

Guilt and Shame

Fairview Missionary Church | Angola, IN

Scripture: Assorted

Speakers: Jake Shipe & Joel Greenwood

March 19, 2023

Good morning. How is everybody? You're here. That's good. I like that. Today is the first Sunday in a series of messages that is designed to prepare our hearts for Easter. And one of the things that Sam and his team just did is they introduced a new song for us called this is our God whose lines of lyric and biblical truths are going to be the backdrop for our sermon series as we prepare our hearts for Easter.

This morning, Joe's going to focus on the first line of that song. And that first line, it talks about the walls of guilt and shame and how in Christ, the walls of guilt and shame can become rubble. But one of the things I would like to do to begin our time is I want to define for us both guilt and shame. Guilt is defined as this, the fact of having committed an offense or a crime.

Now, one of the things I'd like to do just so you might be thinking to yourself, Jake, I'm not a criminal, I'm not committed any crimes. Therefore, this doesn't really apply to me this morning. I want to share with you some examples from my life that illustrate guilt. The first one is this, when I was in high school, one of the things that we did on a Friday night or that my buddies and I decided it was a good idea to do. It was to go and teepee our tennis coach. Yeah, great idea.

Not a good idea. And on, as we were leaving the house, my dad looked me in the eyes, and he said this. He said, use your best judgment. Now, here's what my dad was really saying, even though he didn't say these exact words. My dad was saying, Jake, and buddies with him. Make some other choice on Friday night, something that is a bit more constructive than this.

But this wouldn't be a story this morning. If we had done that, right? Yeah. So a few hours later, my tennis coach called my dad to come collect my buddy and I from his house. That was guilt. Here's another example of guilt a little more serious. Now, I have always grown up around the church. However, and I'm 40, so I've only been a Christian for the last 20 years of my life.

Now, I have always known what God has said about God honoring relationships and the things that are to take place within God honoring relationships, marriage specifically, and I've always known what my parents, how they raised me, how they raised my brother and I to honor gals.

And to top that off, I was in this church in the youth group here, and so for 7 years, junior high, and then senior high for 7 years, I heard the faithful instruction biblical instruction from our youth pastor that described how men and women were to be in a relationship. And my freshman year in college, I disregarded all of that instruction.

The act of justified disobedience, that too, was also guilt. So now that I have everybody's attention, I'm going to go ahead and I want to share with us the definition for shame. This is shame. Shame is the painful feeling of humiliation or distress caused by a thoughts of foolish or wrong behavior. And I let a life of both foolish and wrong behavior.

Now the following are my real examples of expressed and experienced shame. And the first scenario with my dad, I felt a vast separation. And the reason I felt this separation is my dad gave me a clear instruction, even

though he didn't say it with specific words. I knew what my dad did not want me to do. And instead of listening to my dad and being obedient to my dad, I did what I wanted to do.

And that separation that I felt, that is an example of shame. And the second scenario, there are two things that I experienced, and I look at my stomach specifically. I felt this gnawing ache that would not go away because of what I did. There wasn't anything that would take away that ache.

In addition to that gnawing ache that wouldn't go away, there was this emotional heart shattering grief, which was caused by the lies that the enemy was whispering in my ears, and he was saying things like this. Jake, you will never know the love and the intimacy and the true joy of a Christian marriage because of what? You've done. That was my shame.

That was a shame that I experienced now, I don't want this to be sad this morning. But one of the things that Joel, he's not only going to talk about guilt and shame this morning because that would be really depressing if he only talked about guilt and shame this morning. However, he's also going to talk to us about sorrow. Now the sorrow that Joel is going to be talking about is not the kind of sorrow that I experienced in my acts of guilt.

Joel is going to be talking about a kind of sorrow that is literally the difference between life and death. Let's go ahead and pray to open our message this morning. Father, we thank you for this day. We thank you for your love for us. God, we thank you for the words of the lyrics that Sam had us sing. We thank you for the truths that talk about the idea that guilt and shame the walls of guilt and shame can become rubble in Christ.

Father I pray that it is pastor Joel comes and he shares your truth from your word that you would open our hearts and you would open our minds so that we would hear them and that we would do them. God, thank you for hearing our prayers. All these things we ask in Jesus name. Amen. Thank you, pastor Jake. I'm glad that you were able to share some of your experiences with guilt and shame 'cause I don't have any stories like that myself. So I had to have Jake start this morning.

