

Jesus Prevents Two Stonings

Indigo's heart was beating like a drum. She quieted herself and listened. She would just wait and pray.

Indigo had grabbed a handful of clothes and ran for the dressing rooms when she spotted a coworker from another department. She didn't want word getting back to her supervisor that she had taken the day off. Because she had not! Indigo was the only person in her office scheduled to work the Friday before the Memorial Day holiday weekend.

She had told her supervisor that she didn't mind working. But about an hour after Indigo got to the office, she became restless. She wanted to leave. Who would know? She wanted an early start to her holiday, too. She wanted to get some shopping done.

A knock came at Indigo's closed door. "Need any help in there, ma'am?"

"No, thank you," replied Indigo.

"Lord, forgive me," prayed Indigo. "This is what I get. I'm stealing. That's what I'm doing. I'm stealing time from my employer. I'm being paid to do a job, not shop. Why do I do these things?"

Indigo exhaled and sat for a while. She felt correction come, but not condemnation. She would go into work on Saturday and work the full day. But first, she had to get out of this dressing room. If she was spotted by the coworker—so be it.

1. *Why is it wrong to think of oneself as better than another person?*

2. *What does Jesus offer to all who sin and desire forgiveness?*

3. *Why do we need to offer grace to others instead of condemnation?*

Caught in the Act

John 8:1-6a, KJV

1 Jesus went unto the mount of Olives.

2 And early in the morning he came again into the temple, and all the people came unto him; and he sat down, and taught them.

3 And the scribes and Pharisees brought unto him a woman taken in adultery; and when they had set her in the midst,

4 They say unto him, Master, this woman was taken in adultery, in the very act.

5 Now Moses in the law commanded us, that such should be stoned: but what sayest thou?

6a This they said, tempting him, that they might have to accuse him.

John 8:1-6a, NIV

¹But Jesus went to the Mount of Olives. ²At dawn he appeared again in the temple courts, where all the people gathered around him, and he sat down to teach them. ³The teachers of the law and the Pharisees brought in a woman caught in adultery. They made her stand before the group ⁴and said to Jesus, "Teacher, this woman was caught in the act of adultery. ⁵In the Law Moses commanded us to stone such women. Now what do you say?" ^{6a}They were using this question as a trap, in order to have a basis for accusing him.

Jesus was teaching in the temple courts when a woman caught in adultery was brought before Him. The Pharisees and teachers of the law made the woman stand in front of the people, publicly shaming her. The woman made no defense and did not identify her guilty partner—the man with whom she was found. The law mentions the guilt and punishment for both parties (Lev. 20:10; Deut. 22:22).

Since this was happening during the Feast of Tabernacles, with thousands of people in the city, the religious leaders were trying also to publicly put Jesus in an awkward and compromising situation. His popularity was threatening them—not only politically, but spiritually.

The teachers of the law and the Pharisees thought the

“trap” (vs. 6a) they set would put Jesus in a no-win situation. They did not expect Him to say, “Sure, go ahead—Moses could not have been clearer.” They knew He was too compassionate for that. But if He told them to halt the execution, then He could be accused of treating the Torah with contempt, and thus discredited as a rabbi. Instead, He did something completely unexpected.

4. *What did the Pharisees demand of Jesus?*

5. *What was their motivation in bringing this woman to Jesus?*

Writing on the Ground

John 8:6b-11, KJV

6b But Jesus stooped down, and with his finger wrote on the ground, as though he heard them not.

7 So when they continued asking him, he lifted up himself, and said unto them, He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her.

8 And again he stooped down, and wrote on the ground.

9 And they which heard it, being convicted by their own conscience, went out one by one, beginning at the eldest, even unto the last: and Jesus was left alone, and the woman standing in the midst.

10 When Jesus had lifted up himself, and saw none but the woman, he said unto her, Woman, where are those thine accusers? hath no man condemned thee?

John 8:6b-11, NIV

^{6b}But Jesus bent down and started to write on the ground with his finger.

⁷When they kept on questioning him, he straightened up and said to them, “Let any one of you who is without sin be the first to throw a stone at her.”

⁸Again he stooped down and wrote on the ground.

⁹At this, those who heard began to go away one at a time, the older ones first, until only Jesus was left, with the woman still standing there. ¹⁰Jesus straightened up and asked her, “Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?”

¹¹“No one, sir,” she said.

“Then neither do I

11 She said, No man, Lord. And Jesus said unto her, Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more.

condemn you," Jesus declared. "Go now and leave your life of sin."

Volumes have been composed on what Jesus wrote in the dirt that day. Since John doesn't tell us, we can only speculate. Whatever He was writing, Jesus stopped them in their tracks when He challenged anyone who was without sin to cast the first stone.

Apparently, this challenge convicted them. They knew that they were culpable in the eyes of God for failing to keep His commands. To condemn this woman was to condemn themselves. They didn't stone the woman anyway or continue questioning Jesus. Starting with the oldest, they threw down their rocks and left.

When all the executioners left, Jesus turned to the accused woman and asked her where her accusers were. Finally, she spoke, and said that no one was left to condemn her. She would not be executed that day—unless the one Man in front of her (who was the only one truly without sin) said she should be punished for her wrongdoing.

