

The Woman Caught in Adultery

Caught in the act of adultery, dragged naked by force into a public gathering place, humiliated by her sin, separated from anyone to protect her, judged and sentenced to death without trial by self-righteous leaders, and then placed before Jesus hoping to discredit him... is how the apostle John describes the opening scene of *The Woman Caught in Adultery*.

But then, something unexpected happens.



John 8:2-11

2 At dawn Jesus reappeared in the temple courts, where all the people gathered around him, and he sat down to teach them.

3 The Scribes and the Pharisees brought in a woman caught in the act of adultery. They made her stand before the group 4 and said to Jesus, “Teacher, this woman was caught in the act of adultery. 5 In the Law, Moses commanded us to stone such women. Now what do you say?” 6 They were using this question as a trap, in order to have a basis for accusing him.

But Jesus bent down and started to write on the ground with his finger. 7 When 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.” 8 Again he stooped down and wrote on the ground.

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. 10 Jesus straightened up and asked her, “Where did they go? Has no one condemned you?”

11 “No one, Teacher,” she said. “Then neither do I condemn you,” Jesus declared.

“Go now and leave your life of sin.”

FOR REFLECTION

1. The man who participated in the woman's act of adultery has not been judged as the woman has. This fact speaks to privilege that men in that society had. What has been your experience with modern-day sexism or heteronormativity? What experiences have caused you to feel less privileged?
2. The older ones are the first to leave... Do you feel yourself judged more by an older or younger generation?
3. What are some of the charges people bring against you as an LGBT person or an ally? Who is in the crowd surrounding you with stones in hand? When have you been among the crowd ready to throw stones at others?
4. When everyone leaves, what is it like to be alone with Jesus? How does Jesus cover your exposed self?
5. Even though Jesus does not condemn you, do you still feel sinful as an LGBT person or as an ally? If so, what would you need to overcome this feeling? If not, how did you accept Jesus' message of love and acceptance?
6. How do you reconcile the "law" with God's promise of mercy and new life?



PRAYER:

Psalm 109: 1-5, 21-22, 26-31

Antiphon: Let them curse, Yahweh, but you will bless.

Do not be silent, O God of my praise,
for wicked and deceitful mouths are opened against me
Speaking against me with lying tongues.

They surround me with words of hate, and attack me without cause.
In return for my love, they accuse me, even while I make prayer for them.
So they reward me evil for good, and hate me for my love.

But you, Yahweh, act on my behalf for your name's sake;
because your steadfast love is good, deliver me.
For I am poor and needy, and my heart is pierced within me.

Help me, Yahweh, my God! Save me according to your steadfast love.
Let them know that this is your hand; You, Yahweh, have done it.
May my accusers be clothed with dishonor;
May they be wrapped in their own shame as in a robe.

With my mouth I will give great thanks to Yahweh;
I will praise God in the midst of a throng.
For God stands at the right hand of the needy,
to save them from those who condemn them to death.

Antiphon: Let them curse, Yahweh, but you will bless.