



Early in the morning Jesus came again to the temple. All the people came to him and he sat down and began to teach them. The scribes and the Pharisees brought a woman who had been caught in adultery; and making her stand before all of them, 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. Now what do you say?” They said this to test him, so that they might have some charge to bring against him. Jesus bent down and wrote with his finger on the ground. When they kept on questioning him, he straightened up and said to them, “Let anyone among you who is without sin be the first to throw a stone at her.” And once again he bent down and wrote on the ground. When they heard it, they went away, one by one, beginning with the elders; and Jesus was left alone with the woman standing before him. Jesus straightened up and said to her, “Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?” She said, “No one, sir.” And Jesus said, “Neither do I condemn you. Go your way, and from now on do not sin again.” (John 8:2-11)

I invite you to sit with this idea for a moment: **You can’t fix what you won’t acknowledge.** When you have taken some time to reflect on what this might mean, move on to the rest of the devotional, and to the following story about two people who found truth in this statement.

There was a man who was incarcerated for 19 years. And there was a woman who spoke at the prison as part of Black History month. The two connected on a deep level, and began writing to one another. They would bear their souls and share one another’s burdens, hopes, and dreams. They continued their relationship when the man was freed from prison. Together they clawed and scratched to make things work. They had a son. But life became increasingly difficult in ways neither one could have imagined or anticipated. Their relationship began to disintegrate and eventually they parted ways. But they made a commitment to each other that they would work hard to raise their son in a healthy way, that they wouldn’t allow their own personal differences to interfere with helping their child become successful. At one point in their journey the man sought professional help and discovered that he had been avoiding unresolved issues from his past.

One thing he learned is that **you can't fix what you won't acknowledge** and these unacknowledged issues contributed to his relationship break-up. (You can view more of their story at www.ted.com and in the search box type *How to co-parent as allies, not adversaries.*)

It seems to me this is also the lesson of the story told in the 8th chapter of John about the woman caught in adultery. When Jesus challenges the religious leaders by saying, "Let anyone among you who is without sin be the first to throw a stone at her," his goal is to help them acknowledge their own shortcomings. He does the same with the woman. While Jesus doesn't condemn the woman, he does tell her to go and sin no more. That is, he is encouraging her to admit her wrongdoing and confess her sin, so that her life may be transformed. Until there is an acknowledgment, an owning of the brokenness, there can be no restoration or reconciliation.

As you think about your own relationships, what needs to be acknowledged in order to create an environment for brokenness to be mended and wholeness restored?

Pastor Chuck

Let us pray. God of mercy, we acknowledge before you that we have sinned and fall short of your glory. Let our confession be the first step toward reconciliation and new life, so that we may experience the joy of being at one with you and our neighbors. Amen.