



First Baptist Church Selmer

BODY TO BELIEVER • INTENTIONAL OUTREACH • JOHN 8:1-12 • 8/28/2022

MAIN POINT

Believers are to seek opportunities to share their faith even in the most difficult of circumstances.

INTRODUCTION

Use this section to introduce the topic of discussion.

When is the last time you shared your faith with someone else?

Why is it difficult to share your faith with others?

Is it easier to share your faith with people you know or don't know?

One of the biggest struggles that most Christians agree on is the struggle of sharing your faith with others. From not knowing what to say or feeling intimidated by someone asking questions, most Christians will admit they struggle with sharing their faith. If something is a struggle, then most often, we simply just don't do it.

The opportunities we have to share our faith occur more often than we think. Since sharing our faith is not always on the top of our minds, many times, the opportunities present themselves and then are gone before we ever even realize it.

Have you ever had an opportunity to share your faith only to realize later that you missed it?

How does it make you feel to miss those opportunities?

We are going to look today in John 8 at how Jesus took advantage of the opportunities that presented themselves to Him and how it changed the lives of those around Him.

UNDERSTANDING

Use this section to read the Bible together and talk about it.

| HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ JOHN 8:1-2

1 "but Jesus went to the Mount of Olives. 2 Early in the morning he came again to the temple. All the people came to him, and he sat down and taught them." (ESV)

Why do you think Jesus went to the temple early in the morning?

What was Jesus' response when people came to him?

Jesus went to the temple early that morning at the end of the Feast of the Tabernacles. This would allow Jesus to come in contact with Jewish pilgrims that had traveled to Jerusalem to celebrate. Word had quickly spread that Jesus was in the temple and many came to listen to his teachings. Jesus seized the opportunity to reach more people during this festival.

Jesus was teaching in the court of the women which was also the location of the treasury of the Temple. It was there that the Pharisees hatched out a plot to humiliate him.

| HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ JOHN 8:3-6

3 "The scribes and the Pharisees brought a woman who had been caught in adultery, and placing her in the midst 4 they said to him, 'Teacher, this woman has been caught in the act of adultery. 5 Now in the Law, Moses commanded us to stone such women. So what do you say? 6 This they said to test him, that they might have some charge to bring against him. Jesus bent down and wrote with his finger on the ground.'" (ESV)

Why did the Pharisees bring the woman to Jesus?

It does seem rather suspicious that only the woman was brought to Jesus to render judgment. According to Old Testament law, the man and the woman should have been brought forward. The Pharisees abruptly interrupted Jesus' teaching and pushed the women into the front of the crowd.

What did Jesus say to answer the Pharisees' question?

What did Jesus do instead?

The book of John doesn't record any words that Jesus spoke up to this point. He merely bent down to the ground and begin to write in the dirt. Speculation has been rendered about what Jesus wrote on the ground but the Bible doesn't tell us. Instead, we see three groups of people that will be forever changed by Jesus' actions: 1) the Pharisees 2) the crowd 3) the woman.

Were the Pharisees overly concerned with what the Law of Moses told them to do in all circumstances?

Why was this circumstance one that was worth bringing to Jesus?

Were the Pharisees interested in the outcome of the judgment that Jesus passed on this woman or were they more concerned with humiliating Jesus?

The Pharisees wanted to publicly humiliate Jesus. If he was too harsh in his judgment, then Jesus would no longer be considered compassionate or a "friend of publicans and sinners." But if Jesus was too lenient, He would be considered a false prophet and be subject to arrest. This seemed on the surface as the perfect plot to rid them of this man named Jesus.

| HAVE VOLUNTEER READ JOHN 8:7-11

7 "And as they continued to ask him, he stood up and said to them, 'Let him who is without sin among you be the first to throw a stone at her.' 8 And once more he bent down and wrote on the ground. 9 But when they heard it, they went away one by one, beginning with the older ones, and Jesus was left alone with the woman standing before him. 10 Jesus stood up and said to her, 'Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?' 11 She said, 'No one, Lord.' And Jesus said, 'Neither do I condemn you; go, and from now on sin no more.'" (ESV)

Has anyone ever called out your sin before?

What was your first thought once your sin was called out?

Who was Jesus attempting to "reach" in this story?

When Jesus spoke, his words were not well received by many, especially the Pharisees.

"*Him who is without sin among you be the first to throw a stone at her*" were the words, yet the only one that was without sin chose not to throw one. Jesus was not only changing the life of this woman but also the lives of the Pharisees and the onlookers from the crowd.

What was interesting about Jesus' questioning of the woman?

What two things did Jesus say to her as she left?

