

From our Churches

Author: Mark Diller Harder

Church: St. Jacobs Mennonite Church

Date: February 2010

This resource is part of a larger **From Our Churches** archives available as an inspirational resource to teachers, ministers and others of Mennonite Church Canada. Posted by permission of the author. Permission to reproduce and distribute is granted.

The Woman caught in Adultery

Monologue by Pharisee

John 8:1-11

I was one of the last to leave – stone in hand. From the moment Jesus spoke I wanted to leave, wanted to run – but it was like my legs were made of stone – I couldn't move. There we were, beside all the huge stone walls of the Temple, the symbol of strength, tradition, the solid law. We finally had him. The case was air-tight. There was no way he could get out of this one.

We had been trying for weeks to trap Jesus, to catch him in his own riddles and games. Healing on the Sabbath, blasphemy, inciting the crowds. The temple police had circled all around him at the Festival of Booths, but we needed to be careful of the crowds – they are so volatile and impulsive. They were tagging him as the long awaiting Messiah. We needed something that tested him – that condemned him. And this was perfect.

The woman herself was unimportant, dragged out here from some corner of the city where her sins had found her out. The man always seems to get off scot-free. The law of Moses is so clear on adultery. Jesus would be condemned no matter what side he took – law or grace, conviction or forgiveness. Either we get him or we turn the crowd on him. I sat back from a safe distance to watch him squirm.

In one phrase he changed all that – everything got turned around and the suddenly the finger was pointing right at me... at all of us, at you. Jesus bent down, scrawled something in the ground and spoke "Let anyone among you who is without sin cast the first stone." No stone would be thrown that day. We were speechless, frozen, literally stone-walled. When I finally snuck away, I heard Jesus ask the woman where we had all gone. "Has no one condemned you? Neither do I condemn you. Go, and sin no more." (*slowly*) I am going to hold on to this stone, this rock, for a long time.