

The Woman Caught in Adultery

Encountering Jesus--part 5

March 9, 2014

DAY 1: Shame: "Wanna get away?"

1. Southwest Airlines' commercials have this clever tag line. "Wanna get away?" Each commercial has someone who has embarrassed themselves in a very public way. They'd do anything to run away and hide from public humiliation and shame.

2. It's bad enough that we've done something wrong, something we know we should not have done. But when someone we know sees us, something is added to our guilt. It's shame. Shame is a cruel taskmaster. It follows us by day and haunts us at night.

3. This week we'll look at a woman who experienced incredible public shame.

John 8:1 But Jesus went to the Mount of Olives. ² At dawn he appeared again in the temple courts, where all the people gathered around him, and he sat down to teach them.

4. What is the setting for this story? Public or private place? City or remote? Multitude of people or a handful?

John 8:3 The teachers of the law and the Pharisees brought in a woman caught in adultery. They made her stand before the group...

5. What two things did the Pharisees do?

6. What attitudes from the Pharisees do you imagine were "landing" on the woman?

7. If you were the woman what would have been going on inside you?

8. What would you imagine would come from the mouth of Jesus?

DAY 2: Shame: fueled by scorn

John 8:4 "Teacher, this woman was caught in the act of adultery. In the Law Moses commanded us to stone such women. Now what do you say?" They were using this question as a trap, in order to have a basis for accusing him.

1. Have ever experienced public shame? Jot down a few words or phrases...
2. If you are familiar with this week's story, you can easily picture the Pharisees. What words describe their attitudes? Faces? Expressions? Tone? Stance?
3. For some reason, it's harder to picture the woman. What do you imagine of her? What was her attitude? Expression? Stance? What was the look on her face? Was she making eye contact with anyone? What does **shame fueled by scorn** look like?
4. Every adulterer hungers for a love he/she doesn't have, but it seems that the new person is someone who can FINALLY quench the deep need for hunger inside. But, she now stands in front of a large group of *men*. What is ironic about this situation?
5. What do the Pharisees want Jesus to do?
6. The Pharisees have put Jesus on the spot, "to test Him." What is the apparent dilemma they have put in front of Him?
7. What would have happened if Jesus denounced the woman?
8. What would have happened if Jesus had been "soft" on sin and let her go?
9. What would have happened if he had "told off" the Pharisees?

DAY 3: Shame: loosened through relationship

1. Imagine the scene. Everything in the temple courts must have come to a standstill. Everyone was “all ears!” This is where shame does its dirtiest work. If we do something wrong and no one sees us, that's one thing. But when we do something wrong and we're spotted, seen, shame sets in. We're mortified, feel like a failure. We feel the searing rays of scorn pouring down on us.

2. Jesus is in an "impossible" situation. How would He handle it? How would He be redemptive to the woman? To the Pharisees?

John 8:6 ...But Jesus bent down and started to write on the ground with his finger.

3. What strikes you about Jesus' actions?

4. What do you think He is trying to accomplish? What affect do you think this had on the woman?

5. Below are the most well-known times when God "wrote" with His "finger." Do you think any of these stories had a bearing on what Jesus was doing when he wrote in the dirt?

Exodus 31:18 When the Lord finished speaking to Moses on Mount Sinai, he gave him the two tablets of the Testimony, the tablets of stone inscribed by the finger of God.

Jeremiah 17:13 O Lord, the hope of Israel, all who forsake you will be put to shame. Those who turn away from you will be written in the dust because they have forsaken the Lord, the spring of living water.

Daniel 5:5-6 Suddenly the fingers of a human hand appeared and wrote on the plaster of the wall, near the lamp stand in the royal palace. The king watched the hand as it wrote. [6] His face turned pale and he was so frightened that his knees knocked together and his legs gave way.

Daniel 5:25-27 “This is the inscription that was written: mene, mene, tekel, parsin....Mene: God has numbered the days of your reign and brought it to an end. [27] Tekel: You have been weighed on the scales and found wanting.

6. The Pharisees were unfazed.

John 8:7 When they kept on questioning him, he straightened up and said to them, “If any one of you is without sin, let him be the first to throw a stone at her.”

7. Jesus finally speaks. What do you think were the effects on the:

a. Pharisees?

b. Woman?

DAY 4: Shame?

1. The men were pondering Jesus' statement, "*If any one of you is without sin, let him be the first to throw a stone at her.*"

John 8:8 Again he stooped down and wrote on the ground.

2. Silence was doing a redemptive work! I wonder if the men had heard Jesus speak on adultery!

Matthew 5:27 "You have heard that it was said, 'Do not commit adultery.' ²⁸ But I tell you that anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart.

3. What do you think was going on inside the minds of those men?

4. What would have been going through your mind?

John 8:9 At 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.

5. Why do you think the older men left first?

6. Why were there no men left?

7. The woman stands silently while the men are leaving, one by one. What things do you think were going on in her?

8. How had her public humiliation changed?

9. Had her shame changed? If so, how?

10. If you had been the woman, what would you expect Jesus to say next?

DAY 5: Shame: transferred!

1. We come to the climax of the story. What will He do with her sin? What will He do to help her get back on the right path? What does "love" look like?

John 8:10 Jesus straightened up and asked her, "Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?"

2. He *starts out* by the tenor/attitude of how he relates to her. What do you sense in His approach in verse 10?

3. Her response ...

John 8:11a "No one, sir," she said.

4. What do you think is happening at that moment as He relates to her? How is He treating her, and what is the effect on her?

5. Jesus continues...

John 8:11... "Then neither do I condemn you. Go now and leave your life of sin."

6. How does Jesus address her shame?

7. How does He address her sin?

8. The woman's shame left her, but it didn't "disappear." It went somewhere.

Hebrews 12:2 Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

9. Where did the woman's shame go?

1 Peter 2:6 For in Scripture it says: "See, I lay a stone in Zion, a chosen and precious cornerstone, and the one who trusts in him will never be put to shame."

10. Does a Christian ever have to remain under the shame of sin?