But Jesus refused to condemn her and made it clear that she was free to go back home alive. He also made it clear that what she had done was wrong—she was to leave her "life of sin" (vs. 11) that dishonored both her and God.

6. *How did Jesus respond to the demand of the Pharisees?*

7. *What did He tell the woman caught in adultery to do?*

Before Abraham

John 8:56-59, KJV

56 Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day: and he saw it, and was glad.

57 Then said the Jews unto

John 8:56-59, NIV

⁵⁶"Your father Abraham rejoiced at the thought of seeing my day; he saw it and was glad."

him, Thou art not yet fifty years old, and hast thou seen Abraham?

58 Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am.

59 Then took they up stones to cast at him: but Jesus hid himself, and went out of the temple, going through the midst of them, and so passed by.

⁵⁷“You are not yet fifty years old,” they said to him, “and you have seen Abraham!”

⁵⁸“Very truly I tell you,” Jesus answered, “before Abraham was born, I am!”

⁵⁹At this, they picked up stones to stone him, but Jesus hid himself, slipping away from the temple grounds.

Still at the Festival, Jesus told His Jewish listeners that their ancestor, Abraham, rejoiced at “seeing my day” (vs. 56). How could that happen? By faith, Abraham would have seen Jesus’ birth foreshadowed in the miraculous birth of Isaac and then Jesus’ sacrifice in Abraham’s offering of Isaac on the altar (Gen. 22:8). When Jesus talked as if He were present during the time of Abraham, observing His enthusiastic anticipation of the day when Jesus would deliver His people, the people responded with incredulity. Jesus was not even 50 years old yet—but He had interacted with someone who lived 2,000 years in the past?

Jesus’ response was clear: He was not only present during the lifetime of Abraham, but He existed prior to the patriarch’s birth. By saying that He was the great “I Am,” He identified with the great “I Am” who met with Moses in the wilderness (Exod. 3:14). Jesus’ identification with God was not lost on those who heard Him; they were ready to execute Him on the spot. But Jesus simply “slipped away” from them, into the crowd. However, they would never forget that Jesus clearly claimed to be equal with His heavenly Father as God—without condition or compromise.

8. *Who did Jesus say rejoiced at the thought of seeing His day?*

9. *Where did Jesus say He landed on the timeline with Abraham?*

Inclusive Grace

Justina disliked all holidays because her family wasn't around to celebrate. Most of her children were prodigal children. They left home with no desire to return home. They blamed her for struggles in their childhood that she had little control over such as financial hardship and her mental illnesses. Every day Justina prayed for them. Despite their criticizing her for their upbringing, Justina extended grace to them. Jesus had forgiven her for all the mistakes she made while raising her children and she prayed that one day her children would forgive her too.

Jim cringed every day when he walked past the brick house in his neighborhood. His friend overdosed in that house. Yes, his friend shouldn't have gone into the house or taken the drugs, but why did the previous owners sell drugs to children? Over time, Jim began to walk past the house and pray for the people who once lived there. Instead of condemning them for their actions, Jim was learning to extend grace to them by praying for their salvation and transformation.

Julia had nightmares for years after she was robbed. Yet one day, at a friend's graduation, she saw the man who robbed her. He had spent a few years in prison but was released. Now, he laughed and talked as if nothing had ever happened. Julia wanted to leave, but she stayed and tried to be happy for her friend's sake. Eventually, Julia was able to look at him and pray for him. She prayed for God to give her the grace to forgive him one day. For now, she was glad to be able to be in the same room with him and have some peace within herself.

10. *Is it easier to extend grace to a family member or a stranger? Explain your answer.*

11. *What are some ways we can extend grace to those who have caused us pain?*

12. *Why is it important to remember Jesus' grace given to us?*

Gratitude for Grace

Parents often complain about how ungrateful their children are. One of the reasons they feel this way is because of the lack of expression shown by their children.

► *Reflect on ways you have experienced Jesus' grace in the last week and write here or on another sheet of paper a "Thank You" note to Jesus, expressing your gratitude for the grace He daily shows you. Keep your written expression of gratitude to Jesus in a place that you can read it regularly such as in your Bible or purse. Throughout next week, take time to read it and verbally thank Jesus daily for His grace.*

KEY VERSE

And Jesus said unto her, Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more. —John 8:11b, KJV

"Then neither do I condemn you," Jesus declared. "Go now and leave your life of sin." —John 8:11b, NIV

DAILY BIBLE READINGS FOR NEXT WEEK'S LESSONS

Week of September 25 through October 1

(See *The Quiet Hour and Cross* devotionals on these passages.)

- Mon.** Deuteronomy 6:4-9—Keep God's Laws in Your Heart.
- Tue.** Matthew 6:1-8, 16-18—Practice Your Piety in Secret.
- Wed.** John 15:1-8—Abide in Christ.
- Thu.** Ezekiel 36:25-30—God Will Give the Spirit.
- Fri.** Romans 2:1-8—God Will Repay Each One's Deeds.
- Sat.** Romans 2:9-16—God Shows No Partiality.
- Sun.** Romans 2:17-29—God Looks at Your Heart.