



SIEBENQUELL

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# When do we reach for the Stones?

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There are three stoning scenes in John's Gospel. The most famous of them is in the story of the woman caught in the act of adultery. In John 8,7 it is told: »And as they continued to ask him, he stood up and said to them, 'Let him who is without sin among you be the first to throw a stone at her'. «

The second scene is in John 8, 58-59. »Jesus said to them, 'Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I am'. So they picked up stones to throw at him, but Jesus hid himself and went out of the temple. «

And the third scene is found in John 10, 30-33. »My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all, and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand. I and the Father are one. The Jews picked up stones again to stone him. 3Jesus answered them, "I have shown you many good works from the Father; for which of them are you going to stone me?" The Jews answered him, "It is not for a good work that we are going to stone you but for blasphemy, because you, being a man, make yourself God". «

In reality, we are not made for stoning nor are we called to carry it out. In the beginning, God let his life breath stream into us. That which is in God is flows out of him and into us. Thus, the lie breath that fills God is also present and effective within us.

Yet, if we want to form the world with this life breath of God, then we must recognize a danger and answer a question. When do we reach for the stones?

Do we reach for the stones in order to fulfill the law? Do we do so in order to silence messages we do not wish to hear? Do we reach for the stones in order to win arguments, end conflicts or to maintain our view of the world?

In these cases, and in many others, we reach for the stones as a simple, raw and violent answer for complex and difficult situations. But must stones be our answer to such events and experiences? Jesus chooses the breath of life as his answer. In word and deed he takes what is within himself (life breath) and tries to place it within the people around him, indeed, to breathe it into them. Every story he tells, each question he faces, every person to whom he turns, every fragility which he heals: never does Jesus reach for the stones, neither the physical ones nor the verbal ones.

Today the stones fly once again. First the verbal stones were thrown, the heavy, hate-filled, venomous and wounding words which we drew from our innermost selves, precisely from the inner space which God originally filled with his life breath. And then the physical stones flew, which we drew from creation, precisely from that space, which we are supposed to fashion with the life breath of God. These stones are thrown against the flesh of our brother and sisters, and cast against their property and possessions. These stones hail down upon the vehicles which try to transport them to safety and are flung against the houses where they seek comfort and security.

Since the Night of Broken Glass (November 9, 1938), the shards, the buildings, the victims and the reasons for stone casting hatred have changed. The stones, however, have remained the same. When do we reach for the stones? Until we honestly look at the question and answer it, we will be unable to pose a second one. Are stones really a worthy answer for a people who God has filled with his life breath?

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*Vallendar, November 9th, 2017*