**JUST A STONE’S THROW AWAY!** John 8:1-11  
  
There was a man that told his friend that they had dismissed their pastor. His friend asked, why? The man said, “Because he told us we we’re going to hell.” The friend asked, “What does your new pastor say?” The man said, “He says we’re going to hell, too!” The friend said, “So what’s the difference?” The man said, “When the first pastor said it, he sounded like he was glad about it. When the new pastor says it, it sounds like it’s breaking his heart.”

It was said of D.L. Moody that he could never speak about hell without weeping. You can’t read the New Testament without finding a trail of tears of compassion for hurting, broken and sinful people. There has never been a greater time for the church to love like Jesus loves than today. It should be our prayer and desire to see people through the eyes of Jesus and love people with God’s love.

We will never be able to win the lost and to help the fallen if we don’t love them first. We can mouth all the right words and quote all the scriptures but it is love that causes others to see Christ in us. Anyone can shout at people and condemn them but it takes the heart of Christ to feel deep sorrow for hurting and lost souls.

If you can laugh about someone going to hell then you don’t have the heart of Christ. If you can make light of someone ravaged by sin then you don’t have the heart of Christ. Jesus wept over an entire city because they were lost. He wept at the tomb of Lazarus because He has great compassion.

The definition for compassion is: “Sympathy, empathy, concern, kindness, consideration and care”

[Psalm 145:8](http://www.sermoncentral.com/bible/NIV/Psalm-145.asp?passage=Psalm%20145%3A8&ScrptureHover=sermon-96243-JUST%20A%20STONE) The Lord is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and rich in love.

[Psalm 78:38](http://www.sermoncentral.com/bible/NIV/Psalm-78.asp?passage=Psalm%2078%3A38&ScrptureHover=sermon-96243-JUST%20A%20STONE) Yet he was merciful; he forgave their iniquities and did not destroy them. Time after time he restrained his anger and did not stir up his full wrath.

How many times has He been gracious to you? How many times in His compassion has He forgiven you? How many times in His compassion has He kept back His wrath from you?

[Lamentations 3:22](http://www.sermoncentral.com/bible/NIV/Lamentations-3.asp?passage=Lamentations%203%3A22&ScrptureHover=sermon-96243-JUST%20A%20STONE) Because of the Lord’s great love we are not consumed, for his compassions never fail.

I. AN ADULTEROUS WOMAN  
A. This story begins early one morning when a crowd gathered in the temple courts to hear Jesus teach. The Feast of Tabernacles had just come to a close, which meant the great crowds were still in Jerusalem. While Jesus was teaching He was interrupted by a crowd of men that brought to Him an adulterous woman.

These men were teachers of the law and Pharisees. They were very religious, well educated and reputed to be men of wisdom and high moral standards. However they were proud, arrogant, ruthless and hypocritical. There is no compassion or concern shown for this woman. She was guilty of the terrible sin of adultery.

Adultery is mentioned 15 times in the OT and 18 times in the NT.   
[Proverbs 6:32-33](http://www.sermoncentral.com/bible/NIV/Proverbs-6.asp?passage=Proverbs%206%3A32-33&ScrptureHover=sermon-96243-JUST%20A%20STONE) But a man who commits adultery has no sense; whoever does so destroys himself. Blows and disgrace are his lot, and his shame will never be wiped away.   
“Thou shalt not commit adultery” is the seventh commandment.  
According to [Leviticus 20:10](http://www.sermoncentral.com/bible/NIV/Leviticus-20.asp?passage=Leviticus%2020%3A10&ScrptureHover=sermon-96243-JUST%20A%20STONE) and [Deuteronomy 22:22](http://www.sermoncentral.com/bible/NIV/Deuteronomy-22.asp?passage=Deuteronomy%2022%3A22&ScrptureHover=sermon-96243-JUST%20A%20STONE), both parties to adultery were to be put to death under the law.  
The rabbis taught that a man should take his own life rather than commit idolatry, adultery or murder. Adultery by definition requires two people, the woman is guilty but the greater guilt lies with the man because he is the responsible spiritual leader in the eyes of the Lord.

This woman was guilty!  
There was never any question concerning her guilt and she does not deny that she is guilty. She deserved death for her sin and she was just a stone’s throw away from paying the price for her sin. Her life hung in the balance and a death penalty was hanging over her head.