Jesus did not condone the actions of the woman if they were true, but also did not condemn her. We must not interpret this as Jesus was "easy on sin" but rather that there is no sin that Jesus cannot forgive us from. The law was given to reveal sin (Roman 3:20) but Christ came to provide us with a Savior from our sin.

Jesus was intentional in His actions but also in His words. He forgave the woman from her sins but placed the responsibility of sin clearly back on her, "Go, and from now on sin no more."

| HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ JOHN 8:12

12 "Again Jesus spoke to them, saying, 'I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.'" (ESV)

How did Jesus provide hope for a hopeless situation?

If we are living in Christ, how much different will our lives look compared to living apart from Him?

The eternity of the Pharisees, the crowd, and the woman was of utmost importance to Jesus. We do not know how many were affected for eternity from this story but we do see that Jesus was intentional and was ready to share the hope of the Gospel when given the opportunity.

APPLICATION

Discuss how to apply what you have studied.

How often do you hear people talk about having no hope?

Is there ever a time that a situation has no hope?

How can we be more intentional in sharing the hope of the Gospel with others around us?

PRAYER

God, thank you for the hope that you have given us through your Son and his death, burial, and resurrection. Thank you for the hope in us but help us to share that hope with others around us. Give us an opportunity to share that very hope with someone this week.

COMMENTARY

| JOHN 8:1-12

8:1-6a. The earliest and most reliable manuscripts do not include John 7:53–8:11. The Pharisees posed a dilemma. If Jesus agreed to stone the woman, he would incur the distrust of the sinners he came to save as well as break Roman law. But a refusal to stone her would make him vulnerable to the accusation that he treated the Law of Moses lightly. It is a sad commentary on the culture of first-century Israel that they brought in the woman but no mention is made of the man.

John left no doubt regarding the Pharisees' motivation: They were using this question as a trap, in order to have a basis for accusing him. So the chapter begins with public accusation, but it also goes on to talk about personal guilt. In one sense the Pharisees stood on solid ground with their appeal to the Law of Moses (Lev. 20:10; Deut. 22:22–24), but the law was not as clear as their accusation seems to imply. For example, her marital status would be a defining factor.

8:6b-8. Interpreters seem fascinated by Jesus' writing in the sand, certainly a reaction unexpected by the Pharisees. Why did Jesus do this? What did he write? One answer suffices for both questions: We do not know. It is useless to speculate, as some have done, that he wrote the names of other adulterers who were standing there among the group of accusers. We are bound to the text which tells us nothing more than that Jesus refused an immediate or reactionary response to the Pharisees' accusation. The centerpiece of this scene is the Lord's answer: If any one of you is without sin, let him be the first to throw a stone at her.

The writing in the sand was followed by the wisdom of the Son. This rubric is certainly valuable for judgmental Christians in our times. The perfect reply preserved both Jewish and Roman law while exposing the wickedness of the accusers. As Jesus began writing on the ground a second time, they had time to think about their own lives and God began to speak to those who were open to hear his voice. Again the accusers were brought face to face with the law they

themselves had quoted. According to Deuteronomy 17:2-7, the witnesses of a crime who had reported it to the authorities would be the first to cast the stones.

8:9. What followed was the withdrawal of the sinners, one at a time, the older ones first. Did the older ones leave first because they had more time to accumulate sins of their own? Was it their maturity and sense of impending judgment that made them fleet of foot to escape this embarrassing predicament? Did they recognize that perhaps their sin was greater than the woman's and Jesus knew that full well? Again, the text does not tell us. But conscience must have played some role in this scene as the accusers left Jesus alone with the woman.

Imagine a stage play as you watch in silence—no dialogue, no music. The confident and critical Pharisees, moments ago pointing their fingers at the woman and at Jesus, now silently exit stage right or stage left without another word. Christians are not perfect—just forgiven. And because of the extent of God's forgiveness to us, we ought to be the least judgmental people in the world.

8:10-11. The first two scenes of the story described the charges and their response. Now we come to the verdict. With the accusers gone, there remained no condemnation. The Son of God refused to press the issue. Her sin was not just set aside; soon Jesus would pay the penalty for both the woman and her accusers. Jesus asked a rhetorical question and the woman answered it simply. Forgiveness rests upon the Lord's understanding.

Finally, we see that the verdict rests upon the Lord's forgiveness. Forgiveness demands a clean break with sin. The same Jesus offers forgiveness today to sinners whose sins equal that of the woman or those of the Pharisees. And not only forgiveness for initial salvation but also for daily sins of anger, disobedience, envy, greed, and the judgmental character shown by the Pharisees which gave birth to this episode.