



PITMAN ROAD
CHURCH OF CHRIST

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PITMAN ROAD POST

Move

Meet

Make

Our Vision

To be a place where God's love is experienced, known, and shared by all.

THERE'S AN A.P.P. FOR THAT!

[A PEACHER'S PERSPECTIVE]

CAUGHT BY GRACE AND TRUTH



Joey Peacher
Preaching Minister

And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen His glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth. - John 1:14

This week, we look at John's gospel. Among John's poetic rhapsody, he writes that Jesus is "full of grace and truth." Anyone else wonder what it looks like to be filled with grace and truth? I know what it feels like to be full of gas. At times, I know I've been full of bull, but full of grace and truth? Later, John writes about an unnamed woman "caught in adultery." (John 8)

"This woman was caught," say the scribes and Pharisees. She broke Moses's law and violated covenant vows somehow. Was she married? Was her partner married? Did both commit adultery? Where is he, by the way? How did they catch her and not her lover? Was she tricked and used to trap Jesus? There are a lot of unanswered questions. But it is undeniable that this woman has been caught in an act of sin.

Wouldn't we rather speculate and focus on her story, the story of someone else being caught, rather than admit when we've been caught? Can we sympathize with this woman? Rather than referring to her as "the woman caught in adultery," perhaps we can begin to view her as "the woman caught in the grace and truth of Jesus." Wouldn't we all prefer to be remembered not by the times we were "caught," but by how Jesus worked in our lives?

In Jesus we see a perfect balance of grace and truth. He truthfully acknowledges this woman's sin when he says, "sin no more." Yet, Jesus also graciously refuses to condemn her. He extends this same balance of grace and truth to us whenever we're caught.

Truth without grace quickly becomes narrow legalism. Jesus repeatedly indicts the religious leaders for creating burdens on people with rules but neglecting mercy and compassion. Rule-keeping and being right had taken precedent over people. Jesus once told them: "Hypocrites! For you are careful to tithe even the tiniest income from your herb gardens, but you ignore the more important aspects of the law—justice, mercy, and faith" (Matt 23:23)

On the flip side, grace without truth can easily become indulgent tolerance. Anything goes when we refuse to speak against sin for fear of hurting someone's feelings. We expend a great deal of energy to avoid saying or doing anything that could be construed as offensive or insensitive. We may even find ourselves enabling or encouraging the sin. Yet when "loving others" is reduced to simply being inoffensive, we've lost our prophetic witness. Will people be so impressed by our niceness that they'll eventually decide to follow Jesus? Is that approach working? Is it really fair to ignore truth? People need to hear the truth — truth spoken in love, yes; but truth spoken, nonetheless. Jesus affirms the immorality of this woman's lifestyle, but He does so in grace.

One detail in this woman's story that has mystified people for centuries: Jesus stoops down to write in the dirt. What did He write? Many have speculated to answer this. Nobody living knows the answer and it's really not important. Jesus focused his attention down on the ground rather than upon the woman "caught" in front of Him. There is a probability that this woman was nearly naked or naked. She has been "caught" in the act of adultery, so how much time did she have to get dressed? It could be that Jesus averts His eyes away from her nakedness to not subject her to further shame. Jesus will not do anything that further diminishes the image of God in another person. Perhaps this is why He looks down and starts writing in the dirt. But even if this speculation is not reality, when Jesus makes the conditions of her punishment contingent upon the sinlessness of the accusers, the angry mob breaks up. Then Jesus asks her, "Has no one condemned you?" And she replies, "No one, sir." Jesus says to her, "Then neither do I condemn you. Go now and leave your life of sin." The truth is that she was living in sin. Jesus offers her the grace to go forward in new life.

During this encounter with Jesus, a woman is caught in sin and then caught by the grace and truth of Jesus. Jesus never loses sight of the human being right in front of Him. There is much more at stake here than winning an argument about the "issue" of adultery and the legality of punishment. A woman's fate hangs in the balance — a woman caught in sin, yes; but at the same time, a woman created in the image of God.

Jesus extends both truth and grace to this woman. And it makes all the difference in her life.

And it makes all the difference in our lives as well. Instead of worrying about "catching others in the act," maybe we should focus on how we have been caught by the grace and truth of Jesus.

(Adapted from "Balancing Grace and Truth," *Wineskins*, Jason Bybee)

FROM DANIEL'S DEN

I BAPTIZED A "GO-GO" DANCER



Dan Cooper
Connections Minister

Her name was Anita. She was one of a kind! I never met a person like her. She grew up in "the projects" in Philadelphia and lived a very rough life. She supported herself in earlier years in a number of unique ways...