We don’t know who this woman was. We don’t know how old she was! We don’t know if she was single, engaged or married! We do know that she was caught in the act of adultery.  
a. I can picture her disheveled, tired, nervous, afraid and humiliated.  
b. These men dragged her to the temple, shouting out her sin for all to hear and threw her at the feet of Jesus.  
c. A crowd of people stare at her and whisper to one another.

J. Can you put yourself in her place?  
a. Suppose you’ve been struggling with some sin which no one knows about.  
b. Imagine how you would feel if you were brought in front of the church and everyone was told about your sin.  
c. Imagine the shame, guilt and embarrassment you would feel in front of your friends, peers, family and strangers.

The scribes and Pharisees all stood armed with stones ready to take her life.

II. JUDGMENT CALLED BUT MERCY ANSWERED!  
The penalty called for judgment! The sin demanded death!  
F.B. Meyer said,   
“It is a terrible thing for a sinner to fall into the hands of his fellow sinners.”

When David sinned by disobeying the Lord by numbering Israel he invoked the wrath of God.  
God sent the prophet Gad with a choice of judgments:  
• 7 years of famine  
• 3 months being pursued by his enemies.  
• 3 days of pestilence.  
[2 Samuel 24:14](http://www.sermoncentral.com/bible/NIV/2-Samuel%2024.asp?passage=2%20Samuel%2024%3A14&ScrptureHover=sermon-96243-JUST%20A%20STONE) David said to Gad, “I am in deep distress. Let us fall into the hands of the Lord, for his mercy is great; but do not let me fall into human hands.”  
David knew that it was a terrible thing to fall into the hands of men but he knew that God is merciful! I would rather fall into the hands of God any day than into the hands of men.

[Psalm 103:14](http://www.sermoncentral.com/bible/NIV/Psalm-103.asp?passage=Psalm%20103%3A14&ScrptureHover=sermon-96243-JUST%20A%20STONE) for he knows how we are formed, he remembers that we are dust.

[Matthew 26:41](http://www.sermoncentral.com/bible/NIV/Matthew-26.asp?passage=Matthew%2026%3A41&ScrptureHover=sermon-96243-JUST%20A%20STONE) “Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak.”

How frightening it must have been for this woman to look up into the faces of this self-righteous and judgmental crowd. They are so angry that they are ready to stone her to death! They were waiting for Jesus to give them the word and they would take this woman’s life. She was just a stone’s throw away from death.  
In their smug and pious self-righteousness they declared, “The Bible says that she should be stoned but what do you say?”  
a. Jesus acted as if He didn’t even hear them.  
b. He stooped down and with his finger He began to write something on the ground.  
Have you ever wondered what He wrote?

They kept asking Him and Jesus stood up and said,  
“He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her.”  
a. He stooped down again and began to write on the ground.  
b. He may have written:  
They became convicted by their own conscience and with a dull thud the stones fell to the ground and they left one by one.  
a. Jesus then asked this broken, distraught and humiliated woman,  
“Where are your accusers? Has no man condemned you?”  
b. She looked around through tear filled eyes and saw that they had all left.  
She said, “No man, Lord.” There’s no one left to condemn me but you!  
Jesus said to her, “Neither do I condemn you: go, and sin no more”

III. THE LOVE OF GOD!  
Jesus said that the two greatest commandments are these:   
“Love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind” and “love your neighbor as yourself.” Everything hangs on these two commandments!

[John 13:34-35](http://www.sermoncentral.com/bible/NIV/John-13.asp?passage=John%2013%3A34-35&ScrptureHover=sermon-96243-JUST%20A%20STONE) “A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.”

The greatest need we have today is for love!  
• Love goes the extra mile!  
• Love gives the coat and the cloak!  
• Love turns the other cheek!  
• Love prays for our enemies!  
• Love does good to those that spitefully use you.  
Prophesies will fail! Tongues will cease! Knowledge will vanish!  
But love will remain forever!  
Love is better than the tongues of men and angels!  
a. A man or woman can speak in tongues, they might be a great orator and they may even sound angelic. But apart from love it is a sounding brass and a tinkling cymbal!  
Love is better than the gifts of prophecy, knowledge and faith.   
a. All the preaching, teaching and prophecy…All the faith and knowledge…  
Apart from love is nothing!  
Love is better than personal sacrifice!  
a. Benevolent and charitable acts are of no value without love.  
Love is a more excellent way!