Every one of us, honestly, has struggled with guilt and shame. Every single one of us have made decisions in our life and in our past where we just have shame. We have guilt for what we have done. Often because of sin because of some disobedience to God, knowing that God has our best interest in mind and somehow believing that I know better than God. And for some, those feelings never go away. We continue to beat ourselves up over and over again.

And it becomes a lifelong battle that can greatly affect our spiritual lives. We know that the Bible tells us that God has forgiven us, that if we repent of our sins, if we turn towards him, that he will forgive us of our sins. We understand that, but somehow living that out is more difficult, and we struggle with forgiving ourselves. We struggle with moving on. And here is the crazy truth about the enemy and how he works.

The enemy will relentlessly work to get you to disobey God and his best for your life. He will relentlessly try to have you make a decision that will cause you to experience guilt and shame. And so he will say things like, there's nothing wrong with that, whatever that is for you, whatever your struggle is. He'll tell us, God is lying, and he's just trying to ruin your life. He's trying to take away the fun things that you could experience.

And whatever it is for you, whatever your struggle, the enemy will say, there's nothing wrong with that. That is not something that God doesn't want you to do. There's no guilt or shame in that. And so then as all of us have, and we make the mistake, we do that thing, which is disobedience to God. And then the enemy switches tactics. Almost immediately. And he'll say things like, I can't believe you did that. You knew that was wrong.

You've heard so many people. God is never going to forgive you. You're worthless, you're weak. And so he begins to pile on the guilt and shame. Isn't it amazing that we listen to both of those messages from the same enemy that at the first he's telling us do this? It's going to be great. You're going to love it. It's going to be

awesome. It's the best thing in the world. And then as soon as you make that mistake, he instantly switches his script, and he says, I can't believe you did that. And we all fall for it.

And we all have those same messages that play in our mind over and over again, almost like a tape recorder. It's just put on repeats. That's why the scripture calls our enemy the accuser. I'm going to have to have you advance me here. It's stuck. In revelation, chapter 12:10 is John is writing about his vision. He calls our enemy the accuser. He says for the accuser of our brothers and sisters, who accuses them before our God day and night has been hurled down.

This is one of the names that is given to the enemy of our soul because he accuses us of those things that he was trying to get us to do. He is the one that puts the idea in our mind, and then he is the one that accuses us once we make the mistake. For some people, the hardest step toward Jesus is self forgiveness, because these tapes from the enemy have been playing for so long. And so you and I get into this habit of putting on these huge backpacks, right?

And we throw all of the bricks of life in these backpacks and they begin to weigh us down. They're so heavy. They steal our joy. And in the worst case scenarios, they make you and I ineffective in our witness for Jesus. They can even go one step further as I have witnessed very often. These backpacks that people wear filled with their shame and guilt hinder them from even coming to know Jesus at all.

And so I hear people all the time say things like pastor, if you really knew what I did, you would know that God doesn't want me. I'm not worthy. I've gone too far away to be saved. This is just who I am. I can never change. My sins are unforgivable. You don't understand, pastor. I deserve what I'm getting. The church is truly better off without me.

And whenever I hear someone start to say these lines and tell me these things, I immediately recognize them as the lies of the enemy, and some of you here today, some of you watching online. Some of you listening on the radio, you recognize those words because that same tape has been playing in your head over and over again. They're the lyrics to a familiar song that truly have been on repeat in your mind for a long time.

So long, in fact, that you've actually begun to believe them. I once heard it said that if you say something long enough and loud enough, you will eventually believe it's true. If you hear something said loud enough and long enough, you will eventually believe it's true. And for some of you here today, some of you watching and listening, you have heard this message for so long, and it has been so loud. That you believe it's true.

And so through the power of God's spirit, my prayer today is that I can take that tape that CD, that 8 track, whatever it is in your mind, out of your head, and I can replace it with the loving words of Jesus Christ, because scripture is clear that Jesus came to take away our guilt and our shame. He came to break down the walls around us that remind you of the guilt and the shame that you have.

And so today, he wants to break down those walls in your life and remind you that you are a child of the king. That is where your worth comes from. And so for the rest of this morning, I just want to share with you some scriptural truths about what God has done for you. And what is available to you? So listen to this first one, first John, chapter one verse 9. If you were raised in the church, this is a very familiar verse of scripture. John says that if we confess our sins, this involves repentance.

That he is faithful and just and God will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness. If we will come before God, confess our sins, repent of them, not hold on to them anymore. He will forgive us and purify us from all unrighteousness. If we honestly and humbly come before God, he will forgive us. Now I'm not talking about worldly guilt.

