

Jesus, He Who Covers Shame

I. Read John 8:1-11 then pray

II. Introduction

- a. Who is Jesus and what has Jesus done for you?
- b. Jesus the Healer, Jesus the Intercessor, Jesus the Living Water
- c. Jesus, He who covers shame**

III. Thesis: Although it is easy to believe that the text of John 8:1-11 is giving us a subtle glimpse at the graciousness of Jesus, when we fully understand the historical and scriptural context of shame and honor, we find that this text gives us an incredibly complete depiction of our God, who covers shame, and how we must respond to him.

IV. Historical Context

a. **Collectivist Culture**

- i. Your identity was not in yourself. It was in your group; for Hebrew people, their identity was in their Hebrew community.
- b. Joseph Plevnik, author and New Testament professor, wrote that honor is “a **claim to worth** that is **publicly acknowledged**,” while shame is “a claim to worth that is publicly **denied or repudiated**.”
 - i. NOT worth... CLAIM to worth
 1. Honor and shame were designed as a give and take system (claimed/obtained or lost)
 - ii. Publicly acknowledged or denied... not privately
 1. Social construct employed by the public, the community, to either lift up or bring down those amongst them.
 2. Many scholars even believe that every single *public* interaction between two non-familial people was an honor/shame exchange.
 3. What the community thought about a person was considered true and what the community agreed upon was considered right. Thus, a person’s view of himself or herself was a direct product of what the community thought about him or her.
 4. These facts were the product of **collectivist culture**
- c. Important to not confuse honor and shame with self-esteem and guilt.**
 - i. Symptoms of shame
 1. Feeling inadequate (to the community)
 2. Feeling worthless (to the community)
 3. Feeling out of place (in the community)

4. Drawing back in the presence of God

V. Scriptural Context

a. 1 John 2:28

- i. ...When he appears...not draw back...in shame in His presence

b. Genesis 2:25

- i. Adam and Eve see each other for the first time. God is there, too!

c. Genesis 3:6-10

i. Adam and Eve are naked and afraid

ii. God covers them. **Consequences do not equal shame.**

iii. **We serve a God who can acknowledge the consequences of his children's wayward actions without shaming them.**

VI. Back to John 8 and the story of the woman caught in adultery.

a. V3 - Center of the courtyard = public

b. V4 - Caught in the very act of adultery = naked

c. **V2 - Jesus is in the middle of teaching.** Remember all public interactions are an honor and shame exchange. So the scribes and pharisees were not just attempting to shame the woman, they were hoping to steal some of Jesus' honor as well by getting him to say something that was against the Law of Moses—thus their question.

- i. The teachers of the law know that Jesus has been preaching “grace” and has been going around forgiving sins. So, their hope is to either get him to cosign them (which would take Jesus' honor and pin it to them) OR he would go against the Law by saying don't stone her (which would take Jesus' honor as a teacher of the Law and give it to them)

ii. But he does neither and instead starts writing in the sand.

1. We don't know what he wrote in the sand and we could spend all day speculating. But what he wrote is not as important as how they responded to what he writes? They left... **they withdrew from the courtyard. But who remained?**

VII. 1 John 2:28 - Now, little children, **remain/abide in Him**, so that when He appears, we may have confidence and not draw back from Him in shame at His coming.

a. **Abide in Him** - Believe that Jesus is God and that God is in the business of covering shame. Believe that he took on flesh. And as a result, when you come into an interaction with him, an honor and shame exchange takes place.

- i. God, with all glory and honor, exchanges his honor for our sin and our shame.

ii. Because in being whipped, beaten, and crucified by the Romans before the Jews, Jesus's claim to worth was publicly denied. Even though he never broke the Law, he suffered the shame and death of breaking the Law in our place. **Our claim to worth is publicly acknowledged by God.**

1. **Hebrews 12:1-2 – "... despising the shame..."**