

The Adulterous Woman

John 8:1-12

MEMORY VERSE

JOHN 8:11b

Jesus said to her, “Neither do I condemn you; go and sin no more.”

WHAT YOU WILL NEED:

A two liter bottle, three clothespins, and some small treats as prizes.

ATTENTION GRABBER! London Bridge

Have two of your students hold hands over their heads to create a “bridge.” Have the remainder of your children form a single file line and cross under the “bridge” while singing “London Bridge”:

London Bridge is falling down, Falling
down, falling down. London Bridge is
falling down, My fair lady.

Take the key and lock her up, Lock her
up, lock her up. Take the key and lock
her up, My fair lady.

When you get to the “Take the key” verse, have your “bridge” drop their hands around the child underneath, holding him or her captive until the end of the song. This game can be continued to give many children a chance to be both “bridge” and “captive.”

Explain to your class that in today’s lesson they will be learning about a trap that some people tried to set for Jesus, but it did not work. In fact, Jesus used the trap they set for Him to show them their own sin and free someone else from the trap of sin in their life.

LESSON TIME!

Have you ever made a trap, perhaps to trick a friend, or catch an animal? (Give a personal account of a trap you or someone you know set. Here is an example: “My little boy once set a trap for his sister as a joke. He carefully balanced a cup of water on the top of a slightly open door. He called his sister into the room so that when the door was pushed open the water would fall on her head. His trap worked flawlessly, except for one thing.

It was not his sister that entered at the door; it was his mom! As you can guess, this story did not have a very happy ending.”)

Today we are going to read how some people tried to trap Jesus.

Read JOHN 8:1-6

Let's picture this scene like it happened in that day. In those days the teacher sat cross-legged on the floor, and his students stood around him. (Note: you can sit on the floor and have the class stand around you if you want.) Now while Jesus was teaching, the Scribes and Pharisees (proud and haughty religious leaders who were jealous and angry with Jesus) came to where He was. They burst in upon His quiet teaching and they did not come alone. They had carefully planned a trap for Jesus. (If the class starts to get restless, go ahead and stand and have them sit again.)

These religious leaders brought what they thought would be a big problem for Jesus into the middle of this crowd; they thought He would be sure to make a mistake in front of everyone else. They hoped to trap Him and embarrass Him right in front of everyone! But they obviously did not realize Who it was they were trying to trap.

They brought to Him a sinful woman. Now we know we are all sinful, but they brought a woman whom they had caught while committing her sin. She had directly broken one of the Ten Commandments! Now they presented her and her terrible sin to Jesus to see what He would do. Whatever He did, they felt sure they had trapped Him!

(Note: It is probably better to avoid the topic, but if students want to know what adultery is the following is a tactful explanation. Another option would be to focus on sin which students and/or yourself have been caught in: fighting with siblings, stealing, lying, etc. Sin is sin in God's eyes. The sin itself is not so important as its repercussions and in this case how it is addressed and handled by Jesus.) The woman had committed adultery. Adultery means to break the vows of marriage by acting like you are married to someone other than your true husband or wife. It is wrong. God calls it sin, and the Law of Moses commands for an adulterer to be stoned to death. That is how seriously God takes the breaking of a marriage vow. He says to cleave only to your own husband or wife. Those vows are to be for a lifetime.

This woman was guilty of committing adultery. They dragged her to Jesus in front of all His students in the temple. This was their trap. The Law of Moses said to stone such a woman. Roman law, the law of the land which all the Jews hated, said that a person's life could not be taken without Roman permission.

If Jesus said she was to go free, He would be contradicting the Law of Moses in the Bible. If He said she was to be stoned, He would be in trouble with the Roman authorities. This was the trap the religious leaders were trying to set for Jesus!

Wow! WWJD? What would Jesus do? Not only were the Scribes and Pharisees there but His students and those who followed Him were also watching to see what Jesus would do. They wanted to know what Jesus would do with the sinful woman. You see, they knew that they were sinners too. They may not have been caught in adultery, but they were aware of their sinful selves just as we are. Who here has never sinned? If you do not think you have, we would like to hang around you for just one day, even an hour, and I think we would gather enough evidence to prove you are a sinner, too!

So here the crowd was watching. They knew that however Jesus dealt with her was the way He would deal with them. Those who had put their faith in Jesus saw this picture. The sinful was standing before the sinless, the impure before the pure. Everyone in the crowd saw themselves in this woman. What would He do with her? What will He do with each of us when He confronts our sin, whatever that may be?

The “Sin” Game

Set up a two liter bottle and a chair. Have each child stand on the chair over the two liter bottle trying to drop a clothes pin (the round kind that are approximately as thick as the opening to the bottle) into the opening (this should be next to impossible). Explain that whoever gets a clothes pin into the bottle will win a prize. After each child gets a turn to try, explain that according to the rules of the game no one wins. But to show each child what grace is they will all win a prize anyway. Hand out a small prize to each child as a demonstration of grace.

If a child does get a clothes pin into the bottle, award him the privilege of passing out small prizes to the class.

