

GRACE IN THE DIRT

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John 8:1 - 11 KJV

This they said, tempting him, that they might have to accuse him. But Jesus stooped down, and with his finger wrote on the ground, as though he heard them not. 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. And again he stooped down, and wrote on the ground.

Imagine the scene. It is early in the morning. The temple courtyard is crowded with people desperate to hear the Word of God. Jesus is sitting down, teaching the people. There is an atmosphere of worship. Suddenly, the service is violently interrupted. A group of scribes and Pharisees - men who look the part, who wear the right robes, who know all the right scriptures - drag a woman right into the middle of the crowd.

They do not gently escort her. They drag her. She is humiliated. Her clothes are likely torn. She is terrified, weeping, and trembling on the temple floor. The Bible says she was caught in the very act of adultery.

They throw her down in front of Jesus and the entire congregation, weaponizing her trauma to prove a theological point. They demand an execution. But before we look at what Jesus does, we have to look at what is missing from this picture.

1. The Hypocrisy of the Missing Man

You cannot be caught in the act of adultery by yourself. It takes two. The Pharisees loudly declare that the Law of Moses commands this woman to be stoned. But if they actually cared about the Law of Moses, they would have

read

Leviticus 20:10

which says clearly that both the adulterer and the adulteress shall surely be put to death.

So I have a question for the religious elite. Where is the man?

How do you kick down a door, catch two people in the very act, and only arrest the woman? I will tell you how. This was a setup. The man was likely one of them. He was protected by the boy's club. He was shielded by a religious system that covers up the sins of the powerful while publicly crushing the vulnerable. They let the man slip out the back door, adjust his robes, and go sit in the synagogue, while they dragged this broken woman through the dirt to use her as bait to trap Jesus.

This is the definition of pretentious worship. It is the hypocrisy of a system that demands absolute perfection from the broken while hiding the rotting secrets of the leadership. And we have to pause here and talk to the men. True manhood is taking responsibility. God is not pleased with a culture - whether in the streets or in the sanctuary - where men use women, abandon them in the moment of consequence, and leave them to take the hit alone.

This woman was dealing with the trauma of betrayal before she ever faced the threat of the stones. She was abandoned by the man she was with, and condemned by the men who brought her. But thank God, she was about to meet a different kind of man.

2. The Trap of Public Exposure

The enemy loves to isolate you in your guilt. The scribes and Pharisees threw this woman down in the middle of everyone to make a public spectacle of her private failure. They wanted to permanently scar her identity. They wanted her to die surrounded by accusing eyes.

Many of us know what it feels like to be exposed. Maybe you were not dragged into a courtyard, but you know the sting of public failure. A bad

decision. A moment where your emotions got the best of you, your flesh took over, and you made a choice that left you surrounded by people holding stones.

The hardest trauma to heal from is the trauma inflicted by people who claim to know God but operate without His mercy. They stand over you with rocks in their hands, ready to define your entire life by your worst mistake. They demand brutal justice for you, while quietly demanding grace for themselves. They want you destroyed so they can feel holy.

But you have to watch how Jesus handles a crisis.

3. The God Who Stoops

If Jesus says, "Let her go," He breaks the Law of Moses. If He says, "Stone her," He breaks Roman law, because the Romans had stripped the Jews of the right to execute capital punishment. It is a brilliant, deadly trap.

But Jesus does not panic. He does not yell. He perfectly manages His emotions. Verse 6 says, "But Jesus stooped down, and with his finger wrote on the ground, as though he heard them not."

Look at the passion of the Savior. When everyone else is standing up to condemn you, Jesus will stoop down to meet you where you are. He gets right down in the dirt with her. He ignores the loud, self-righteous voices of her abusers. We do not know what He wrote in the dust. Some scholars say He was writing the names of the Pharisees' mistresses. Some say He was writing the Ten Commandments. I just know this: the same finger that carved the law into stone on Mount Sinai was now writing grace into the dirt of the temple floor.

God is not afraid of your dirt. He is not intimidated by the mess you made. When you are operating out of emotional trauma, self-sabotage, and deep shame, Jesus does not stand on a balcony and shout instructions at you. He gets down on your level. He meets you in the mess.

4. The Mirror of Grace

The religious leaders keep pressing Him. They want blood. So Jesus stands up and gives them one sentence that entirely dismantles the attack. Verse 7 says, "He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her."

He turns the spotlight off her shame and shines it right on their hypocrisy. He does not argue the law. He simply raises the standard. If you are going to execute judgment, you better have clean hands.

And then the most beautiful sound in the world happens. Thud. Thud. Thud.

From the oldest to the youngest, the rocks start hitting the ground. The older you get, the more you realize how much grace you have needed to survive. Conviction cleared the room.

Three Keys to Surviving Exposure

We have to understand how to handle the stones people throw at us, and the stones we try to throw at ourselves. When the enemy tries to bury you in your past, you need a strategy to protect your mind. If you are going to overcome the adversity of a public failure, you have to know how to respond when the accusers show up.

Here is your defense strategy for the mind:

- 1. Stop defending yourself to people who are determined to misunderstand you. Jesus did not argue with the Pharisees; He exposed their hearts. You do not owe an explanation to people who are committed to your destruction.**
- 2. Let God handle your accusers. You do not have to fight every battle. Jesus fought for this woman with just one sentence. Surrender your need for retaliation and utterly refuse the root of bitterness.**
- 3. Leave the dirt in the dirt. When Jesus tells you it is over, you have to stop carrying the guilt of yesterday into the**

grace of today.

You cannot heal, and you cannot step into a new season, if you keep picking up the rocks that your accusers dropped. Let them go. Walk away from the weapons that were meant to kill you.

5. The Freedom to Walk

The accusers leave. Suddenly, the noise stops. The threat is gone. It is just Jesus and the woman.

"Woman, where are those thine accusers? hath no man condemned thee?"

She looks around. The very people who were ready to kill her are gone. The men who set her up are gone. The hypocrites are gone. She looks up at the only man who actually had the right to throw a stone, the only sinless man in the courtyard. She says, "No man, Lord."

And Jesus replies with the most powerful words a broken, traumatized soul can ever hear: "Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more."

Notice the order of the blessing. He does not say, "Go and sin no more, and then I will not condemn you." He gives the grace first. The grace is what empowers the transformation. He does not validate her sin, but He absolutely refuses to let her sin become her permanent identity.

He gives her a new revelation of who she is. She walked into that courtyard a condemned, used, abandoned adulteress. She walked out a forgiven daughter of the Most High God.

Somebody hearing this right now needs to know that the stones have been dropped. You have been carrying the weight of condemnation for years. You have let the whispers of the enemy build a stronghold in your mind, telling you that your failure is final. Telling you that you are damaged goods.

It is a lie. The blood of Jesus has cleared the courtyard. Leave the stones on the ground. Refuse the bitterness. Receive your forgiveness. Go, and walk in your brand new identity.