

Good morning everyone! I am Rico Jordan, the Student Ministry intern here. I hope everyone had a great Christmas. I want to thank the pastors here for allowing me this opportunity today. When John first asked me if I wanted to preach I was honored! Immediately after honor I thought oh no what did I just get myself into?

This day has been a long time coming for me. And shows how great God is that he uses someone like me to stand in front of you all right now and speak on something that God has been redeeming in my life, and that is shame.

Let me start by giving you a better idea of who I am and how I came to this point with shame. I became a follower of Christ at age 16 and immediately I was thrown into a whirlpool. In 6 months I was leading our youth worship band and had preached my first sermon. By my junior year in college it was no shock to anyone that I was called into pastoral ministry. I switched colleges and moved to St. Charles to help plant a church and to study Christian Ministry at Lindenwood University. I graduated with the honor of being named Christian Ministry Student of the Year and was accepted into Covenant Seminary.

6 months after graduating I went into a deep depression that I was in and out of for a year which led me to step down from my role in church ministry and work through what was going on in me. See what happened was I was dealing with unresolved hurts and pains. I never felt good enough and felt like my sin outweighed my calling and all at once this perfect beautiful house, me, caved in due to a weak foundation. That foundation was whether I truly believed what is written in Romans 8:1. There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. I thought, if this verse is true then why do I feel like the most hopeless and sinful person on earth. That is when I discovered that shame had played a huge role in my life.

You will live under shame until you believe what Jesus' life and death accomplished.

The last two years of my life I have been working through this shame and rediscovering the gospel in a new way.

Over this holiday season it's possible that you felt shame at some point. Maybe you experienced the feeling that you are not good enough by a parent or in law. Maybe it was in the tone of someone's response when you told them about your job or home situation. Maybe it was the look you got when you went up for

seconds. Or maybe it was how you felt when you arrived with no gifts for others because you couldn't afford them.

Imagine with me what it would be like to come to a holiday family function and feel free from that shame. To not feel less about yourself because of your circumstances but instead have great value in who you are because of Jesus. We all experience shame on some level but until you address unattended shame you will never walk in that freedom.

So now that you have heard me say shame about 50 times what is it, how do we define shame? Pastor Scott Saul says it best, shame is the terrifying sense that something is deeply wrong with me. Sometimes this is blatantly obvious to us. We know that we are broken and we feel shame because of it. This happens when you look at pornography for the gazillionth time or someone denies you love. But sometimes its not so obvious that you are wrong but your reaction to something shows shame. For instance, all of the sudden you got the urge to eat everything in the kitchen. Or you do something wrong and immediately blame it on someone else. In these types of moments you might not be thinking man something is deeply wrong with me but something within you is telling you that I need to

remove this feeling and we turn to other things. But at its core shame is the terrifying sense that something is deeply wrong with me.

We see this definition played out in the story of the fall. Genesis 2:25, God just created Eve from Adams rib and it says, “and the man and his wife were both naked and were not ashamed.”

Then Eve was deceived by the serpent and partook of the forbidden fruit and Adam followed suit and then in 3:7 it says, “Then the eyes of both were opened and they knew that they were naked. And they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loincloths.”

See in the beginning we were in perfect relationship with God and each other. They were naked and unashamed. They didn't even realize they were naked or that being naked was a good or bad thing. There was no shame in their perfect life. Then they take of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil and immediately they sense that something is wrong and they realize that they are naked and go cover up.

Because of the fall sin entered the world and along with it came shame.

What is it we should do with shame? The terrifying sense that something is deeply wrong with me is the first hurdle of shame we must come to grasp. Hear me out, if you are deep in shame this will be the moment you check out and I have prayed all week that none of you today would think that I am heaping shame on you. But we must understand that this sense that something is deeply wrong with me is there because something is deeply wrong with me. I am by nature deeply wrong, I am sinful to my core. Because of the fall you and I have a natural bend towards sin. It is when we sin or when other's sin towards us that shame starts to creep in and we start to think how Paul thinks in Romans 7:24, "Wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death?"

