

## **“The Voice” John Part 8 of 21**

A lot of rocks have been thrown over the years, literally and figuratively. It seems like every violent uprising or riot incorporates the throwing of rocks at police officers. Bricks are used a lot as well. Apparently, there is something deeply cathartic about throwing a brick at someone you oppose. People who are seeking to stand for a cause often hurl rocks at people who stand in their way. It doesn't solve a great deal, but nonetheless, it seems as though it's now a permanent part of our established riot protocol in this country and for that matter around the world. Some people just have a need to throw stones.

People that throw stones are hurting. People who are hit by stones are hurting as well. There is an incredible amount of hurt in humanity. In the middle of all that hurt is the church. The church is comprised of hurting or once hurting people in the process of healing, who haven't forgotten what it means to get hit or to want to throw stones.

An effective church understands pain. A relevant church empathizes with people in despair, confusion, loneliness and fear. An effective church carries burdens not stones. The church that seeks to glorify the Lord understands what stone-throwers feel and “Who” stone-throwers need.

Fruitful ministry only takes place in a context whereby the word of God is not compromised and the hurting are loved. Should we take away the counsel of the Word and still love people—we may be doing hurting people a disservice. Should we maintain the truth of the Word and not love people—we are just plain sorry.

Challenge: This week you are challenged to have a conversation with yourself to discover where you may be hurting. You are challenged to have some meaningful conversations with people to discover where and/or why they are hurting. You are challenged to spend a day intentionally perceiving the world through the eyes of someone with an entirely different viewpoint than yours. (political, spiritual, philosophical) How can we firm up our empathy and soften our hearts for others?

Please read John, chapters 1-8 three times this week and make note of things you sense are important for you to consider, act upon or share with another person. *“Let any one of you who is without sin be the first to throw a stone at her.”* John 8:7

Blessings