

“THE ADULTEROUS WOMAN”

(use in place of “The Prodigal Son” on womens weekends)

1. KNOW THE FATHER

We know much about God. But do we know HIM?

What is He like as a person? What are His interests? How does He think? Tonight, as we begin to know ourselves, we would like to know especially His reaction to our sinful condition.

The Scriptures reveal the character of our heavenly Father, especially in regard to our need for divine forgiveness and acceptance. Because Jesus has said, “He who has seen Me, has seen the Father” (John 14:9) and “whatever the Father does, these things the Son also does in like manner” (John 5:19), we can know the Father’s heart through the works of Jesus. One event that gives us an insight of the Father’s heart toward us is the woman caught in adultery.

2. EVERYONES STORY

John 8:2-4

“And early in the morning He (Jesus) came again into the temple, and all the people were coming to Him; and He sat down and began to teach them. And the Scribes and the Pharisees brought a woman caught in adultery, and having set her in the midst, they said to Him, “Teacher, this woman has been caught in adultery, in the every act.”

Maybe we haven’t committed the act of adultery, but each of us has more than likely looked at another with lust in our heart. In Matthew 5:28, Jesus says that lusting in our heart is adultery. The point is all of us have yielded to the power of sin. We moved beyond sexual temptation and entered into

the state of adultery in our lives or in our hearts. We know the feeling of moral failure. Being caught in our sin, however, brings an added dimension of shame and humiliation. Can you imagine what this woman must have felt being caught in her immoral act and then the added humiliation of her actions being exposed in front of all the people who were in the temple listening to Jesus?

3. HUMILITY

To discover the response of this woman caught in sin, let's read on.

John 8:5-6

“Now in the Law, Moses commanded us to stone such women; what then do You say? And they were saying this, testing Him, in order that they might have grounds for accusing Him. But Jesus stooped down, and with His finger wrote on the ground.”

Sometimes God permits us to be caught in our sinful condition to bring us to our senses. We are not informed about her lifestyle. We know nothing about the motive or frequency of her sinful behavior. She may have been a prostitute, or she may have been seduced. There is no point in regretting the past. We need to learn from our mistakes, and respond appropriately. It is obvious from the Scriptures that she made no attempt to excuse, rationalized or defend her actions.

She was caught in her guilt, and quietly she awaited the execution of her judgment. She accepted with humility the outcome of the decision that was in the balance. Her sinful condition was acknowledged for her. The judgment of the law was clear, but maybe there was a glimmer of hope.

4. GOD'S MERCY

John 8:7

“But when they persisted in asking Him, He straightened up, and said to them, ‘He who is without sin among you, let him be the first to throw a stone at her.’”

All of a sudden, shame and humiliation were replaced by overwhelming shock and surprise. Jesus was being her advocate. He was not excusing her guilt, but rather He used her guilt to expose the guiltiness of her accusers. Suddenly, a tiny glimmer of hope burst into a flood of mercy. Surely, she thought for the first time since being caught, she might receive a second chance.

5. HUMAN REACTION

The story continues to unfold as we read:

John 8:8-9

“And again He stooped down and wrote on the ground. And when they heard it, they began to go out one by one, beginning with the older ones, and He was left alone, and the woman, where she was, in the midst.”

To demonstrate the greatness of divine mercy, Jesus reveals by contrast the usual human reaction to the sins of another. The scribes and the Pharisees react to this sinner the way most “good people” tend to react. They demanded the judgment of the Law. Mercy and forgiveness were not options. Biblical scholars believe that Jesus began writing their sins in the dirt.

The self-righteous were confronted with their own guiltiness and instead of pleading for mercy, they departed in frustration. They didn't care for this

woman at all!

Others had used her and they were doing the same thing. They were using her, even jeopardizing her life to trap Jesus, or so they thought. But the mercy of Jesus is beyond human comprehension or control, and it was overflowing.

6. Conclusion

Dramatic changes occur when Jesus is present. Let's read the conclusion of this passage.

JOHN 8:10-11

“And straightening up, Jesus said to her, ‘Woman, where are they? Did no one condemn you?’ and she said, ‘No one, Lord.’ And Jesus said, ‘Neither do I condemn you; go your way. From now on, sin no more.’”

We expect condemnation and judgment from our heavenly Father. We fail to see our behavior from His perspective. We expect the worst and live under its certain judgment of rejection and execution by stoning. But our Father holds no stones, only open hands and eyes of love. Then He speaks to our sinful, shameful, and humiliating condition and publicly declares, “You are free from condemnation, rise and go about living but leave this sinful lifestyle. You are free!” All we have to do is receive our forgiveness and mercy and be willing to leave this sinful condition and live with gratefulness this new beginning.