I'm not talking about that guilt that you have because you were caught or you knew you weren't supposed to do it, but you don't really feel bad for it. This confessing of our sins is a godly sorrow. And this godly sorrow is quite different than worldly guilt. And so the apostle Paul talks about this in second Corinthians chapter 7. He

says, this godly sorrow that John was talking about, it brings repentance that leads to Salvation and leaves no regret.

That's godly sorrow, but worldly sorrow actually just brings death. So let me help you understand the difference between godly sorrow and worldly guilt. The best way for me to understand this in my own life is to use an analogy, you know, as I was growing up, I would do something I wasn't supposed to do, and oftentimes, it was maybe because of my older sister, and so I would do something to her and my mom would say, now Joel, you apologize when I would get caught, right? And so I'd go, okay, fine, I'm sorry, you know?

But I wasn't sorry. That was worldly guilt. I was really only sorry that I had gotten caught. I didn't feel bad for what I did. That's not sorrow. That's not this godly sorrow that Paul and John are talking about. Godly sorrow is the realization that my sin, my mistakes, my choices have affected and been against a holy God. That's what my sin has been against. And I do feel guilt for that.

I feel bad for that because I know what I did was wrong. And the beauty of coming to that point in your life, not just getting caught for your sin and regretting the consequences that you now have to deal with, but true godly sorrow that leads to repentance is that if you confess that sin, scripture is clear, that God will take that sin and remove it from you as far as the east is from the west. This is not a backpack that you put on and you have to hold for the rest of your life.

And so when you are able to unload that shame and guilt, it leaves no regret. And the shame and guilt has to flee your life. They only have power over you now if you let them. And so we need to continue to decide not to let that guilt and shame have power and not believe the lies of the enemy because God is clear that if we confess that he will purify us and allow us to live a life of righteousness.

Look at what Isaiah says in chapter 54. Isaiah says to us, do not be afraid. You will not be put to shame. Do not fear disgrace. You will not be humiliated. You will forget the shame of your youth and remember no more the reproach of your widowhood. I say it says don't fear disgrace. You will not be humiliated. You are forgiven. You have been made new. Scripture says that we are made into a new creation.

We have been justified by the blood of Jesus. Now, unless you grew up in church, this word justified is not something that we use a lot in our culture. And so to define that so that I better understand that. When I think of the word justified, I define it just as if I never did. If I am justified before God, from my sins, it is just as if I never did it.

No guilt, no shame, no regrets. Scripture is clear that once you do confess your sins and you repent and come to Jesus and proclaim him as your lord, that sin no longer has control over you. Sin has been defeated by the cross of Jesus Christ. It has lost its control. Paul says in Romans chapter 6 verse 14 for sin shall no longer be your master because you are not under the law, but now you are under grace.

We do not have to give in to temptation anymore. We can look at the accuser. We can look at the enemy and we can say no because God has given us the power to overcome. Paul says in first Corinthians chapter ten verse 13 that no temptation has overtaken you except what is common to mankind and God is faithful. He will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, believers, we're gonna be tempted.

Unfortunately, when we proclaim Jesus as our lord, the enemy doesn't give up on us. He wants to make us ineffective in our witness. He still wants to try to ruin our lives while we're here because he knows that we are going to spend an eternity with the father. But when we are tempted, we need to recognize that God will also provide a way out so that you and I can endure it. He will give us a way out in Christ Jesus, you and I have power over sin.

We're no longer need to be slaves to sin, but instead we can pursue righteousness. This is the beautiful gift that we are given through Jesus Christ. Through his death and his resurrection, you and I have been set free,

but it is a choice. It's a decision that we must make. If we want to continue to live in the bondage of the chains of sin and death and shame and guilt, we can choose to do that.

But we also have the choice to be free from those things. And so the choice is you continue to carry your shame, allow sin to rule over you and to steal your joy and to steal God's best for you. Or you can let Jesus take that backpack off. The shame, the sin, the guilt, you can give it to him instead of lugging it around with you wherever you go.

Or you can choose to keep it on. Again, I asked the question, why would we choose to keep that pain? Why would we choose to keep that guilt in that regret? And I don't have an answer for that, but every single one of us at some point in our life has made the decision to hold on to that. And so I was again thinking of another analogy. And I was reminded of times when my kids were younger and they were in diapers.

And you guys have had kids or grandkids or nieces or nephews? And you know you're sitting in the living room and all of a sudden you smell something, right? And you know what it is. And so you're like, okay, we need to go change your diaper. And for some reason, every kid that I have ever known doesn't want their diaper changed. They would rather just sit in their stinky diaper. They're comfortable. It's theirs. Don't take it away, right? It's mine. I made this. And even though we think, well, that's silly. Why do they do that? We don't know why they do that.

