon on the Mount (*Matt. 6:9-13*). Prayer is simply communication with God. Just as we can speak to other people in the physical sense, so we are able to speak to God in the spiritual sense. We can pray anytime, anywhere, and He hears us. He also responds to prayer, most often through His written Word (the Bible).

There are many reasons why we pray, for example to remind us of our dependence on the Lord for provision, for protection, for wisdom, for forgiveness, and much more. Prayer is a way for us to praise and worship God, to glorify Him, and to focus our mind and heart on His will for our lives, to “seek first His righteousness” (*Matt. 6:33*). Prayer should be a natural rhythm of the Christian life. In fact, Paul encouraged us to “pray without ceasing” (*1 Thess. 5:17*).

When we pray, we should approach God with familial respect, as we would if our earthly father was also a king (v.2). While we should be grateful to have an audience with Him, we should also submit to His will and plan (v.2). In prayer, we can humbly ask for His provision (our daily bread), forgiveness, and help against temptation (v.3, 4). Prayer is an open line of communication with God, to admit faults, to share thoughts and feelings, to beg for help, to vent frustration, and to intercede for others.

At the end of the passage, Jesus shared some parables related to prayer. One was about a friend needing a favor at the most inconvenient time. The point of the story was this — if someone is willing to help an annoying friend in the middle of the night, **how much more** will our heavenly Father who loves us answer us when we pray? Another parable posed a similar question. If our imperfect earthly fathers know how to give good gifts, then **how much more** will our heavenly Father give us when we ask?

## Daily Reflection

The point of Jesus’ lesson is simple. **God answers prayer**, so keep praying, keep seeking, keep asking, and keep knocking.

However, we must be cautious with prayer and heed several warnings.

Read *James 1:5-8*. What is the first warning?

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Next, read *Matthew 6:5-8*. What is the second warning?

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Now, read *1 John 5:14, 15*. What is the third warning?

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Finally, while God answers prayer, His answer may not be what we want to hear, nor will His timing be what we prefer. Sometimes, God says “Yes.” Sometimes, He says, “No,” and often He says, “Not yet.” But we can be assured that all of His answers are for His glory and our good.

God answers prayer, but do we pray? While it should be like breathing for us, our lives are evidence of prayerlessness. “**He is able to do far more abundantly beyond all that we ask or think...**” if we will pray (*Eph. 3:20, 21*).



# Something Greater Is Here

March 11 – Luke 11:14-36

BiAY.org | Daily Reflections NT  
Day 70 – 295 Days to Go

## Today in Your Reading

Jesus had another confrontation with the unbelieving Jews, probably stirred up by the religious leaders. The controversy followed the removal of a demon from a man who couldn't speak (v.14). Once again, they claimed that Jesus' actions were empowered by the devil, whom they called Beelzebul (v.15, like in *Matt. 12:24-29*). Beelzebul is an Old Testament reference to the false god, "Baal, the prince."

After Jesus pointed out the absurdity of their claim, that Satan would not work against his own allies (v.17-19), He told them that this power was evidence of "the finger of God" (v.20). Every Jew was familiar with this reference. When the magicians and sorcerers of Egypt could not repeat the plagues of God, they told Pharaoh that these were the works of "the finger of God" (*Ex. 8:19*). Jesus went on to explain that while Satan is strong, **something greater and stronger was standing among them**. For the Son of God was able to bind the strong man and loot his house (v.21, 22).

Next, Jesus shared a strange parable about a wandering demon returning with seven friends (v.24-26). In the context of the conversation, this parable related directly to the Jews as individuals and as a nation. They were standing in the very presence of the Son of God, hearing His words. The kingdom of God was in their midst (v.20). All they had to do was believe in Him. If they didn't, they proved that they were against Him (v.23), and the evil that awaited them would be worse than before He arrived. Jesus reinforced this truth when He said, "Blessed are those who hear the word of God and observe it" (v.28).

Next, Jesus pointed out how hard-hearted that generation was, as they were seeking a sign (v.29-32). He told them that they were worse than the Ninevites who heard Jonah and worse than the Queen of Sheba who traveled to hear the wise King Solomon. **Something greater than**

**Jonah and Solomon was in their midst, the Messiah**, and if they rejected that opportunity to follow the Light, they would forever be filled with darkness (v.33-36).

## Daily Reflection

No doubt, you have heard someone say, "I don't see any evidence for God. If He would only show me something, a sign, then I would believe in Him." Untrue. The people in Jesus' day were privileged to see more than any generation in history, yet they chose not to believe in Him.

What is it about us that we desire a sign to prove that something or someone is true?

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Even today, we often put our trust in the things we can see. List some examples.

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The problem is that these things will fail us. Any earthly relationship, any earthly possession, and any earthly experience will eventually leave us empty and disappointed.

**Something greater is here!** The God of heaven and earth came to live among us, to redeem us from our fallen state, to make us new creatures, and to give us eternal life!

The world says, "Let us see, and we will believe." But the Lord says, "Believe, and you will see." Then, our darkness will be illumined by the Light.