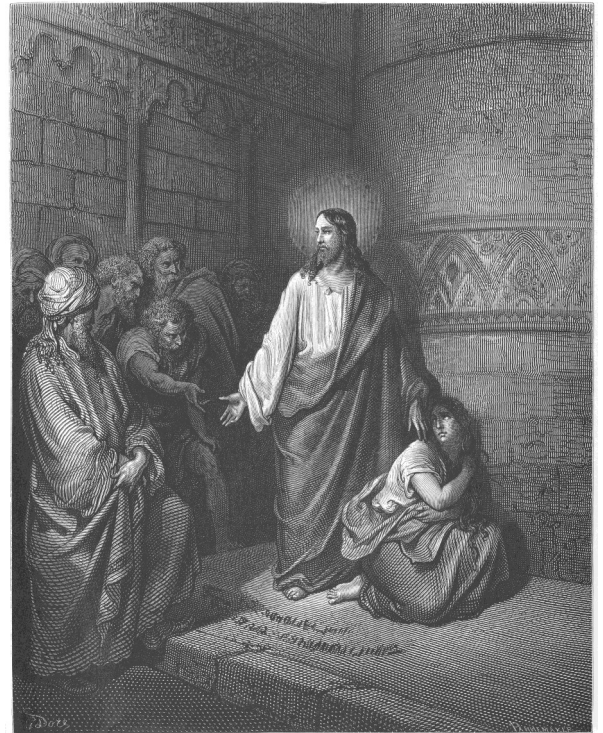


Jesus' Mercy Towards a Woman Caught in Adultery

Jesus went to the Mount of Olives. But early in the morning he arrived again in the temple area, and all the people started coming to him, and he sat down and taught them. Then the scribes and the Pharisees brought a woman who had been caught in adultery and made her stand in the middle. They said to him, "Teacher, this woman was caught in the very act of committing adultery. Now in the law, Moses commanded us to stone such women. So what do you say?" They said this to test him, so that they could have some charge to bring against him. Jesus bent down and began to write on the ground with his finger. But when they continued asking him, he straightened up and said to them, "Let the one among you who is without sin be the first to throw a stone at her." Again he bent down and wrote on the ground. And in response, they went away one by one, beginning with the elders. So he was left alone with the woman before him. Then Jesus straightened up and said to her, "Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?" She replied, "No one, sir." Then Jesus said, "Neither do I condemn you. Go, and from now on do not sin anymore."



I. EXPLORE IT!

The punishment for adultery is death by stoning or other means of execution (Leviticus 20:10 and Deuteronomy 22:22-23).

By Roman decree, Jews could not put anyone to death. Therefore, when the scribes and Pharisees brought the adulterous woman before Jesus, they were seeking to trap Him, forcing Him to choose between the Law of Moses and the authority of Rome. This is similar to the tribute money trap (Mark 12:13-17) the scribes and Pharisees setup to trick Jesus in the Gospel according to Mark.

This is the only passage in the scripture where Jesus writes anything. Church Fathers suggest that Jesus was invoking Jeremiah 17:13, "Lord, on whom Israel's hope is fixed, all who reject you will be inscribed in the dust, for they have rejected the source of living water, the Lord." Alternatively, it could be that Jesus just showed disinterest in the proceeding.

In the death penalty case, the witnesses against the accused were to take the initiative in carrying out the execution (Deuteronomy 17:7). Jesus asked the scribes and Pharisees to do an examination of conscience before proclaiming themselves worthy of carrying out judgment. Jesus did not give them the excuse to throw the first stone.

The scribes and Pharisees were elders in the community and were considered wise. They recognized that Jesus had flipped the trap back on them and now faced a dilemma. If they stoned her, they had to answer to the Romans. If they did not, they would be rejecting the Law of Moses.

Jesus says to the adulterous woman, "Go, and from now on do not sin anymore." Jesus hates sin. The lesson of this story is not that sin is of no importance or that God does not punish sin; rather, God extends mercy to the sinner so that he may turn from his sin. He condemns the sin but not the sinner.

2. CONNECT IT!

Through the story of the adulterous woman, Jesus reminds us that we are all sinners and need God's forgiveness. Furthermore, there will be times when we hurt others or when others hurt us. Jesus calls on us not to pass judgement. Rather, we all need to forgive others who have wronged or hurt us. We should not judge or condemn others. Instead, like Jesus, forgive and give others a second chance. Help others to discover Christ, to find the right path to live a holy life. Through our actions, through our prayers, we are able to help each other be better.

3. REFLECT IT!

Read the Scripture passage and answer the questions below.

1. Who are the people in your life that come to mind when you read this passage?

2. Why did this passage make you think of them?

4. LIVE IT! [GENTLENESS]

Gentleness is having or showing a kind and quiet Nature; it is not harsh or violent.

In what ways can you help the person (or people) mentioned in the **Reflect It**?

Do you plan to go to confession during Lent? Make every effort to receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation this week.

5. REMEMBER IT!

"Neither do I condemn you. Go. [and] from now on do not sin any more." (John 8:11)

6. PRAY IT!

Prayer for Healing

Lord, look upon me with eyes of mercy, may Your healing hand rest upon me, may your life-giving powers flow into every cell of my body and into the depths of my soul, cleansing, purifying, restoring me to wholeness and strength for service in Your Kingdom. Amen.

¹ http://www.scborromeo.org/biblestu/c_lent_5.pdf