

Good Friday

April 15, 2022

### Have You No Shame?

*“But he was wounded for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with his stripes we are healed” Isaiah 53:5*

Have you no shame? This is a question that has been asked numerous times and in various tones. Chances are many of us are familiar with this question. Maybe we've asked this question of others? Perhaps others have asked this question of us? We might even ask this question of ourselves? While this question doesn't always expect a verbal response, most times we really don't want to give an answer. We don't want to think about shame, let alone talk about it, especially when it's personal!

Yet, the silence we often resort to is rather deafening. The truth for all of us is that shame has been a part of our lives in one way or another. We can't get rid of it in our lives. Sometimes we're ashamed of others. Their actions and thoughts or their image and the way we think it reflects on us. Other times we're ashamed of ourselves. Our own actions and thoughts or our own image – the way that we think we look. We can find ourselves constantly battling shame from the outside or from the inside.

For all the technology and advancement that we've witnessed in these recent years, our solution to our battle with shame hasn't changed! We cover up our shame. Whether it's through deflections of humor, or contrasting it with others' shame or ignoring that it exists, we are experienced, cover-up artists that know many ways to cover our shame. This is a natural process for us!

We come by this cover-up technique honestly. It's been handed down from generation to generation! Going all the way back to Adam and Eve who covered their shame at disobeying God's Word with fig leaves. While today's disguises have grown and changed, our purpose for them hasn't! We, like the sinners who came before us, want to cover our shame. We deal with our shame by trying to hide it from God, from others and even ourselves.

Despite what our experiences might tell us, covering up and hiding our shame doesn't address the issue. It may put it out of sight and out of mind for a time, but it still lingers. Shame has to be exposed. Shame needs to be exposed for what it is, not hidden or covered up as something else. That's exactly what happened on Good Friday. This day, we're reminded again that our shame, yours and mine, was exposed.

Our shame was exposed in Jesus. On the cross, Jesus, the Lamb of God, bore our shame. That's what He was doing on that first Good Friday. Although He is pure and holy, Jesus was carrying all our shame in that pure and holy body of His on that day. That is why He looked so bad on that day we call “good.”

Our reading from Isaiah captures Jesus' appearance as He bore our shame this way, **“He had no beauty or majesty to attract us to Him, nothing in His appearance that we should desire Him. He was despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows, and familiar with suffering. Like one from whom men hide their faces He was despised, and we esteemed Him not”** (Isaiah 53:2–3). That's the way things played out that first Good Friday, when Jesus Christ, the sinless Son of God, took on the sin of the world and died a sinner's death under the wrath and judgment of God, His righteous Father.

It looked for all the world like Jesus was the worst sinner who had ever or would ever live. That's how Isaiah even describes it: **“We considered Him stricken by God, smitten by**

**Him, and afflicted”** (*Isaiah 53:4*). It looked as though Jesus deserved to die. But there upon the cross, Jesus, the sinless Lamb of God, got what we deserved. At the cross, justice was done, but not as it seemed. Jesus was indeed stricken and afflicted by God, but not on account of anything He had done. Rather, it was our sins – yours and mine – that He was carrying on His sinless back, that pure and holy Lamb of God. And there He bore our shame as well.

However, things were not as they appeared that Good Friday. The turmoil and pain of that first Good Friday was something Jesus willingly chose for our sake. For Jesus, the joy of bringing His people Paradise far exceeded the cost of the cross. So, Jesus endured the cross and despised the shame in order that by the cross He could reveal His glory in His shame, His joy in sorrow, His comfort wrapped in suffering and pain. When it looked as though Jesus was stricken and smitten by God because of His own sin, in reality for our sake He was taking the punishment our sins deserve.

At the cross, amid great agony of body and soul, Jesus opened up the heart of God for the whole world to see. Things truly were not what they appeared to be. Hidden under Christ’s agony and excruciating suffering we see the Father’s love in action. Through this crucified Love our ugly shame – that sense of being dirty and filthy, contaminated by things that fill us with remorse and regret. Things we have thought and said and done that leave us broken, humiliated and ashamed deep inside, feeling all alone and isolated from God – that ugly shame is removed.

For in His cross and by His death, the Lamb of God bore all our shame away. **“He was pierced for our transgressions, He was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon Him, and by His wounds we are healed”** (*Isaiah 53:5*). Today this healing is yours. The wounds of Jesus are strength for the weary, consolation for the sorrowing, healing balm for the walking wounded. Every wounded heart and hurting soul can find its health restored in this moment in the very Savior, Jesus Christ, once given into death that we might live.

Because of Jesus, there is room at the cross for sinners who grieve and mourn their sin; sinners who know their transgression, whose sin is ever before them; sinners who know the bitter taste left over in their mouths from angry words they have spoken; sinners whose lives are strewn with the wreckage of sin and the anguish of hurt; sinners who feel in their bones the wretched refuse of foul and polluted thoughts and who know the awful weight of shame and guilt that comes from sins of thought and word and deed.

We no longer cover our shame with our own disguises. God covers our shame with the forgiveness that Jesus has won for us. We no longer hide our shame with our own methods. God hides our shame by His method, by Jesus’ suffering and death. We are no longer defined by the scars of our shame. Instead, God defines us by the scars of our Savior. Have we no shame? In the healing wounds of Jesus, we can respond and say, “Yes, we have no shame. Thank be to Jesus! Amen.”

In Christ the Crucified,

Pastor Dan