

## Children's Moment

May 4, 2014

**Title:** On the Road to Emmaus

**Theme:** Jesus reveals himself to his followers.

**Object:** Image of Jesus graphic.

**Scripture:** “When he was at the table with them, he took bread, gave thanks, broke it and began to give it to them. Then their eyes were opened and they recognized him, and he disappeared from their sight. Luke 24:30-31 (NIV)

**-S-** This morning I have a picture for each of you. (Pass out picture) I want you to stare at the four small dots right in the middle of the picture. Concentrate and stare at the dots while I count to fifteen, then close your eyes. When you close your eyes, a white spot will appear and there may be a picture inside of that white spot. Let's try it and see what happens. Are you ready? Okay, concentrate! One, two, three.....(to fifteen) Now, close your eyes and keep them closed. Do you see anything? You may open your eyes now. How many of you saw the face of Jesus? Some people have a little trouble seeing it at first, so if at first you don't see the face of Jesus, keep trying and eventually you will see his face.

Our Bible lesson today tells an amazing story about a day when Jesus walked and talked with some of his followers, but they didn't even recognize him. Here is what happened. **-S-** After Jesus was crucified and risen from the grave, two of his followers were walking on the road that led to a town called Emmaus. They were sad and were talking about what had happened to Jesus. Suddenly, Jesus joined the disciples and walked along with them, but they did not know who He was because God kept them from recognizing him.

"You seem to be having a very serious discussion. What are you talking about?" Jesus asked them. One of the men answered, "You must be the only person in Jerusalem that doesn't know what has happened the past few days." Then they told them about how Jesus had been crucified, and buried, and that some women had gone to his tomb, but the tomb was empty. "We have heard that He is alive," they said, "but we have not seen Him."

"Do you find it so difficult to believe what was written by the prophets in the Scripture?" Jesus asked. "It was predicted by the prophets that the Messiah would have to suffer all these things before entering his time of glory." Then Jesus quoted passages from the writings of the prophets, explaining what the Scriptures said about himself.

By this time, they had come to Emmaus and the disciples invited Jesus to stay with them since it was getting too late in the day to travel. **-S-** So Jesus stayed with them and when they sat down to eat, Jesus took the bread and blessed it, broke it, and gave it to them. Suddenly, their eyes were opened and they saw that it was Jesus. Then just as quickly as he had appeared to them, Jesus disappeared. They were so happy and excited to have seen Jesus that they ran back to Jerusalem to tell the others that they had seen Jesus.

Do you want to see Jesus? The Bible says, **-S-** "You will find him if you look for him with all your heart and with all your soul." (Deuteronomy 4:29) Oh, He may not appear to you in the same way He did to the disciples in our story, but If you study God's Word and seek Him with all your heart, He will reveal himself to you.

Dear Lord, open our eyes. We want to see Jesus! In Jesus' name we pray, amen.



**-S- Jesus Confronts Hypocrisy****-S- Background**

There is some controversy surrounding this passage we will study this morning. How many of you have John chapter 7, verse 53 to chapter 8, verse 11 in your bibles? Not all translations include these verses. **-S-** The evidence of the early manuscripts of the Gospel According to John has led the majority of biblical scholars to regard this passage as having **not** been part of the original book as John wrote it. Therefore, many commentators skip this passage in their writings. Of the oldest ten manuscripts of the Book of John eight omit this passage and two leave a blank space where it would have been included. Some scholars speculate that it was omitted because the early church thought it to be too soft on the issue of adultery. However, no one knows for certain if it was omitted or added later. Does this mean we should not deal with this passage as inspired scripture? **-S-** Even though the scholars often pass over this passage in their writings the majority of Bible scholars consider this to be a true story and to be inspired scripture. I, as many of the scholars, believe the story is genuine, even if it was not part of the original Book of John. **-S-** The Book of John was written about 85 AD and Eusebius, the Roman historian wrote that Papias, who died about 100 AD, and who was a companion of the Apostle John and also a friend of Polycarp. Papias wrote of this story, so we know this story was known and written of no later than 5 to 15 years from the writing of the Book of John. The evidence shows this story was included within a few years of the original gospel account by John. Even Jerome included this story in the Latin Vulgate. **-B-**

This story works as a bridge between chapter 7 verse 52 and chapter 8 verse 12. Without this story the change would be abrupt for we do not know where Jesus is in verse 12 of chapter 8 or whom He is speaking to. There is also a pattern found beginning in chapter five onward; a story is used by the Apostle John to set the theme of the teaching that follows. In chapter five the miracle of the healing of the man who had been unable to walk for thirty-eight years at the Pool of Bethesda (**bay-thes-dah**) is the foundation of the sermon that follows. The feeding of the multitude in chapter six leads to the discourse of Christ as the “bread of life.” In chapter seven the discussion between Jesus and His brothers about going to Jerusalem for the Festival of Booths leads to Jesus’ teaching at the Festival and builds a foundation for what we will now study. So too, the story we find here of the adulterous woman introduced in chapter 8 deals with both righteousness and freedom in Christ that John puts forth in the rest of the chapter. **-S-** This story is consistent with the nature of Christ and demonstrates His holiness, wisdom and compassion. There is little doubt this story is true and I believe that God inspired it to be placed in the scriptures to teach us. So, let’s begin to explore what God would have us learn.

