Oak Grove Church of Christ Newsletter - 2026.11.08

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Speaker-AM: Jamie Rinehart
Title: Anxiety
Recording:

Speaker-PM: Robbie Moreland
Title: Blessings From God
Recording:





Article

On Throwing Stones, 11/8/2026 by Terry Wane Benton

The story of Jesus saying, “He that is without sin, let him throw the first stone,” is very misused today. Stoning as a form of execution under the Law of Moses (which Jesus was under) would never have occurred as commanded by God if all witnesses to a crime had to be sinlessly perfect. Jesus did not mean that, or He would have imposed a new rule that destroyed the law before He took it out of the way at the cross. Under the Law, a witness to a crime only had to avoid being involved in the very sin he was testifying against. In other words, were these testifying against the woman caught in adultery, guilty of the same thing, adultery? Perhaps they knew just where to find this woman that morning because they had been with her themselves? Where was the man? Now she suddenly became useful to bring before Jesus, contrary to the Law? (John 8).

Did Jesus let the woman go because He did not uphold the Law? No! Jesus was upholding the Law, which commanded that in cases of adultery, both the man and woman were to be brought, not just the woman, and the Law said the witnesses against another could not be involved in unfair testimony where they themselves were involved in the same act, and were so sure of their eyewitness responsibility that they were willing to cast the first stone (literally). (Leviticus 20:10; Deuteronomy 17:6-7; 19:15-21).

The woman’s accusers were breaking every one of those rules. False witnessing was also punishable by death. So, Jesus was not making a new rule that you can never point out sin of any kind in another unless you are first perfect, but He was saying in cases where the death sentence was carried out, the witnesses to a crime had to be honest witnesses who were ready to pass the tests of true eyewitness duties:

- Bringing both parties caught in the act,
- Not be involved in the crime, and
- Be so sure of their testimony that they would literally throw the first stone, aware of the penalty for false witnessing.

Since there were none to fill the true witness role in this case, the woman was not condemned to the death sentence by Jesus. Jesus did the right thing here as always.

Jesus did not let the woman off the hook. He told her she sinned and to ”go and sin no more.” So it is right to point out sin (Ephesians 5:11). The church at Corinth did not have to wait until they were all perfect before dealing with the man who had his father’s wife (I Corinthians 5:1ff). They were not involved in a capital case of stoning. They were involved with a case of sin among them. They did not all have to be perfect before dealing with the brother and warning him that sin will condemn his soul before God.

When sin is open and known, we have a duty to warn the sinner that he cannot continue in sin so that grace may abound (Romans 6:1f; I Corinthians 5-6). Warning about sin is not “throwing stones.” If warning about sin is always “throwing stones,” then we can never confront sin under any circumstances. No! Confronting sin is not “throwing stones.” It is more like confronting people with truth so they can repent and escape the error of their actions before God. We cannot protect sin by telling everyone that they cannot warn about sin unless they are first sinless in every other way. That only furthers sin and helps people feel comfortable continuing in it. That is not what Jesus was teaching in John 8. Exposing the unfruitful works of darkness (Ephesians 5:11) is not “throwing stones.”