

Jesus Is The Answer For Shame

A Bible Study On John 8:2-11

5th Step - Lesson 3

A lot of people live in a constant state of feeling shame. For these people there is almost always a voice in the back of their mind telling them things like,

- “You’ve messed up again; you’ll never get it right.”
- “You can’t go back to church and be with decent people any more, after what you’ve done.”
- “When you were abused and mistreated, you really deserved it.”
- “You’re no good anyway, you might as well live that way.”

Those messages in a shame-filled person’s mind are very often a repetition of messages she heard from parents and other people in authority as she was growing up, messages like, “You were a mistake, I never should have had you,” and, “You’re stupid; you never get anything right.” When a person has been beaten down with that kind of undeserved shame, she’s going to have a hard time dealing with real guilt over real sin in any kind of healthy and godly way.

Jesus isn’t in the business of beating people down; he’s in the business of picking them up with his love and forgiveness. As God the Holy Spirit brings you into a closer relationship with Jesus, you’re going to see yourself more and more as the infinitely valuable object of God’s love.

THOUGHT QUESTIONS:

- Think of something that has brought you shame. What does it feel like to think of that thing?
- What would it be like to find out that the thing that has caused you shame was wiped off the record, as if it had never happened?

John 8:2-11 – At dawn he appeared again in the temple courts, where all the people gathered around him, and he sat down to teach them. The teachers of the law and the Pharisees brought in a woman caught in adultery. They made her stand before the group and said to Jesus, "Teacher, this woman was caught in the act of adultery. In the Law Moses commanded us to stone such women. Now what do you say?" They were using this question as a trap, in order to have a basis for accusing him.

But Jesus bent down and started to write on the ground with his finger. When they kept on questioning him, he straightened up and said to them, "If any one of you is without sin, let him be the first to throw a stone at her." Again he stooped down and wrote on the ground.

At this, those who heard began to go away one at a time, the older ones first, until only Jesus was left, with the woman still standing there. Jesus straightened up and asked her, "Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?"

"No one, sir," she said.

"Then neither do I condemn you," Jesus declared. "Go now and leave your life of sin."

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. In verse 3 this woman's secret sin was publicly announced by these religious leaders. What is it like to have people find out about some secret sin?

2. In verses 4-5 the religious leaders made it clear that they believed people fell into one of two categories: "good" people, like themselves, who deserved to live, and "bad" people, like this woman, who deserved to die. What sorts of things have you seen people use to judge who's "good" and who's "bad?"

Have you ever been judged this way by people who thought they were better than you?

Have you ever judged **yourself** the way these religious leaders judged this woman?

3. The religious leaders expected Jesus to either join them in their condemning this woman or to try to bend the rules for her. Instead, verse 6 says he bent down and drew doodles in the sand, the way people doodle on paper when they're bored. What does this tell you about how Jesus feels about shaming and judging?

4. Look at Jesus' reply in verse 7. What is he saying about the idea that the world is divided into "good" people, who deserve to live, and "bad" people, who deserve to die?

5. Look at Jesus' conversation with this woman in verses 10-11. Jesus is telling her that no one had the right to shame and condemn her--that even he himself refuses to shame and condemn her. Compare this with what the Bible says in Hebrews 9:14 – "How much more, then, will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself unblemished to God, cleanse our consciences from acts that lead to death, so that we may serve the living God!" What does this tell you about what God has done about any shame you're living with?

6. Notice, in verse 11, that Jesus tells this woman to start living a changed life only **after** he tells her that he's not going to shame or condemn her. How would **freedom from shame** be a better start for living a new life than **fear of shame**?

CLOSING PRAYER: Take this time to turn your shame over to Jesus for forgiveness and healing, and to turn yourself over to the Holy Spirit for the power to live a new life.