

# **AWARENESS.SKILLS.KNOWLEDGE.**

## **Intergenerational Women's Ministry**

St. Matthew AME Church

Reverend Melvin E. Wilson, Pastor|Teacher

25 February 2023

This month provides an overview of how her

**S**piritual Gifts

**P**ersonality (Presence/Perspective)

**E**xperiences (Positions/Protection)

**C**ares/Passions

**I**nterest

**A**bilities

**L**ife Talents

contributes to her special God-given purpose; equipping her to **minister to all God's children.**



*"It's not the load that breaks you down,  
it's the way you carry it."*

*Lena Horne*

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**All Women of the Bible by Herbert Lockyer – The Woman Christ Saved From Death By Stoning  
Pages 239-242 (John 8:1-11; Deuteronomy 17:5-6)**

## **AWARENESS**

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*She said, "No man, Lord." John 8:11a (KJV)*

### **The Anointed One**

- Jesus never shrank from close association with sinners.
- In His journey He conversed with at least three women who had been guilty of adultery – the Woman of Samaria, the woman who came to Him in the house of Simon, and now the woman of this narrative. His loving kindness and tender mercy characterized His dealings with each of them.
- While at the Temple members of the Sanhedrin were seeking to kill Him, and the Scribes and Pharisees were in sympathy with such a wicked design. With them was a woman who had been caught committing a most degrading and serious offense.

### **The Accusers**

- The religious leaders who brought the woman to Christ belonged to a class most eager to deal with harlots (A woman who prostitutes her body for hire; a prostitute; a common woman.)
- They regarded themselves as custodians of public morality, treating sinners with sanctimonious contempt (making a show of being morally superior to others).
- They were partial in that they did not bring the man, the chief offender. Divine justice, however, is without partiality (James 3:17).

### **The Adulteress**

- She was guilty of the sinful conduct with which she was charged.
- Jesus pitied the woman's weakness and made full allowance for the force of temptation compelling her to sin. He regarded her conduct as being a manifestation of wickedness evidenced by His command that she sin no more.
- Could anything have been more cruel or harsh than that of setting this sinful woman "in the midst" of the Temple, exposing her to the gaze of the multitude?

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- It was bad enough for the woman to be conscious of the guilt of her sin, but to parade her before others was a cruel act and destitute of the love eager to hide a multitude of sins (1 Peter 4:8).

### **The Advocate**

- As a Jew, and as the Messiah, Jesus was under solemn obligation of respecting the law of Moses (Deuteronomy 1:9; Matthew 5:17) and in His life on earth fulfilled the law (Matthew 5:18).
- When the Pharisees quoted the law, they hoped to snare Jesus into making an answer contrary to the law. If He said “stone her”, His tenderness and kindness in dealing with the sinful and degraded would have been shown as being false. If He said “let her go”, there might have been a revolt among those who although they were favorable to Him were yet staunch defenders of what Moses taught. He needed wisdom to deal with such a situation.
- Jesus did four things:
  - He knew how to the answer their question, which He successfully did by silence. Jesus paused!
  - He stooped and wrote in the dust around His feet looking away from the frightened female dragged into His presence.
  - When He looked up and spoke, the judicial decision was not forthcoming but what the Pharisees heard stunned them – “He who is without sin among you – that is the type of sin men engaged in with such a woman – let him cast the first stone.” The only One present that day without sin was the sinless Lord Himself.
  - He convicted the Pharisees of their own conscience; they were condemned in being guilty of the very sin they cast against the woman.

### **The Acquittal**

- When Jesus looked up the 2<sup>nd</sup> time, He only saw the woman who did not flee as the convicted Pharisees who left the Temple in shame.
- Now facing her, Jesus asked, “Where are those thine accusers? Hath no man condemned thee?” The woman simply answered, “No man, Lord.” She recognized that He was the only One who had the right to pass sentence on her.

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- She did not attempt to defend or offer an excuse for He knew all about her and thus she reverently called Him “Lord”.
- Then came the word her heart longed to hear, “Neither do I condemn thee; go, and sin no more.”
- While there is no expression of forgiveness or peace as in other situations, it is believed she went forth and in obedience to Christ’s command entered a new life of pardon, peace and purity.
- Be slow to condemn and quick forgive.

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## **BLESSINGS OVERFLOW!!!**

**March 25, 2023**

**Pricilla, The Woman Who Was Foremost In Service**

Pages 121-125; Acts 18:2, 18, 26; Romans 16:3; I Corinthians 16:19; 2 Timothy 4:19

**April 22, 2023**

**Syro-Phoenician Woman, The Woman Who Begged As A Dog**

Pages 224-226; Matthew 15:21-28; Mark 7:24-30

**No May Session**

**June 24, 2023**

**Rebekah, Rebecca, The Woman Whose Favoritism Brought Sorrow**

Pages 134-140; Genesis 22:23; 24; 25:20-28; 26:6-35; 27; 28:5; 29:12; 35:8; 49:31; Romans 9:6-16

**July- August Summer Break**

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## **SKILL**

### **Step Twenty-Four: Slow To Speak – Breaking The Power Of Sin**

#### **Four Important Lessons We Can Learn from Jesus and the Woman in John 8<sup>1</sup>**

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Often when speaking about the unnamed woman in John 8 who was guilty as accused, it wasn't a matter of *if* she committed adultery, but rather that the men in authority said she did. But think about it, why did Jesus respond to them, to the situation the way He did?

