



Fruit of the Spirit

Gentleness – Lesson 3

"Let your gentleness be evident to all." Philippians 4:5

Lesson Time

Last week we talked about how Jesus was the gentle shepherd and if we wander away from Him and make the wrong choices He will gently lead us back. Today we will look at a story of how Jesus was gentle to a woman about to be stoned.

Jesus was teaching in the temple courtyard and all the people gathered around Him to hear Him teach. The teachers of the Law and the Pharisees brought in a woman. She had been caught in sin. They told Jesus the woman was caught doing something terrible and that in the Law, Moses commanded them to kill such a woman by throwing stones at her. Then they asked Jesus "Now what do you say?" These men were trying to trap Jesus with that question. They wanted to have a reason to bring charges against Jesus.

Jesus didn't get mad even though He knew that they were trying to trick Him and get Him into trouble. Instead, Jesus bent down and started to write on the ground with his finger. The men with the woman kept asking Jesus questions. So Jesus straightened up and said to the men, "Has any one of you not sinned? Then you be the first to throw a stone at her."

He bent down again and continued to write on the ground. Those who heard what Jesus had said began to go away one by one because they knew they had sinned and were not without sin. Remember last week we talked about how we all make wrong choices. We need Jesus, the Good Shepherd, to save us and gently lead us back to following Him. Just like us, the men who brought the woman could not throw the stone because they all had sinned. Jesus was the only one who had lived a sinless life; according to what He was saying, He was the only one who could throw a stone at the woman.

Do you think that Jesus picked up a stone and threw it at the woman for doing wrong and for her sins? No! Instead He gently called her by the same name He used for His own mother just before He died on the cross. He said "Woman." Then he asked her, "Where are they? Hasn't anyone found you guilty?" He was asking about the men who were ready to throw stones at her.

The woman told Jesus "No one, sir." No one was left to throw stones at her and charge her for her guilt because they knew they were just as guilty. The men had walked away because they didn't want Jesus to tell everyone in the courtyard of the temple about their sins. So Jesus told her, "Then I don't find you guilty either. Go and sin no more." Jesus knew she had sinned but He was gently forgiving her instead of making her pay for her sins by dying. She could then respond to God's grace and forgiveness by living a life of obedience to Him.

If Jesus had thrown stones at the woman would that have taught her to love Him? Would that have shown her His gentleness? Did He gently point out the sins of these people or was He harsh? How should we treat others when they sin? Should we be gentle?

In order for us to know what gentleness is, whom must we look to? Jesus is our example. As we seek Him and choose to follow His ways what will we receive from the Holy Spirit? We'll receive the fruit of the Spirit so we can show other people who God is by the way we live our lives. He gets the Glory as we are used as part of His story!

Prayer Time

Activities

The goal of this time is to utilize a variety of engaging activities – passive and active play, crafts, application, and more – to reinforce what was taught in the lesson. While you may not get to every activity, we encourage you to complete the "Take-Home" activity so children leave with a tangible reminder of what was discussed today.

If numbers are high and/or time and space allow, you may want to use a center format: divide the class into groups (one for each activity) and rotate through the centers after an allotted time.



Supplies:

Jesus with the woman picture

Large pan

Sand

Glue sticks/white glue

Paintbrushes (if white glue is used)

Crayons

Have the kids color their picture of Jesus and the woman. While they color, talk to them about how Jesus came to earth to save us from our death because of our sin and how this woman could have been stoned to death. Jesus knew that the men were trying to trick Him and get Him into trouble. Instead of being harsh to them and yelling at them or letting them throw stones at the woman, Jesus bent down and wrote in the dirt and then asked them if any of them were without sin. Next, have the kids put glue (using glue sticks or white glue and paintbrushes) where the woman is sitting. Then have them use a cup of dirt and sprinkle the dirt onto their paper over the glue so that the extra dirt falls into a large pan.



Don't Throw Stones

Supplies:

Basket with "Jesus Can" sign

Paper

Ask a volunteer to pretend that he/she was caught committing a terrible sin. Have him/her stand in the middle of the room. Also put the trashcan with a sign saying "Jesus Can" in the middle of the room. Give each child a blank sheet of paper.

Tell the class: In Jesus' day, when people were caught committing certain crimes, the punishment may have been to get "stoned to death" by the people living in the village. "Should we stone this criminal for his/her sin?

If the children shout "yes!" Remind them of Jesus' gentleness and tell them to take a minute and think about their sin. Tell them that if they have sinned (told a lie, argued with their parents, been disobedient, etc) they can take time to write or draw about their sin and then crumble their paper into a ball. If they say they have not sinned and want to throw the ball at the volunteer remind them that **in the story Jesus said 'If any one of you is without sin, let him be the first to throw a stone.'** Who is without sin in this class? (Make sure the children understand that they cannot throw the paper because they have sinned.) **That's right, we have all sinned.** Even Jesus said that 'everyone has sinned, and falls short of the glory of God'. Before we judge someone else for doing wrong, we need to look at our own lives and remember that we too have sinned. When we remember that Jesus died for us and that He is gentle to forgive, it helps us to be gentle with other people when they make wrong choices. Now tell them to take their crumbled piece of paper with their sin and explain that they can ask Jesus for forgiveness and throw the ball in the "Jesus Can" basket. Remind them that "Jesus can" forgive them for the times they disobey Him. That is why He chose to die on the cross for us - so we can be forgiven!



Writings in the Dirt

Supplies:

4 pie plates or roasting pans

Dirt

Wipes

Hand sanitizer

Have the kids draw and write in the dirt that's in the pie/roasting pans. Ask them to think about what Jesus may have been writing on the ground. Explain that we still don't know for sure what Jesus wrote, but it may have been the laws known as the Ten Commandments. God wrote with his finger two times in the Old Testament and both times it was to write the law. Though we do not know for sure what Jesus wrote; we do know that we have all sinned just like the men who brought the woman to Him.



Gentleness Toss

Supplies:

“Gentleness” basket

“Jesus Can” basket

12 beanbags

Give each child a beanbag. Have the kids take turns and decide whether the statements below are examples of gentleness or sins that need forgiveness. Have them toss the beanbag into either the basket labeled “Gentleness” or “Jesus Can.”

You push another child out of line so you can be first.

You let a child go first in a game.

You help your younger brother or sister when he/she falls down.

You tell your mom you cleaned your room when you didn’t.

You invite someone to play with you and your other friends.

You do not follow the rules of a game so you can win.

You take something that belongs to someone else.

You break your friend’s toy and buy her a new one to say you’re sorry.

A child is being mean to your friend and you politely ask him to stop.

You sit and rub your friend’s back when she is crying or upset.

You tattle on someone just so he gets in trouble.

Your teacher asks you to do something and you tell her “NO!”



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