She ran a dry cleaning business, a child care center, worked as a "go-go" dancer, a taxi driver, a tailor, an antique dealer, and she ran a boarding house for men. At least some of those professions drove her to drink. So, she was also a recovering alcoholic. Needless to say, she did not have a high regard for men. But, all that changed when she met Jesus! Our church's mission is "to meet people where they are and together be transformed into the image of Christ." Anita's transformation was dramatic.

For months after she put on Christ in baptism, as her journey continued, every time she came to church she wiped tears. Her heart had been touched. She changed. They were tears of joy. They were tears of relief. They were tears that said "I have found what I've been looking for all my life and it is good."

Anita blessed our church family in so many ways. She started a button-collecting club, gave painting classes -- yes, she was a great artist and loved to send Christmas cards that she painted herself, and she started a square dancing club at our church building. Through all three of these activities, she introduced people to the church family who would not have come through the doors for any other reason. At least a couple of them have become followers of Jesus. The activities also provided opportunities for deeper relationships and friendships among the church family as well as others.

She invited everyone she could to come to church, especially people from her apartment complex, because she loved to share her faith in God with people. She was the treasurer of her complex for quite some time, and she always beautifully decorated her corner of the hallway.

Even if she had to come in a walker, Anita would not miss LIFE Group. She loved the fellowship, the honesty, and the intimacy it provided. She also loved to eat, especially desserts. She loved to tell stories. Even though it required great effort, Anita attended LIFE Groups as long as she was physically able.

I cannot count the times that she said "I've never met men like the men in our church." "They don't have an ulterior motive." "They are good men." "I respect them." "They are not like the men in this world that I've known." Anita's greatest desire was that her son Michael come to know the Lord. She lamented that he had not had a good father, and she wanted him to become a man like the men she knew at church. She tried very hard to be an example to him of the power of God to transform a person's life. Unfortunately, Michael has not yet wanted to know more about God, but we must continue to pray for him and reach out to him if possible, because that's the best way to honor our dear Anita!

She was married three times. According to her, at one time or another she had tried to kill one of her husbands. She loved to tell stories of her earlier life, but she didn't want to go back there. She loved to eat, which is the reason that we waited to celebrate her life until we were able to have a luncheon after her memorial service.

Parkinson's Disease, a host of other physical issues, and ultimately COVID-19 took her from us. But we will see her again, on the other side.

Heaven will be sweeter because we knew her here. - **Dan**

MEMORIAL SERVICE AND LUNCHEON FOR ANITA O'HARA

A memorial service celebrating the life of Anita will be on **Saturday, May 8 at 11AM at the Pitman Road church building.** A luncheon (coordinated by Ageless LIFE Group) will follow.

If you would like to help provide food for the meal, please contact **Sandy Sheehan** ASAP.

Some important information to remember:

- ⇒ Masks will be required while in the building (unless seated and eating)
- ⇒ No one will serve themselves food or drink (Ageless L.G. will serve)
- ⇒ Tables in the Family Life Center will be distanced by at least 10 feet
- ⇒ A tent and tables will be set up outside for those who prefer to eat outdoors.





WITH SYMPATHY

Jay Schneider's mother, Mary "Polly" Schneider, passed on to her reward unexpectedly on April 3.

We send our love, prayers, and comfort to Jay, Bethany, Alice, and the rest of the family.

THANKS SO MUCH

Dear Pitman Family, thank you for remembering our family during this difficult time. The Peace Lily is beautiful. We are blessed to have a God that is so good! Love, **The Atkinson Family**



THANK YOU

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ, thank you so much for the beautiful plant you had sent to our home in memory of our Dad, Alton

Lee Cooper! I am Mary Beth, the daughter who cared for my Dad till he died. It was a joy to share in his time of need. Six and a half years and now he is with the Lord in his place of reward! May we all get there and see him again in Heaven! Thank you for allowing Dan to get time off to help. In Christian Love, **Mary Beth and Larry Stalley**



CHURCH LEADERS WORKSHOP

Thursday, May 20 - Saturday, May 22

For elders, ministers, deacons, & church leaders. Cost is \$60/person. Registration ends May 20.

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FAMILY CAMP

Friday, May 28 - Sunday, May 30

For all ages. Cost is \$100. Children 4 and younger are free. Registration ends May 29.

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SUMMER CAMP OPEN HOUSE

Saturday, May 29 from 10AM - 4PM

FREE & open to public. No reservations required.

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CAMP SONSHINE

Saturday, June 5 - Sunday, June 6

Ages 8-18. Cost is FREE. Registration ends June 4.

Visit manatawny.org to register and for more information/details on each of these events.

CONGRATULATIONS

Tim and Paige Holmes welcomed their second daughter, **Ella-Rae Nia Holmes**, into the world on April 3 at 6 pounds, 11 ounces. Older sister Olivia was very excited to finally meet Ella-Rae! Congratulations to Tim, Paige, and Olivia, and to Granny Cordelia and Uncle Brandon, on this sweet addition to the family.



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