

Nobody Left Out 4 – The Woman in the Dirt

Welcome back to Redemption Church in Plano, Texas. My name is Chris Fluitt, and I am glad to welcome everyone. Thank you for joining us in worship.

Nobody Left Out

We are in the 4th week of our sermon series “Nobody Left Out.” We are inviting you to read along in a 40 day devotional with the same title by author Michael Murray.

Available here:

<https://www.amazon.com/Nobody-Left-Out-Messes-Devotional-ebook/dp/B08MY583G8>

Tonight, I want to talk to you about the woman in the dirt.

The Woman in the Dirt

Last week we touched on some ancient world culture contexts that play a part in our story this week.

Women – were disadvantaged in the ancient world. If a woman did not have a husband, she would often go hungry or turn to prostitution.

Pharisees – were religious teachers who considered themselves righteous.

A prostitute would likely feel that they had no other choice but to sin.

A Pharisee would likely feel that they had no other choice but to judge the sinner in their midst.

John 8:3-11(NIV) 3 The teachers of the law and the Pharisees brought in a woman caught in 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, “Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?” 11 “No one, sir,” she said. “Then neither do I condemn you,” Jesus declared. “Go now and leave your life of sin.”

This is a great story. There are several perspectives in this story. This is one of those stories that you can read multiple times and each time you read it come away with a different emotion or revelation.

The Woman in the Dirt

We don't know much about the woman.
How old is she?
What is her name?
Where is her family?

She has accusers, and they never tell us anything about the woman except that she was caught in the act of adultery. Maybe the accusers don't know anything else... but more likely the accusers think nothing else matters but judgment for sin.

The pharisees act like prosecutors in the court of law. The lawyer for the prosecution will only point out what the defendant has done wrong. A prosecutor will never say anything nice about the defendant, they only seek to paint them in the worst light possible.

The pharisees act as prosecutors here. "This woman was caught in the act... Case closed! The law says she should be stoned to death."

A defense attorney was not present to speak on her behalf.

Defenseless

Have you ever felt defenseless?

Have you ever felt ganged up on?

Have you ever felt like everyone was against you?

Have you ever felt like no one cared to hear your side of the story?

Have you ever felt used?

Have you ever felt guilty and hopeless... and unloved?

Have you ever been caught? There is no defense for that really... you just await your sentencing.

The woman in the dirt was defenseless.

The woman was not allowed to tell her story. I wonder what her story was.

Imagine with me... She was a young lady with hopes and aspirations. One day she meets a man who shows an interest in her... perhaps they get married or

perhaps they don't. But imagine that she gives herself intimately to this man only to be ultimately used and discarded.

Given the ancient world culture, now that she is no longer a virgin, she is unlikely to become married.

Now that she is no longer a virgin, she is likely disowned and disinherited by her family. They would act like she never even existed... Imagine her heartache.

Since she had no hope of a 'happy ever after' and since she could not turn to her own for help and support, she turned to prostitution to try to make another day.

Imagine... She was broken by being exploited and used by a man, and now exploits herself and allows herself to be used every day. She was broken and now every day she is broken again.

I don't know this woman's story for sure, but this kind of story would not have been unheard of in the ancient world.

The woman was defenseless and exploited.

Exploited

She had been taken advantage of and used. She was in a constant state of being used and discarded. She had been broken repeatedly, and who could even expect a different outcome.

I want to remind you how the story started.

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

She was "brought." "They made her stand before the group."

She did not choose to be here. She was forcefully brought. She had no choice but to come with those who exerted power.

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?”

It was to be an immediate judgment and execution. But read the next verse...

*6 They were using this question as a trap, in order to have a basis for accusing him...

Do we understand what is happening here?

They – the pharisees – where using this question – should we stone this sinner – as a trap for Jesus.

Exploited

The woman was being exploited by the pharisees. They really didn't care what happened to her, they were using her to accuse Jesus.

How cruel that this exploited woman was yet again being exploited. Do I need to remind you that she is being exploited by the ones who consider themselves righteous?

The scripture says they were using their question to the Master as a trap.

Entrapment

They are trying to entrap Jesus. They are putting Jesus in a scenario where no

matter what Jesus does, they will accuse him.

If Jesus says, “don’t stone her” then they will accuse him of not keeping the law.

If Jesus says, “stone her,” they would likely change the story and accuse Jesus of stoning a woman with no proof.

But their trap does not begin with Jesus. These pharisees probably entrapped the woman.

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

They caught the woman in the act of... adultery.

The act of adultery takes 2 people, one of which is married. The woman is not likely married, so where is the married man? How is it that the man was not caught?

How is it that we are never told about the man?

- Was there a man at all? Could it be that the entire accusation is fabricated?
- Could it be that the guilty man is one of the pharisees who willfully trapped her in a sting operation, that they looked past the sin of one of their own brothers?

These pharisees were hypocrites. They were unethical yet judged her ethics. They were unrighteous, yet they proclaimed righteousness.

The Woman in the Dirt

The woman in the dirt is defenseless, exploited, and entrapped. How would Jesus respond?

How would Jesus respond?

If I have learned anything from reading the Bible, it is that Jesus usually responds unexpectedly.

Jesus, you are always so surprising.

I am always surprised at how Jesus loves my enemies.

I am always surprised at how Jesus is willing to forgive me.

I expect Him to reject me, but He embraces me.

How Jesus responds in John 8 is still surprising to me.

If it had been an action movie, Jesus would have looked at the woman in the dirt and said, *Arnold Schwarzenegger voice* “Follow me if you want to live!” And Jesus would pull out a pump action rifle and start blasting...

