

Anxiety, Shame, and the Gospel

Introduction: Good morning! Good to see you all this morning. Littles come on up and jr high you are going to stay in today but will be back to your normal class next week.

Pray and dismiss kids.

About 6 weeks ago when Kenner was planning the preaching schedule for the next few months he scheduled me to preach but knew it was going to be out of series. As you know we just finished Matthew and we will not start our next series for a couple weeks here. I asked what he wanted me to preach on and he said you can preach on whatever you want but I think you should share about your race you have been training for. Some of you know at the end of last month I went down to San Francisco and ran the Sf half-marathon. 13.1 miles.

I immediately told him no... there are a lot of reasons I did not want to do it but the primary one is because I knew what that meant as far as what I was going to have to share with everyone. I wanted to take the easy way out and just go to Hebrews 12 talk about running with endurance etc. A worthwhile message for sure but that is not what my race was about. Running the race in San Francisco was all about anxiety and shame. The race was about a physical challenge that helped me to process and deal with some anxiety and shame that has been a really difficult struggle for the last two and a half years.

So this morning we are going to talk about anxiety and shame and the gospel. In order to do that I am going to tell you some of my story from the last two years and then we will talk about what God has taught me and how the gospel speaks into our anxiety and shame.

My story: I have to warn you that this is a very fearful thing for me to do right now and there is still a lot of raw emotion attached to what has been happening in my life so do not be surprised if there are some tears at some point or at many points but I will do my best to not allow that to totally disrupt things here.

As many of you know I pastored at a church in southern California for 6 years before moving here. 5 years as a youth pastor and a little over a year as the lead pastor as they searched for a permanent replacement of the pastor that I worked under as the youth pastor. It was in that year and half or so of transition that my struggle with anxiety and shame came to the surface.

1. I learned what does not work:

- **Being told to just stop worrying, being depressed, or sinning does not work. A logical explanation alone doesn't work because shame becomes a part of the picture. While shame may not be the initial trigger at all times it is most often the perpetuator.**

- **Self-condemnation for that which Christ does not condemn because it divorces our emotions from our being. Jesus seeks to love, heal, and develop us as whole people which includes our emotion. Romans 8:1 Is it sinful? I don't have an answer... but heaping condemnation on top of struggle only produces more shame.**

- **Trying harder to not be anxious or feel shameful does not work and in fact compounds the problem. The goal is not to be stronger but to embrace your neediness and invite Jesus and His people into your struggle. 2 Corinthians 12:1-10**

2. I am beginning to learn what does work:

- **The healing work of the Gospel is unconditional love, acceptance, and union with Christ. Romans 8:14-17**
 - A. **The opposite of fear is not courage the opposite of fear is connection. A spirit of sonship being with our Father.**

 - B. **Gospel love is not love that excuses brokenness but acknowledges it, leaves room for you to embrace it and then transforms it into wholeness.**

- **The healing work of response is vulnerability within the confines of Christian community. James 5:13-16 Galatians 6:1-5 John 13:34-35**

- ³⁴ **A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another. ³⁵ By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.” John 13:34-35**

- Brothers,^[a] if anyone is caught in any transgression, you who are spiritual should restore him in a spirit of gentleness. Keep watch on yourself, lest you too be tempted. ² Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ. ³ For if anyone thinks he is something, when he is nothing, he deceives himself. ⁴ But let each one test his own work, and then his reason to boast will be in himself alone and not in his neighbor. ⁵ For each will have to bear his own load. Galatians 6:1-5

- ¹³ Is anyone among you suffering? Let him pray. Is anyone cheerful? Let him sing praise. ¹⁴ Is anyone among you sick? Let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord. ¹⁵ And the prayer of faith will save the one who is sick, and the Lord will raise him up. And if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven. ¹⁶ Therefore, confess your sins to one another and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person has great power as it is working. James 5:13-16

- A. We have to begin to see issues like anxiety and shame as brokenness that we all share in as humans rather than weakness to look down upon and bring more shame to.

- B. We must stop eating our own. If Jesus do not come into the world to condemn why should we condemn one another.

- C. We have to do it together.

Closing thoughts:

Healing and restoration often does not mean rescue or complete deliverance. It often means strength, endurance and hope. God is more concerned with our transformation than our comfort.

Vulnerability is not weakness!! Vulnerability is our best measure of courage.- Brene Brown

Communion:

The best way we can respond to this is the communion table.

It is here that we are reminded of our brokenness and here that we are reminded that we have space at the table.

Christ was broken that you would be made whole.

His blood was spilled that you would be cleansed and made one with him. It is the cross that speaks into our anxiety and shame and depression with the deepest meaning and real power. So as the elements are passed allow the truth of the song and the truth of the gospel to watch over you and Jeremy will walk us through the elements.