The great news is that we don't have to live under this thought of Wretched man that I am because someone already delivered us from this body of death, which leads us to our passage today.

Look with me in Romans 8:1-4. "There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. For the law of the Spirit of life has set you free in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and death. ³ For God has done what the law, weakened by the flesh, could not do. By sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, he condemned sin in the flesh, ⁴ in order that the

righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.”

See sin did enter the world and there is a heavy weight from it. Sin is serious and God knew that it would lead to death so he had a plan of redemption already set in motion. ³“For God has done what the law, weakened by the flesh, could not do. By sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, he condemned sin in the flesh.” Because God is just there had to be a punishment for sin. But because God is love he didn’t leave that punishment for us to bear. Instead he gave it to his son Jesus. And in verse 3 it says Jesus came down and took on flesh. He was fully God and fully man. He lived in the same flesh as you and I but lived a blameless life. He lived a life that was worthy and purposeful. It was obedient and free from guilt and sin. He had the same emotions and temptations as you and I but his life was found without blemish. By his life, he did what we weakened by the flesh could not do and in so he fulfilled the law. He took away the need to come to God with a sacrifice to forgive our sins by being the last and only sacrifice needed. He was a sinless man who was brutally beaten and mocked and humiliated to die on a cross to take on all the sin past present and future and condemn it so that we do not have to live in the condemnation that we deserve. “There is therefore now no condemnation in those who are in

Christ Jesus.” “For the law of the Spirit of life has set you free in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and death. Because of Jesus life and death we are free from sin and death. Free from the weight of shame. And we take on his righteousness. We take on his holiness and blamelessness. We walk in this freedom.

You won't walk in freedom until you believe what Jesus life and death accomplished.

So now let us look at shame in light of the truth and what it looks like to live in shame. Shame distorts the truth and becomes a false reality. Is there anyone in here who likes reality television? So no one is willing to admit it. I will admit it.

One of my guilty pleasures is reality television. The only thing that keeps me from watching reality television is that we do not have cable. I would much rather watch “real” people in “real” situations than a scripted show. TLC is becoming infamous for their shows. Two years ago if you walked into a Walmart all over the place was Duck Dynasty merchandise. People love reality television. Reality tv started in a raw form. It was real. Once people get use to the cameras they live out their lives the way they usually would. Then it changed and people loved the drama and the funny moments so it became a little more scripted. Some are even completely scripted. What once was reality is now a faux reality. It still has the

illusion of reality. The people are real. They are in real places but it's not actually reality.

That is what it becomes to live in shame. The gospel and God's truths are the standard of reality. Meaning, when God says he loves you and you are forgiven then that's reality, you are loved and you are forgiven. But when we live under shame these truths start to become distorted and lies from the enemy start to become our truths. Shame has us believe that we are our sin. When we don't believe in the accomplishments of Jesus life and death we are still under the condemnation of our sin and begin to believe in the enemies lies which start to form our faux reality. Which in this case is we are not loved and I have to work for my forgiveness. The biggest lies we believe are that we are alone, worthless, hopeless, and rejected. The best example I can give you is from my own life. Now that I am a few years in I can see reality and my shame reality as separate but I have to choose what to believe. So because of my past and people in my life part of my faux reality is that I am unworthy of love. This thought or belief is always in the back of my mind.

When we are living under shame we become obsessed with covering up and hiding. We don't want to be found out. Our sinfulness drives this faux reality. So

we think if people actually knew my sin then they would never love me. Because I think that, I don't want people to know the depth of my sin so I hide and cover up. Sometimes this is figuratively. I keep my sin hidden. Or sometimes it plays out literally. I will stay in bed all day. We see this in our relationship with God also, right? Adam and Eve do it in the garden. They cover up with fig leaves and try to hide when God is calling for them. For us we avoid God. We avoid his word, church, prayer, and people who talk about God because of the condemnation we fear he brings.