The first thing we see in our lesson was that Jesus dealt with the Scribes and Pharisees before He dealt with the woman. What did He do in verse six? He stooped down and wrote in the sand. (Demonstrate by stooping and writing with your finger on the floor.) We do not know what He wrote. God did not choose to tell us

His attitude in writing on the ground helps us understand a little more. He had just been rudely interrupted. A woman was now in their midst who was being brutally humiliated by the Scribes and Pharisees' actions. Jesus knew they had no legal right to drag her into public gaze. They blurted out her story with no concern for justice, only worried about trying to trap Jesus. What did He do by stooping and writing? He was communicating to them how rude they were being. They continued asking Him what He was going to do with this sinful woman.

Read JOHN 8:7-9

In Deuteronomy 17:7, it tells us that by Jewish law the accusers were to throw the first stone. Jesus said that those without sin should cast the first stone! Wow! That sentence should put all of us out of the stone-throwing business for the rest of our lives! Even the Scribes and Pharisees left one by one! They knew how guilty they were in their hearts. Perhaps many were guilty of the same sin as evidence by how they left the scene. They had not trapped Jesus at all. They had just embarrassed themselves. Jesus cleared them out. Now comes the best part of the story.

Read JOHN 8:9-11

Jesus was left with the woman and His students. The students were still watching closely. What He did with her would indicate what He would do with them and their sin and ultimately how He will deal with us and our sin. **According to what Jesus had said about the sinless having the right to cast the first stone, He was the only one with the right to cast a stone at her; He is the only sinless one. But He did not do that.** Instead, He called her by the same name that He used for His mother at Cana and the cross, "Woman." It was a word Jesus used with infinite tenderness. I am sure her face was greatly changed since she had first been brought to Jesus.

The Pharisees were cruel, and she was probably scared and angry at them. But now she was looking at Jesus, and she humbly answered His question. He asked, "Where are your accusers? Has no one condemned you?" She answered, "No one, Lord." She called Him

Lord. She knew men, and she knew this was no ordinary man. It was the Lord. Jesus is the Lord, and He told her, “Neither do I condemn you.” He forgave her! She humbled herself before Him and acknowledged Him as Lord, and He forgave her.

Jesus was not being easy on her sin, but He forgave her because of her repentant spirit, knowing that He would one day die for her sins. Forgiveness is free for us, but it cost Jesus everything to give it to us. He put Himself and His redeeming, atoning love between her and her sin. He would pay the great price for her sin, just as He paid the great price for our sin. He makes sure that His gracious forgiveness is not an excuse to sin.

He tells her to “go and sin no more.” She would not be sinless, but in response to God’s grace, she would offer Him an obedient life. She would no longer live in willful disobedience. She would bring her life into obedience and confess any sins she was guilty of to her new Lord, Jesus Christ. We learn from her that in Jesus we go from having Guilt, to receiving Grace, to responding with Gratitude: The Three “Gs”.

Read JOHN 8:12

This is one of the most wondrous verses in the entire Bible. He says, “I am the light of the world.” The light is available to everyone in the whole world. How the world needs light! How the world needs Jesus! Jesus comes and illuminates the hearts of those who acknowledge Him as Lord, like the adulterous woman who had guilt, received grace, and responded with gratitude.

“Follow” in this verse means to believe on Him and to receive Him. He gives us the light of His Spirit. His light should shine from us for the whole world to see. We are to shine God’s love. God’s very character will shine forth from us as we respond to His forgiveness with grateful obedience.

The crowd listening to Jesus was aware of their own sin and must have been so moved by the grace He showed the sinful woman. That meant there would be grace shown to them as they repented for their sin. They could not help but respond to God’s gracious forgiveness with grateful obedience. We learn from this story about Jesus that He has grace for our repentant hearts too.

When we recognize our sin and see it as God does and turn away from it, He graciously forgives us. In Luke 7:47 Jesus tells us that those who are forgiven much, love much. And in John 14:15 Jesus teaches, “If you love Me, Keep My commandments.” We see from the obedient woman in our story and learn from Jesus that we should also “go and sin no more,” just as He said. We enjoy His light around us and in us.

Our Sin Account

Set up an accounting sheet on the class board. Explain to the children that in business people keep an account of things to see if they have money or if they owe a debt to someone. There is also an accounting of our sins. We are all in debt because of our sin. On the left column, list the fruit of the Spirit. At the top of the three right hand columns list the words “always”, “sometimes”, and “never”.

Explain to your children that unless each item is listed as “always,” there is a debt of sin. After explaining this, take a red marker and write across the board, “PAID IN FULL BY JESUS.” Explain that Jesus forgives and has paid the cost for our sins on the cross, and He produces the fruit of the Spirit in our lives.

He paid the price for our sin. Have you thanked Him for that today? Our heavenly accounting books showed that we owed a great debt because of our sin. When we asked Jesus to forgive us and rule our lives, He stamped “Paid” on our account. We no longer owe payment for our sin. We are no longer condemned because Jesus paid it all for us. When we stand before God, He will look at us and say “Your account is paid, enter into My rest.”

Wow! That is what we have in Jesus. Let’s thank Him for paying for our sins.

PRAYER

Lead the children in a prayer of thanksgiving for Jesus’ full payment for sin. If there are any children who have not received the gift of salvation, be sure and give them the opportunity to respond.