

Stooping and Writing

And again, he stooped down, and wrote on the ground. – John 8:8

The account of the woman taken in adultery brought before Jesus is so instructive and characteristic of our Lord that we do well to pause and consider every word. Let us meditate for a few moments upon the deep significance in Christ's actions of twice stooping down and writing on the ground.

The situation was dire. The woman was caught in the act of adultery. The text implies there were sufficient witnesses to fulfill the Mosaic Law for condemnation. Among the witnesses were conspirators – trying to trap Jesus in order to either expose Him as a fraud or diminish His following and influence. Both objectives were likely in play. They presented to our Master what they thought was an iron-clad dilemma. If He agreed that she should be stoned according to the Law, the people would perceive Him a fraud. Why is this poor woman of less worth than the rag-tag retinue of harlots and publicans that comprise the core of His most devoted followers? Were they next? Not to mention, following through with the Mosaic prescription would be tantamount to insurrection, for only Rome had the right to capital punishment. But if He simply dismissed the case, it would be apparent that He was mocking God's Law, stripping it in the eyes of the nation of all of its historic and moral authority. They surely had Him. So, what would Jesus do? He stooped down and wrote on the ground.

Whatever our Lord wrote convicted the hearts of every accuser. Not one of them could escape their own conscience, and one by one, they left. With no accusers, the decision was Jesus' alone as to what to do with this sinful woman. He chose to dismiss the case, sending her on her way to sin no more. The Law was upheld, and mercy was shown.

And are we not all this woman – caught red-handed in our sinful state, dead in our trespasses and sins while we live? There are many witnesses against us. Our own conscience condemns us. The devil actually tells the truth when he accuses us before the throne of God night and day. The Law must be upheld. We must be condemned. But before the first stone could come speeding our way from the bar of Heaven, something grand and marvelous and unimaginable happened. The Logos stooped down – all the way down. Down to where we tread. He thought it not robbery to be equal with God, but made Himself of no reputation, and was made in the likeness of men. And He wrote on the ground. This ground. The dust humanity treads. He wrote the love and mercy and grace of God in a brief thirty-three year Life that has impacted mankind for millennia and is speaking still. And if that were not enough, he stooped down again, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. There on Calvary, His blood copiously ran down onto the ground below, penning the unfathomable love of God for sinners as He was made sin for us, Who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him. And from that cross do we not hear, "Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more."

Indeed, the Law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ. Let us live today unto our Lord Who liberated us and showed us such great mercy. -- *D. Murcek*