

When People are Against You

Last week we looked at the story of how four friends took their paralyzed friend to Jesus. Only problem with that is where Jesus was teaching there was no room for them to get in. So they cut the roof open, lowered their friend down and placed him in front of Jesus. Jesus was so moved by their faith that He healed the man! Why would Jesus do this? Well, He did this because **Jesus is for you!**

Tonight, we are going to look at another story of how Jesus is for you but in a very different way!

Now I want you all to be honest with me. How many of you have those days where all you want is for people to leave you alone? You've had a rough day, or you're just straight up cranky. You think to yourself, "I swear, if anyone talks to me today, I'm gonna lose my mind. I'm just gonna keep my head down, go where I need to go, and not say a word to anybody."

But then, it seems like that is the day where somehow, you are the most popular person in the world? How many have experienced that before? All you want is for people to leave you alone just this one day, and instead, you have people coming up to you left and right trying to talk to you. People just won't leave you alone!

What's funny is that this idea that people just keep swarming you was basically what Jesus' life was like every day!

John 8:1-11 (MSG)

8¹⁻² Jesus went across to Mount Olives, but he was soon back in the Temple again. Swarms of people came to him. He sat down and taught them.

How cool is it that wherever Jesus showed up people would show up? That he didn't need to post it on Facebook or send out a DM to people. He just would show up and people would show up!

We know that when Jesus rolls up anywhere:

People are attracted to Him!

People could not get enough of Jesus! What is that He taught lessons through humility! He wasn't all crazy about it. Jesus could have easily floated on a little cloud above people like 50 feet in the air, with lights shining around him. Or He could have had angels fly around him and shoot fireballs off like fireworks. This wasn't Jesus though! **Jesus wasn't about the show; he was about the people!**

Jesus simply made himself available to people! Man, that is so powerful. Jesus just wanted to be with people! He would sit down among them and teach them.

3-7 The religious scholars and Pharisees led in a woman who had been caught in an act of adultery. They stood her in plain sight of everyone and said, "Teacher, this woman was caught red-handed in the act of adultery. Moses, in the Law, gives orders to stone such persons. What do you say?" They were trying to trap him into saying something incriminating so they could bring charges against him.

Oh man! Seems like not everyone was for Jesus at this point! When we talk about "Pharisees/Sadducees/Teachers of the Law" we are talking about the Bible teachers/Pastors/Lawyers of that time!

These crews were CONSTANTLY trying to trip Jesus up! So these dirtbags drag this woman in front of Jesus. They use her just like a prop in order to trap Jesus.

The Woman

This lady was caught in adultery. She was caught sleeping with someone who wasn't her husband! When we read this it's like they literally have pulled this woman away from her partner and brought her to Jesus.

Adultery was a serious crime in these days. It was actually punishable by death! The mandate for this sin, was stoning. I am not talking about throwing little pebbles or little rocks at someone. I am talking about literally throwing rocks like these: **[TEACHER NOTE: HAVE A BIG ROCK!]** Her accuser would throw the first stone at her, and then others would join in and throw stones at the woman till she was bloodied, beaten and dead.

Now check this out; in order for this woman to be stoned properly, there was a process.

1. There had to be a ton of evidence to convict who was guilty.
2. Two eyewitnesses had to see the “event” at the same time.
3. There had to be a trial for the one that was persecuted.
4. Then the one that was convicted had the opportunity to speak up.
5. Not only the woman but also the man that was caught was to be tried and stoned as well!
(BUT THIS RARELY EVER HAPPENED!)

So when we read this story there is a huge obvious question: WHY DIDN'T THEY FOLLOW THE PROCESS???

It is 100% clear that this whole thing was a setup.

How did the people catch her so fast?

How did they know where she would be? Usually this is done in secret!

Why didn't they bring the man?

Was he possibly part of this setup? Was he in on this, because he knew this woman would fail???

They were setting up this woman and they were setting up Jesus!

