

Woman Caught in Adultery Encounters Jesus “Jesus’ Grace and Compassion Demonstrated”



The Story: John 7:53 - 8:11

Background

The Pharisees generally hated Jesus, due to his exposure of their hypocrisy and lack of love. The Pharisees thought they laid the perfect trap to have Jesus end up with one of two bad outcomes:

- 1) If Jesus simply let the woman go free, Pharisees could accuse Jesus of breaking and speaking against the Law of Moses, which stated adulterers are to be stoned (Lev 20:10; Duet 22:22). (Note: Mosaic law required both the man and woman adulterer to be stoned – where was the man?)

OR

- 2) If Jesus agreed she should be stoned, he would immediately lose his reputation with the people of being a person of love and grace. And it would be in violation of Roman authority and defies the government (only the Romans could condemn a person to die).

Wonder What He Wrote

It remains a mystery of the Bible. Rather than speak His answer, Jesus bent down and began to write on the ground, using his finger. Then He stood and said, “If any one of you is without sin, let him be the first to throw a stone at her.”

Then He stopped and wrote on the ground again.

The accusers dispersed.

We don't know what Jesus wrote, but let's just imagine that He wrote their names. "If any one of you..."

Then, let's imagine that when He knelt down again to resume writing, He began to finger-pen a list of sins...*their sins*.

"...is without sin..."

Standing there, clothed with all their fancy religious clothes, they were before Him with their sins exposed and naked.

When her accusers were no longer there, Jesus spoke to her for the first time. Whether they were alone or if His disciples were standing close-by, it must have felt as though there were no other people in the world, much less at the temple. The woman was standing, Jesus was still kneeling.

And then He stood and turned to her. "Where are they? Has no one condemned you?" He asked her.

"No one," she answered. And she called him "Lord."

"Neither do I condemn you," he told her.

Do you ever wonder why? Perhaps for all the nakedness of her sin, what Jesus knew that the accusers did not, was the condition of her heart, the circumstances of her situation, and — more importantly — where she was spiritually at that very moment. "Lord," she called him. *Kurios*, in the Greek, meaning, "Messiah."

"Go and leave your life of sin," he concluded.

Understood rather than condemned. Saved rather than stoned. Sin exposed yet covered in His love.

Key Takeaways and Life Lessons

- By bringing the woman to Jesus, the Pharisees' motive was political entrapment.
- Jesus silenced his critics and demonstrated love, grace, mercy, and forgiveness.
- Sin is never to be treated lightly. God calls us to turn away from sin, but in turn, offers forgiveness.
- Forgiveness does not mean condoning sin or granting permission to continue sinning. Jesus was not accepting the woman's sin, but empowering her to change.
- This story exposes the sin of self-righteousness, a tendency in all of us.
- God offers all people a chance to repent and begin a new, transformed life.

Closing Thought: "I have no stones to throw"

Follow-up Scripture: **Matthew 7:1-5, James 4:11-12**