If it had been a soap-opera, Jesus would have awakened from a coma and

revealed that he is the long, lost brother of the woman in the dirt...

If it been Star Wars, a cloaked figure would appear against the 2 suns of Tatooine and ignited his lightsaber as the John Williams score crescendos.

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

Everyone who was present and every person who has read this scripture has thought the same question. What is Jesus doing?!

There is a problem at hand. There is a trap set for the woman and for Jesus, so why is he down on the ground and writing in the dirt? Jesus is again unexpected.

There is a pressing need, and Jesus is seemingly doodling in the dirt!

We are never really told why Jesus is doing this. I want to suggest that Jesus is disrespecting the pharisees and their question. To answer the Pharisees question would have legitimized their usurped authority. The truth is their motive and line of questioning was illegitimate.

If you think His drawing in the dirt was silly and a waste of time... Jesus is showing us all that their traps, bad theology, and evil motives were misdirected and a waste of time.

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.

They keep questioning Jesus, and Jesus gives them permission to stone the woman with 1 caveat. “Let any one of you who is without sin be the first to throw a stone...”

And with that Jesus went back down to the ground and continued writing.

There is something really humorous about this business in the dirt.

Now, every message I have ever heard on this story has taken time to wonder what Jesus was writing in the dirt. It could be that Jesus was writing the names of the men and the dates in which that had slept with this very woman. It could be that He was writing the command to love your neighbor. For all we know Jesus could have been drawing stick figures... We don't really know.

Here is what we do know. It worked.

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.

Here is why it worked.

Jesus said, “Let anyone who is without sin be the first to throw a stone...”

Jesus does not defend the woman as being sinless... or wrongly accused... She was likely rightly accused as a sinner. Instead, Jesus challenges the pharisees to examine themselves instead of the woman.

Am I a sinner?

Jesus offers them an invitation. It is not an invitation to justify themselves, but to search their hearts for sin.

Jesus offers us the same invitation. Do not try to justify your sin... Drop the arguments...

-But it was not a big sin.

-Everyone does it.

-It is ok, because no one knows about it.

-It is ok, because I only do it occasionally.

-They deserved it.

Search your heart.

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.

I love this verse.

One at a time they grew convicted of their sin. The pharisee walked away when they realized they were no better than the woman.

Defenseless

The woman was defenseless, but so too were the pharisees defenseless to sin. Sin stood over them ready to execute them.

Exploited

The woman was exploited, yet the pharisees were also exploited by sin. They had been taken advantage of and used.

Entrapment

The woman had fallen prey to entrapment, but the pharisees were no better. Sin had laid a snare and they had fallen into sin's trap.

The Woman in the Dirt

The scripture says, one at a time the pharisees left... from oldest to youngest, as they were confronted by their sin, they walked away... until only Jesus remained.

I want you to get the picture of all your accusers standing over you and ready to destroy you. But Jesus stands up, by bending down to you... and one by one all your accusers leave until only Jesus remains.

10 Jesus straightened up and asked her, “Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?”

Jesus has a sense of humor. “Where did they go?” Like Jesus didn’t know!? Somehow, Jesus was so engrossed writing in the dirt he forgot he was to be an executioner? No way! I think Jesus was being funny here.

“Remind me,” Jesus says, “Were you being condemned?”

The enemy had been at work, but he made the mistake of bringing the sinners right to their savior.

Your enemy is at work, as well, but he is leading you right to the savior.

Remember how Jesus invited the one without sin to throw the first stone?

The woman could not pick up a stone... she was a sinner.

The pharisees could not pick up a stone... they were sinners.

But Jesus, was without sin. The only one present who could have picked up a stone was Jesus. The one who truly could have condemned the woman was present – Eternal God!

Jesus did not condemn the woman, instead Jesus was condemned to die in her place.

Do you understand that Jesus came not to condemn but to save?

John 3:16 is one of the most requested verses in the Bible...

John 3:16 (NIV) For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.

Too many people do not know the next verse.

John 3:17 (NIV) For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him.

Jesus loves you. He is the only one who could pick up a stone and condemn you to death, but instead Jesus saves you by His death upon the cross.

Defenseless

Jesus became defenseless for us. He could have called Angels to protect Him, but He allowed himself to be tortured in our place.

Exploited

Jesus was exploited for us. The same pharisees took advantage of Him. Judas exploited Jesus. Pilate and Herod tried to use Jesus. The roman soldiers exploited him for nothing more than to laugh at his pain. Jesus was exploited for you.

Entrapment

Jesus experienced entrapment. When he was wrongly arrested... when he was unfairly put on trial... when he was lied about... BUT UNDERSTAND THIS: Jesus was not tricked. Jesus walked into the trap knowingly. He did it for you.

Musician

What Jesus did for the woman He has done for you... nobody left out.

I want us to come pray. These altars are open right now as I close.

Jesus reaches down into the dirt...

Jesus is God in a bod. When Jesus reaches down into the dirt, He is the very same God who reached down into the dirt in Genesis 2 and formed mankind.

I don't know if we can really comprehend this, but when God formed Adam in that dirt, God saw more than one man... He saw all of mankind. God reached into dirt and saw every man and every woman.

The all-knowing God reached into the dirt in Genesis 2... and He saw you. He saw the woman in John 8. He had already seen her in Genesis 2.

How Jesus bent down to the dirt in John 8 was a surprise to the pharisees, the woman, and all who have read. But our God, our Jesus, has a habit of reaching into dirt and pulling mankind out of it.

He brought me out of the miry clay,
He set my feet on the Rock to stay;
He puts a song in my soul today,
A song of praise, hallelujah!

