

The Woman caught in Adultery

This is again a Gospel that can suffer as a result of familiarity.

Much as the obvious lessons it demonstrates are of value. It never does any harm to take a fresh look.

To begin again

There is a lot of anger in this story.

There is a lot of self-righteous indignation.

There is a huge amount of hypocrisy

The Scribe and Pharisee are not seeking to learn from the wisdom of the teaching of Jesus, but to find the means of condemning him. These men of learning use a vulnerable human being to force their interpretation upon Jesus. They defend their position of status by placing this foolish young woman in mortal danger.

It is easy to be very angry with such arrogance. From a distance of two thousand years it is perhaps pleasant to resent their authority.

But calm down

Calm down

Before the Christ who doodles in the sand

They have no authority

They are fools

Before Christ we too are merely servants

So do not add to the drama, the entertainment, the foolishness

Calm down

and make space for forgiveness

I doubt the crowd who are listening to Jesus resent this interruption in the discussion

None of them speak out. None defend this woman. No one takes the risk of being wrong. They stand around like sheep. Or worse they are enjoying the entertainment that could potentially lead to the death of this victim.

Like so many crowds there is cowardice and indecision.

Like so many crowds they await for someone to act

It is easy to be very angry with such collaboration with evil. From a distance of two thousand years it is perhaps pleasant to resent and to feel distant from such complicity.

But calm down

Calm down

Before the Christ who doodles in the sand

This crowd is composed of classic humanity

They are exposed to perverse leadership and capable of institutional wrong

Before Christ we too are merely ignorant servants

So do not add to the blindness, the obedience, the implementation

Calm down

and make space for forgiveness

There is within this story one main character missing. That is the man who was caught in adultery.

Where is the man caught in adultery? She was surly not on her own.

No one asks where he is. No one questions this very sexist expression of justice. All comply with the chauvinist view of the world.

Like so many who have come to Jesus they bring with them the baggage of their culture.

Like so many who come to Jesus they too prefer the comfort of fitting in, to the rejection of the normal.

Even when that normal is wrong

It is easy to be angry and condemn. To cut off those who do not agree. To distance, to alienate those who have been deformed by this fallen world.

But calm down

Calm down

Before the Christ who doodles in the sand

The man who is not there is also a victim

He learned to be an adulterer, with the complicity of the crowd

Before Christ we too are merely forgiven pilgrims

Swayed by convention and custom

So do not add to the blindness, the obedience, the implementation

Calm down

and make space for forgiveness

The Scribes and the Pharisees still exist and still scream self-righteous non sense

Forgive the fools

The crowd still bay like sheep and follow the present convention

Recognise the madness

The individual is still formed in a world of good and bad, and reflects that complex development.

Love yourself

Calm down

Calm down

The beauty in this Gospel is when the noise is all over

And the crowd have gone away

This poor girl is then able to listen to Jesus

Calm down

Calm down

Listen to Jesus

And make space for forgiveness