### **-S-** Setting the Stage

First, we need to set the stage for the story that follows and it should be noted that verse 53 of chapter 7 and verse 1 of chapter 8 should have been used to close out chapter seven. Reading beginning in verse 53. **“Everyone went to his home. <sup>1</sup> But Jesus went to the Mount of Olives.”** Now at the close of this great seven day Feast of Tabernacles the people return to the quiet and security of their own homes. This is a contrast to our Lord Jesus who was homeless. **-S-** The Mount of Olives was about a mile from the Temple in Jerusalem on the western slope of the low

mountain and Bethany was on the eastern side and was were the home of Mary and Martha was located. Yet the Mount of Olives and Bethany were away from the noise and lights of Jerusalem and they where quiet. After spending a night away from people we read in verse 2, “Early in the morning He came again into the temple, and all the people were coming to Him; and He sat down and *began to teach them.*” This may very well have been Jesus’ habit when in Jerusalem for we read in Luke, **-S-**<sup>37</sup> “Now during the day He was teaching in the temple, but at evening He would go out and spend the night on the mount that is called Olivet.<sup>38</sup> And all the people would get up early in the morning *to come to Him in the temple to listen to Him.*” (Luke 21:37-38) **-S-** The Mount of Olives was where Jesus made His final prayer was just south of the Garden of Gethsemane were Jesus was arrested. **-S-** It appears that the Mount of Olives and the Garden were Jesus’ place of solitude and they were close to Bethany were he often stayed.

As we prepare to examine this story of hypocrisy and sin we need to focus on three things: **-S-** firstly, the horror of sin; **-S-** secondly, the mastery of God in all circumstances; and **-S-** thirdly, the words of the Savior to the sinner. Let’s pray as we prepare to dive into this story and glean what God would have see and learn.

### **-S-** Horror of Sin

This story reveals the depth and horror of unsaved mankind’s sin. Beginning in verse 3 we read that the Lord’s teaching was interrupted, **-S-** “The scribes and the Pharisees brought a woman caught in adultery, and having set her in the center of the court,<sup>4</sup> they said to Him (*Jesus*), ‘Teacher, this woman has been caught in adultery, in the very act.’<sup>5</sup> Now in the Law Moses commanded us to stone such women ...” Adultery is sin and certainly this woman was guilty of adultery. But

compared to the sin of the Jewish leaders and men who were using her in an attempt to trap Jesus, I consider her sin as less. I understand all sin separates us from God, but her sin was not premeditated to hurt and trap the incarnate God. These men were guilty of what we find in Matthew's written record of Jesus speaking, **-S-** "Why do you look at the speck that is in your brother's eye, but do not notice the log that is in your own eye? Or how can you say to your brother, 'Let me take the speck out of your eye,' and behold, the log is in your own eye? You hypocrite, first take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take the speck out of your brother's eye." (Matthew 7:3-5) The log of sin was large in the Jewish leaders eyes. For you to understand the harshness of my comment about these men you need understand the depth of their actions in using this woman as a means to trap Jesus. On the basis of their testimony and in light of the very **-S-** exacting requirements of Jewish law this situation could only have been a premeditated trap designed and executed by these men. The Jews thought their system of Law, if obeyed, gave them salvation. The law failed to secure salvation and instead of humbling men before God, **-S-** the Law made the Jewish leaders self-righteous and proud. However, the Jewish law went out of its way in demanding verifiable evidence for proving guilt of any crime punishable by death. The result of this was it was difficult to secure a death penalty unless the evidence was strong and clear. Here we are dealing with a case of adultery. Both Leviticus and Deuteronomy condemn to death those who commit adultery. **-S-** "If *there is a man who commits adultery with another man's wife, one who commits adultery with his friend's wife, the adulterer and the adulteress shall surely be put to death.*" (Leviticus 20:10) Leviticus brings to light the first problem of many with this situation. It was necessary to have several witnesses to see the act between the man and the woman in order to substantiate this punishable sin. These

witnesses would need to be able to testify to the same act observed and bring both to the authorities. One can then see it would be almost impossible to meet the requirements of the Law unless this was setup in advance. So the Sanhedrin is beneath contempt by their behavior. The fact that only the woman was brought to Jesus reveals their dishonesty. Both Deuteronomy and Leviticus require both the man and woman be brought together for judgment. **-S-** So where is the man? Why was he not brought with the woman? Had the Pharisees arranged this whole incident and given the man immunity? How horrible is this whole arrangement!