Have you ever been around your friends when you need to talk on the phone with your parents? You get a call from your mom asking where you are, and you're giving her an update and all of a sudden, one of your friends yells in the background, “Yo! Pass the weed!” All of a sudden, you have to convince your mom that that is NOT what you are doing!! But because of that, your friend has now tried to incriminate you to your parents. This is similar to what's happening to Jesus. People are trying to incriminate him and get him to be seen as in the wrong, regardless of what the truth is.

⁶ They were trying to trap him into saying something they could use against him, but Jesus stooped down and wrote in the dust with his finger. ⁷ They kept demanding an answer, so he stood up again and said, “All right, but let the one who has never sinned throw the first stone!” ⁸ Then he stooped down again and wrote in the dust.

These guys were trying to force Jesus to make a decision on this woman's life! They didn't really care about this woman; she was just a tool to get to Jesus. They thought they had Jesus! They thought they had him cornered.

If Jesus didn't go along with Moses' law the people would turn on him. If Jesus would have said stone her he would have been arrested and everything He stood for was done.

A Jew could not take anyone's life without Roman permission, if Jesus said stone her, he would be arrested.

While these people are trying to trap Jesus, he bends down and begins to write something in the dirt with his finger. This is the only time in the Bible where we see Jesus writing something and yet we don't know what he wrote!

The real question is not what did Jesus write... the question is, how does Jesus confront this? **How does Jesus stand for us, when people stand against us?**

We have all sinned, yet Jesus took the punishment in our place. He died on the cross, that should have been us! At that moment justice and mercy came together.

Jesus gives the most gangster, drop the mic answer ever: **let the one who has never sinned throw the first stone!**" He showed them they were unfit to judge her.

9-10 Hearing that, they walked away, one after another, beginning with the oldest. The woman was left alone. Jesus stood up and spoke to her.

"Woman, where are they? Does no one condemn you?"

11 "No one, Master." "Neither do I," said Jesus. "Go on your way. From now on, don't sin."

Jesus treated the guilty woman with dignity. This woman was guilty and everyone knew it! Jesus knew it. However, Jesus did not come to condemn her but to save her.

Jesus tells her, "Go now and leave your life of sin!" He refused to allow this woman to stay in her sin.

The reality of God's forgiveness doesn't mean our sins aren't serious!

Jesus makes it clear that we should never become accepting of a sin, even as we show compassion and love toward the one who sins. Jesus gave the

woman something the law didn't... he gave her forgiveness. We should never lose touch with the reality of sin and the depths of it.

Jeremiah 31:3-4 (NIV)

"I have loved you, my people, with an everlasting love. I have drawn you with unfailing kindness. I will build you up again."

You see, this woman did not have anyone for her. It didn't matter to the RELIGIOUS LEADERS whether she lived or died. The very people who are supposed to shepherd and teach the Jews, not just about the righteousness of God but of the mercy of God, are the ones who essentially tell this woman that her life is meaningless. It doesn't matter to them whether she lives or dies.

This person that she had been caught with in adultery was nowhere to be seen. This wasn't like a Romeo and Juliet story where they both would die together. Whatever the reason he wasn't there, whether he was a part of the setup or was simply saving his own skin, this person had also abandoned her. Imagine the loneliness that this woman felt on top of the shame she had in disobeying the law.

Yet, when no one else was for this woman, Jesus was. When she looked around and saw everyone ready to condemn her, Jesus was there defending her. He turned to her and said, "I do not condemn you."

Some of you are looking around the room tonight desperately looking for someone to defend you. You may feel like you are by yourself and that everyone is against you, but let me tell you tonight that Jesus is always for you, even when everyone else is against you.

Romans 8:31 (NIV)

"What, then, shall we say in response to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us?"

Maybe you have felt wronged by those who are supposed to defend you. Maybe it was church leaders, your parents, or those that are closest to you. If it was a church leader, let me just apologize for that. Sometimes we get it wrong... If it was a parent or someone close to you, let me just tell you how sorry I am that you have had to experience that kind of loneliness. Please know this that Jesus is for you with the utmost compassion in His eyes for

you to know that you are not alone. If He is for you, then who can truly be against you?

Let's pray.