#### **Lesson #1: Jesus Stooped Down**

When taught John 8 narrative someone always asks, “What did Jesus write on the ground?” Theories abound—from Jesus merely dragging His finger through the sand, to Him writing the specific names and sins of the Pharisees. But there is simply no way to know what Jesus wrote because the author chose not to tell us—or didn't know himself. So rather than getting caught in the weeds of such details, let's look at what Jesus did.

- Jesus refused to get swept up in this scandal. They are in the Temple and the Pharisees brings this woman in front of the crowd. The Pharisees used her as an item, an object, a thing to entrap Jesus. The Pharisee's asked, “Teacher, this woman was caught in the act of adultery. . . Moses commanded us to stone such women. Now what do you say?” (v. 4–5).
- Jesus responded by stooping down. He said nothing. He didn't ask for more information. He didn't put His hands up, palms out, and say, “Whoa, slow down. I need more information.” Nor did He begin preaching hellfire and brimstone. We expect Him to talk, to say something, anything! The Pharisees kept badgering Him with questions, and finally Jesus stood up, only to deliver His legendary line, “Let any of you who is without sin be the first to throw a stone at her” (v. 7). Immediately, Jesus stooped down again and continued writing until every accuser had left. Question: Did Jesus ignore the sin that took place?
- We don't need to know what Jesus was writing to learn from him in this moment. Too often we allow a group's emotions to become our own in heated situations.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.cbeinternational.org/resource/four-important-lessons-we-can-learn-from-jesus-and-the-woman-in-john-8/>

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What the Pharisees insisted Jesus deal with on the spot, Jesus decided wasn't actually all that urgent. Where the Pharisees had cooked up a crisis, Jesus de-escalated it by not engaging verbally or emotionally.

- We can learn a lot from Jesus's silence. This was no emergency. Jesus models the humility and self-control of a leader who is quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow to be provoked (James 1:19).

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### **Lesson #2: Women and Sexual Sin**

- There is a bias toward women and sexual sin, especially in the church.
- When it comes to King David and Bathsheba, many Christians feel the need to research and explain away his behavior, to defend him and cover for him by calling his abuse of power an affair (even though it was rape). And yet we don't give this woman the same benefit. We allow the text to tell us that she was an adulteress and let it be so. This realization should cause us dissonance (lack of agreement), and prompt us toward more equitable interpretation in the future.
- Jesus seemed unconcerned with the woman's sexual behavior, especially compared to the Pharisees who brought her to Him.
- We know that Jesus is righteous. He didn't hide from confrontation, nor did He allow improper or incomplete labels to be applied to what was wrong. We can deduce, then, that Jesus would've agreed that adultery is sinful. However, in this text, Jesus didn't even mention her alleged sin—to the men nor to her.
- Jesus seems to understand that much of what looked like sexual sin was actually women being taken advantage of and mistreated. In contrast to common practices of His time, Jesus was not afraid of women. He did not view them as temptresses. He respected them as full human beings.<sup>1</sup>
- Jesus's actions were scandalous because they broadened acceptance, extended mercy and forgiveness to the undeserving, and brought justice to the overpowered and abused. Will the church ever do the same?

### **Lesson #3: Neither Do I Condemn You**

- It should strike us that Jesus did not speak to the woman as an individual until the crowd dispersed and they were left alone.

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- Before she committed to any response, Jesus stood again and asked, “Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?” (v. 10). She was a person now! Jesus turned her from a thing into a person, merely by asking her a question about her condition.
- He cleared the crowd so as not to embarrass her further while getting to the truth. Jesus asked her no detailed questions regarding the real story or her side of things. He questioned her privately, but it was only to reveal an evident truth. At her simple reply— “No one, sir”—He added His two cents: “neither do I” (v. 11).
- “Regardless of her story and how she came to be at that unfortunate scene on that day, Jesus’ response is not to rebuke her or humiliate her.”

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### **Lesson #4: The Scandalous Good News**

- What is the good news for (the person in) this narrative?
- Jesus forgives our sins, and this fact alone is worthy of worship and celebration. Still, if this were the only takeaway from the story, would it be good news for the men who were gathered with stones in their hands? Some interpreters see Jesus offering the group of Pharisees the same offer he later makes to the woman—that of self-reflection and changed behavior at the realization of sin.
- What if Jesus had pronounced her guilty and worthy to be stoned? Would it change our understanding of God or the gospel? Most likely, we would see Jesus as upholding the principles of the law and drawing boundaries around what is and is not acceptable behavior. However, because Jesus is different than any other man, this story expands and transforms our understanding of the Good News. Now, it is not only the woman who is offered an invitation to enter into grace, or even the group of men with stones in their hand, but it is also all of us.
- For as long as we are alive, scandals will abound. We should expect them. However, the call to follow Jesus demands that we emulate his life and character, and it comes with the guarantee that when we give it our very best effort, we will transform, slowly but surely.
- Jesus reveals His risky stance of solidarity with people on the margins of society. Jesus does not assume that the dominant narrative being told about a person’s life is

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the narrative that person would tell.” This is what makes Jesus scandalous. This is the gospel, the transformation of death into life.

## **KNOWLEDGE**

Dear (insert your name) \_\_\_\_\_;

Today I engaged in a conversation on how Jesus did not comply with the standard quo. He was slow to speak, quick to listen and that is how God can use me (skills, character, priorities) as an Ambassador of Christ. I must be aware of tools Satan will use to keep me from fully serving Him in mind, spirit and heart. Because of what I heard, shared, learned, witnessed, thought about, I want to remember most

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Blessings Overflow,

**1-800-799-SAFE (7233)**

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