**-S-** Now this woman is brought into the center of the court before Jesus and a crowd of people to bear the shame by herself. The purpose of the Law was to bring the sinner to repentance, but here we see the influence of the devil in the Scribes and Pharisees lives because of their efforts to hurt and destroy. They are motivated by their own pride of self-importance and no longer seek God. If we had been there – as followers of Christ we would have dropped to our knees and prayed for this woman and her salvation – right? I mean that is what we do when someone is found guilty of sin – isn't it? We pray, seek repentance and reconciliation. We do not take pleasure in their suffering – do we? For are not all of us guilty of sin and deserving of being stoned?

### **-S-** God of Circumstances

This story does not only show the depths of man's sin against others for personal gain, but it shows the mastery of God in all circumstances. We need to appreciate the seriousness of this problem the Lord is being confronted with. This confrontation is different from the confrontations by the Jewish leaders prior. Remember the Sadducees, who did not believe in an afterlife confronted Jesus with their trick question of the woman who had been married to seven different



brothers as each brother had died and she never had children – like this would ever really happen! They then asked Jesus in the resurrection whose wife would she be? Jesus tells them that they have erred and that they know neither the Scriptures nor the power of God who is perfect. On another occasion these self-serving leaders tried to trap Jesus with a question about taxes. Jesus answers by showing there is a difference between our relationship with government and God. These two examples are just some of the attempts of the Jewish leaders used trying to trap Jesus who threatened their power and position. Verses 5 and 6 tell us of the Pharisees' plot and trap, **-S-** “Now in the Law Moses commanded us to stone such women; what then do You say?” <sup>6</sup> They were saying this, testing Him, so that they might have grounds for accusing Him.” This problem of the adulteress woman does not just concern Jesus' reputation, but deals with **-S-** three important issues; **-S-** firstly, the life of the woman, **-S-** secondly, the teaching of Jesus about compassion of God's kingdom - which is His kingdom and **-S-** thirdly, the divinely given Law of Moses. These crafty Pharisees thought they had trapped Jesus into giving up at least one or maybe two of these standards in order to resolve this situation.

By this time in the ministry of Jesus people knew that His teachings were of compassion. He had taught that love lay at the heart of God's nature. Jesus befriended sinners and outcasts teaching hope by faith in God. When Jesus spoke to the people He made clear both the path to salvation and the blessing and compassion of God through salvation. Jesus said, **-S-** “All things have been handed over to Me by My Father; and no one knows the Son except the Father; nor does anyone know the Father except the Son, and anyone to whom the Son wills to reveal Him. It is only through Jesus that one can know God the Father – Jesus is the one and only way back to God. **-S-** Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-

laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and YOU WILL FIND REST FOR YOUR SOULS. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light.” (Matthew 11:27-30) If Jesus remained consistent with this teaching I just read and on the basis of what He had been teaching and if He showed compassion to this woman and waived the Law of Moses, then the rulers could denounce Him as a false prophet. What true prophet would speak against the Law? They had already accused Jesus of having little regard for the Law because of His healings on the Sabbath. On the other hand if Jesus upheld the Law and said, “Put her to death” these deceitful men thought they could condemn Jesus. Because Jesus had said, **-S-** “Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest.” The Pharisees approach would be that Jesus fails to tell the people when they come to Him for rest He will condemn them. These men thought they had insight and intellect, and they could trap the incarnate God, but because they were under the influence of the devil they failed to understand they were plotting against God, not man. **-S-** How can God show unconditional love to the sinner without being unjust? The Apostle Paul states the problem in Romans chapter 3, “How can God be both just and the justifier?” (Romans 3:26) From a human perspective this problem is unsolvable. In this calculation, these evil Jewish leaders were right. They thought even if Jesus wanted to show compassion and love, He would not be able to. They had forgotten that Jesus had said, **-S-** “With people this is impossible, but with God all things are possible.” (Matthew 19:26) Was this a new teaching that the Pharisees might not have heard? No, it was not. Job had said to God, **-S-** “I know that You can do all things, and that no purpose of Yours can be thwarted.” (Job 42:2) The prophet Jeremiah said, **-S-** “Ah Lord GOD! Behold, You have made the heavens and the earth by Your great power and by

Your outstretched arm! Nothing is too difficult for You.” (Jeremiah 32:17) So the trap of these self-righteous men has been laid. How does Jesus respond?