We often do the same thing as adults. We're sitting around in our stinky diaper and people see it, and they can smell it, and they know it, and God's like, let me change you. Let me make you into something new, but for whatever reason, our human nature just says, no, no, I'm okay with what I got. I'm comfortable here. It doesn't make any sense. And so you have to ask the question, what are you going to allow to rule your life? Is it going to be sin? Or is it going to be the Lord Jesus Christ?

I can tell you what master I am going to choose. And that's Jesus. He's a much more gracious master. Loving master, loving lord. And so as we enter into this Easter season, I am going to celebrate the victory that Jesus has given us. The victory over sin and shame and guilt that the walls truly have been broken down. They have been turned to rubble.

But maybe you're here today, you're watching online, you're listening on the radio. And those walls are still up in your life. They're around your heart. You've put up these walls around your heart. Believing that you know what is best for you, my prayer is that God would break down those walls. You would allow him to come into your heart and come into your life that you would do what John says in first John one 9 that if you confess your sins that you would recognize that God is faithful and just.

And he will remove your sins and he will purify you. Of all unrighteousness. You can become a child of the king. If you have received that, many of us have, many of us proclaim Jesus as our lord, it's why we're here. We come to worship. We come to celebrate. We look forward to Easter, where we're celebrating the death and then the resurrection of Jesus Christ, and that is the promise upon which we base our hope as followers of Jesus.

If you are here, you still have people in your life, family members, Friends, coworkers, neighbors, who don't know Jesus. They're still carrying around that shame and that guilt and it breaks your heart. Know that you're not alone. I have people in my own family that don't know Jesus. They continue to live their own life thinking. They know what is best. And I see the shame and I see the guilt and it breaks my heart. And so we've created just something that's visual and opportunity for us coming up around Easter.

If you didn't notice in the foyer, there was a set of hands that have been beautifully painted by somebody in our congregation, representing the hands of Jesus. And next to those hands is a table with some sticky notes and some pens there. And this is what I want you to do. Leading up to Easter, you have family members, Friends, people that don't know Jesus. People that are on your heart. I want you just to write their name on

that sticky note and just leave it on the table. That's step one. Maybe it's somebody you want to invite the church on Easter Sunday.

Maybe they live further away, but God is saying to you once again, I just want you to share your story with them about how I have changed your life. And so you write their name down because you've been praying for them for a long, long time for some of you decades. You've been praying for this family member to come to know Jesus. And you want their hearts to be softened and sometimes we just get overwhelmed. Sometimes we have been praying so long for those people that we just feel alone. And so I want you to know that you're not alone.

And so those names that are on the table as you write those, I want you then to grab a name of somebody that wasn't one that you wrote down. And I want you to take a picture of it and it could be a couple of names, write it down, whatever. And I want you to begin to pray for that person, and you might not even know them. And if you are going to pray for that person, take that sticky note off the table and put it into the hands of Jesus, signifying that you are placing them into the hands of Jesus. And hopefully, prayerfully, that will be an encouragement for the person who wrote that name down to know, I am not the only one praying for this person.

I'm not the only one lifting them up and placing them into the hands of Jesus. This Easter season, I am praying that God will break down the walls and prepare their heart to receive the good news of Jesus. And as we walk by that in the coming weeks, leading up to Easter, it will be that visual reminder. That those people that we love and care about, we can truly place into the hands of Jesus, and they are the most gentle and loving and gracious hands that we can put them.

Let me close in prayer. Heavenly Father, even as I wrap up this message, I think of my own family. My own friends who don't have a personal relationship with you. They're still holding that backpack of shame and guilt and regret and sin. And for some of them, maybe they believe they're too far gone.

They have maybe even built the own wall around their heart, preventing you from coming in. Believing that they're protecting themselves when in reality. They're just keeping out the best thing that could ever happen to them. And so having the father, I know it's only through the power of your spirit, that those walls would be broken down. That hearts would be changed, that eyes would be opened, spiritual eyes.

Lord, I pray for my own family and friends that don't know you. That they would come to know you this Easter season. That you would receive the praise. Lord, for those that are here today, whether they're here in person or watching online or on the radio that are carrying around their own backpack of shame and guilt and sin.

That your spirit would speak to them and that they would take it off and they would instead wrap themselves with you. We pray this in your name, Jesus. Amen.