This drives my next point. Lusts for acceptance, approval and control of our fears of rejection and exposure. We need to know that we are loved, enough, accepted, etc, so we seek things that will make me feel that way. We try to earn these things. This is where a works based faith comes in. We struggle to accept what God has already done so we do works to ensure our acceptance and approval or Jesus. This plays out with others also. Your self-value and worth start to become based on what others think of you so you make sure to earn acceptable approval rating from your boss or spouse or parents. We don't want to be rejected or exposed.

It leads to a life of perfectionism, and other self-protective measures we use to keep our lives nice and tidy. Our faux reality has us put unrealistic expectation on ourselves. Things as simple as I will never be late somewhere to I will never offend others. I personally had to fight the unrealistic expectation that I will give the best sermon on this stage today. We seek perfectionism to keep us nice and tidy.

We blame ourselves when others are at fault or we blame others when we are at fault. Blaming ourselves leads to self-condemnation. Have you ever been asked to do something by your wife or husband? And you do it but they become upset or disappointed with you because you didn't do it the way they wanted it done. Like if Meagan told me to paint the living room and I painted blue but she wanted fuchsia. What self-condemning looks like here is that I would take the blame on myself and believe that I am worthless or stupid or a horrible husband who can't do anything right but really she should've been more clear. And in this example Meagan would be the one who is blaming others when it's their fault.

Shame can keep us living in a state of hyper-vigilance where our minds are always working overtime to predict and be prepared for any situation so we can protect our hearts. I once was told that I am never excited about anything. I thought that

person was wrong and heaped shame on me but then I realized that I actually don't show the excitement I have towards things because I'm preparing myself for the moment it goes wrong. This way I can't get my hopes up or my heart broken. Shame makes us crazy and exhausted.

Ultimately a life under shame leads to death. I know that sounds extreme but we see this laid out in the Bible and we see it played out quite literally in the world. The suicide rate is at an all-time high and grows every year. Shame distances you from God and others. Life apart from God is death. Hear what I am not saying. I am not shaming you and saying that you will lose your salvation. But shame leads to a life of unrepentance and darkness. This allows the enemy to really take hold of you and your thoughts. There are many levels of shame that we go through but trust me, from personal experience I can say to you that unattended shame only gets worse and it will lead you to some dark places.

So let me ask you, do you have some unattended shame?

Do you struggle with believing that you are loved and enough?

Do you believe that because of the cross God looks at you and sees holy and righteous, spotless and blameless? Or do you believe that you are worthless, hopeless, and dirty?

Jesus' life was perfect but he took on all of our sin and became worthless, faithlessness, rejection, guilt, and shame. And his death defeated those things. And now you and I live free from a life of sin and death. Let's walk in this freedom. Let point out shame and put it to death.

As I said before, I have been working through shame for the last two years. This past year especially. I do not have it completely worked out. I am not on the other side saying that I don't ever feel shame. You would not believe the amount of shame I had to work through while preparing this sermon. But let me share with you some ways you can move out of being stuck or the downward spiral of shame.

First and foremost is faith and belief. In all aspects of life we are living under faith and belief. I believe that the bridge can hold my car when I drive over it. I have to believe that my wife indeed does love me. Sometimes it's making a decision to believe something. I decide to believe that Jesus paid it all and there is now no condemnation. When shame hits you we must have faith and belief that God's word is true and can speak louder than the enemy's lies.

Another thing that combats shame is vulnerability and confession. If shame is covering up and hiding then vulnerability is exposing and freeing. When we stop

hiding and avoiding God and our sin problems we walk in freedom. God will use your vulnerability with others and yourself to bring you into the light.

Repentance. Instead of allowing your sin to define you and shame you, repent and accept God's grace.

Preach to yourself. Absorbing God's word and reminding yourself of his truths. Let his truths start to ring louder than the enemy's lies. For example, to prepare for this sermon I had to remind myself often of what 1 John 3:20 "For whenever our heart condemns us, God is greater than our heart, and he knows everything." Meaning, God is greater than my self-condemning heart and I have an assurance that I am supposed to be up here today by his grace.

Let us enter the New Year recognizing where shame speaks loud and allow God's truth to speak louder. Sham