At first Jesus appears to ignore them. The second half of verse 6 tells us that, **-S-** “Jesus stooped down and with His finger wrote on the ground.” I do not know why Jesus wrote in the ground or what He wrote and I do not believe anyone else knows. All of the Bible experts who attempt to give an answer give so many possibilities that it proves, in my mind, that they are all taking shots in the dark. The fact that Jesus was writing in the dirt, we observe, had no effect on these rulers for they kept pressing Jesus to answer their question. Verse 7 tells us, “But when they persisted in asking Him, He straightened up, and said to them, **-S-** ‘He who is without sin among you, let him *be the first to throw a stone at her.*’” What a simple statement and yet at the same time it completely disarmed the plot and trap of the rulers. Jesus again stooped down and wrote in the dirt letting the full impact of His statement sink in. Letting God the Father convict them – patiently Jesus waits. As verse 9 reveals, **-S-** “When they heard it, they *began to go out one by one, beginning with the older ones, and He was left alone, and the woman, where she was, in the center of the court.*” There was something in the voice of Jesus or maybe He summoned the Holy Spirit to convict, but either way Jesus convicted these men, but it appears that most of their hearts remained unchanged. Even though these men were schemers and unrepentant, they were powerless to oppose the Man God and His authority. They had spent considerable time plotting and coming up with the humanly unsolvable situation and in a moment it all came undone. The sad part is there is no sign of repentance. Many in the world today are convicted at times and yet they do not repent among these men. I am personally so very thankful that Jesus the Christ is the Master of circumstances. Because you see, like this woman, some of the circumstances of life are my

circumstances. The Law convicts me, for I am a sinner. The world may stand as my accuser, but they need not work so hard to do so, for I am convicted by my own thoughts and actions. If God is not the Master of my circumstances and the circumstances of the entire human race – then I and all other believers stand in total and complete hopelessness accused and condemned by God’s Law. But, the God of all creation has mastered my circumstances and all people’s circumstances by the Cross of Jesus and His resurrection is proof beyond all argument. Jesus is the hope of this woman and He is my hope and the hope of the world. We know this by how He now treats this sinful woman.

### **-S-** God’s Word to Sinners

As our story comes to an end, Jesus turns to the woman for the first time to address her directly. **-S-** “Straightening up, Jesus said to her, ‘Woman, where are they? Did no one condemn you?’ She said, ‘No one, Lord.’ And Jesus said, ‘I do not condemn you, either. Go. From now on sin no more.’” Jesus takes advantage of the Law that required two or more witnesses to convict. Jesus stood as one accuser, because as God He knows all, but the requirements of the Law could not be met. Yet, as God, Jesus was to be righteous, so we may ask, **-S-** “Why did the Lord Jesus Christ not pronounce judgment?” I can think of only one answer and it is the same answer today for those who come to Christ in faith. For the woman the cross was before her and for us the cross is behind us. Those who come to Jesus in faith He bears the full wrath of God the Father, the righteous God, for every sin committed and that will be committed. Jesus did not pay for our sins lightly and God the Father did not forgive our sins easily, but at a high price paid for by the Son of God. Forgiveness is only possible by the act of ultimate suffering in the place of sinners by Jesus – this is the Gospel – this is why Jesus came to the earth

and this is what Jesus accomplished.

Jesus finished by saying to the woman, **-S-** “From now on sin no more.” This is what follows forgiveness, for we cannot, let me say again, one cannot, be saved by God and then continue to do as they please. We must stop sinning - our love for Christ and the power of the Holy Spirit that indwells give us the power to stop. Jesus is saying, I forgive you on the basis of My death, I have paid for you, I have bought you, and you are Mine. Because you are Mine, you are forgiven and you are now holy, therefore, “sin no more.”

My brothers and sisters, you need to place yourself in this story. You must ask yourself – **-S-** are you like the crowd, who stood by watching? They witnessed forgiveness, but did not enter into it. **-S-** Are you like the rulers? They were sinners, like the woman, but they left without hearing Jesus’ words of forgiveness. Their hard hearts would not let them hear. Or, finally, **-S-** are you like the woman? Of all that were there that day, by far it was the woman who benefited – she heard Jesus’ words, but she also receive the gospel message of Jesus and found forgiveness in Him. **-B-**

The crowd was indifferent as crowds always are. The leaders left and went back into darkness, and six months later they crucified the Son of God. The woman was forgiven, by her faith in Christ who would die for her sins and has now died for the sins of all believers and has proven beyond all doubt that He is God very God by rising from the dead and **-S-** He lives! **-S-** I ask you, “Who are you? Who are you in Christ?” My beloved, go and live for Christ. Go and sin no more!