When Paul talked about love in [I Corinthians 13](http://www.sermoncentral.com/bible/NIV/I-Corinthians%2013.asp?passage=I%20Corinthians%2013&ScrptureHover=sermon-96243-JUST%20A%20STONE) he didn’t try to define it he just listed some things that love is and love is not.  
1. Love is NOT envious!  
a. It desires the best for others!  
b. There is no jealousy toward those with more ability, honor or abundance.  
2. Love is NOT boastful!  
a. It does not put on a parade or a show!  
b. It does not toot its own horn!  
3. Love is NOT proud!  
a. It is never conceited!  
4. Love is NOT rude!  
a. It has good manners and is courteous.  
b. It is never discourteous or tactless.  
c. It is sensitive and causes others to feel comfortable.  
d. It is polite.  
5. Love is NOT self-seeking.  
a. It does not insist on having its own way.  
6. Love does NOT break out into sudden anger!  
a. It does not lose its temper!  
7. Love does NOT keep a record of wrongs!  
a. It covers a multitude of sins!  
8. Love does NOT rejoice in iniquity!  
a. It does not rejoice in the failings and sins of others.  
b. Love grieves when others fall.  
Then Paul tells us what love does do!  
1. Love suffers long because love is patient.  
2. Love is kind!  
3. Love rejoices in the truth.  
4. Love bears all things!  
5. Love believes all things or is trusting and never loses faith!  
6. Love endures all things!  
Love is the greatest of all things!

1. Love caused Joseph to forgive his brothers after they threw him in a pit and then sold him as a slave. He didn’t retaliate but forgave them and saved them from starvation.  
2. Love made Abraham go after Lot. Even after Lot chose the well-watered plains of Jordan and left his uncle on a rocky hillside. Lot’s family became infected with the evil of Sodom. He was taken captive by five fierce kings of the plain but it was love that caused Abraham to risk his life and the lives of 318 of his choicest servants to rescue him.  
3. Love caused Stephen’s face to shine like an angel as he prayed for forgiveness for his executioners. Stones and gnashing teeth couldn’t stop his love.   
[1 John 4:8](http://www.sermoncentral.com/bible/NIV/1-John%204.asp?passage=1%20John%204%3A8&ScrptureHover=sermon-96243-JUST%20A%20STONE) Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love.

How do we love the unlovable and unlovely?  
a. By remembering that God so loves us!

[Romans 5:8](http://www.sermoncentral.com/bible/NIV/Romans-5.asp?passage=Romans%205%3A8&ScrptureHover=sermon-96243-JUST%20A%20STONE) But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.  
a. This woman deserved to die but she was set free!  
b. She hadn’t done anything to deserve what she got and that’s why it’s called grace!

All of us like this woman have been found guilty in the eyes of God.   
a. “All have sinned and come short…” The penalty for sin is death!  
We were all just a stone’s throw away from judgment.  
a. We all sinned and the price of our sins is death!  
But the Good News is that the price for our sins has already been paid for on a hill called Calvary.  
a. Jesus took our pain, our shame, our guilt, and our humiliation and paid for our sins with His death on the cross. Christ was condemned for us so that we might go free!  
Even though this woman was guilty she was forgiven and sent forth to live a brand new life.  
a. Old things were gone and all things became new!

No longer do we have to hide our face in shame because of sin, because Jesus loves us.   
  
There is the story of a little girl who had a large collection of dolls. A family friend was over visiting at her house and said, “Are these your favorite dolls?”  
The girl replied, “No, they aren’t, my favorite doll is in a special place”  
The man said, “Can I see your favorite doll?” The little girl took his hand and led him to the back of the house. She pulled out an old raggedy doll that was missing both eyes, both arms, and one leg. The man said, “Why exactly is this one your favorite doll?” The little girl looked up at him and said, “Because if I don’t love her, no one else will”

God sees us in our sins and brokenness and yet He loves us as no one else could.   
This adulterous woman was broken, torn and about to be condemned. But instead of condemning her, Jesus forgave her.  
We too can start over again and put our past behind us, if we will but except the gift of Jesus, the gift of GRACE.

[1 John 1:7](http://www.sermoncentral.com/bible/NIV/1-John%201.asp?passage=1%20John%201%3A7&ScrptureHover=sermon-96243-JUST%20A%20STONE) But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from allsin.