

Covered in Shame
(Turnpike Wesleyan - October 25, 2020)

Scripture Text: Genesis 3:1-7

The serpent was the shrewdest of all the wild animals the Lord God had made. One day he asked the woman, “Did God really say you must not eat the fruit from any of the trees in the garden?” “Of course, we may eat fruit from the trees in the garden,” the woman replied. “It’s only the fruit from the tree in the middle of the garden that we are not allowed to eat. God said, ‘You must not eat it or even touch it; if you do, you will die.’” “You won’t die!” the serpent replied to the woman. “God knows that your eyes will be opened as soon as you eat it, and you will be like God, knowing both good and evil.” The woman was convinced. She saw that the tree was beautiful, and its fruit looked delicious, and she wanted the wisdom it would give her. So, she took some of the fruit and ate it. Then she gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it, too. At that moment, their eyes were opened, and they suddenly felt shame at their nakedness. So, they sewed fig leaves together to cover themselves.

Introduction

Let me add a couple more inquiries to the list of the world’s most important questions. “Why do we feel shame?” and “What do we do with our shame?”

It all starts with a bit of nakedness. The New Living Translation of the Bible says that they “felt shame at their nakedness.”

Covered in Shame

You see, I believe that it wasn’t their nakedness that was the real cause of the problem with these two. Shame goes beyond embarrassment. Shame comes when our faults are made public knowledge. You feel shame when you have to face other people who see your mistakes and failures.

Shame arises out of our own sin. But the Bible has a message for those who are laboring under the weight of shame, regardless of its cause. It is a message of hope, understanding, reconciliation, love, and acceptance.

A Look at the Book

Now don’t misunderstand what I am saying here. God doesn’t ignore our sin. God takes our sin seriously. God continually calls us out of our sin to live as new creatures. God continually urges us to give up our sin, be cleansed, and changed. But God does not devalue us because of our sin. God never rejects us because of our sin. God never

discards us or throws us aside. God never views us as worthless.

Paul writes in Romans 7:24, “Who will rescue me from this body of death?” He concludes the next verse by saying, “Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ, our Lord!” God is the one who will **rescue** us. God is the one who will **save** us. God is the one who will go to extraordinary lengths to bring redemption.

Let me remind you of just a few Gospel examples of people who God **refused** to leave in their shame. Christ saw these people and lifted them out of their sin and their shame and assured them of His love.

Remember the sinful **woman** of Luke 7 who washed the feet of Christ with her tears. Jesus pronounced her healed and forgiven. The **prodigal** son of Luke 15 wasted his inheritance with wild living, but upon his repentance was accepted back into his father’s family. The **sinner** of Luke 18 was so convinced of his unworthiness that he wouldn’t even lift his eyes in prayer. But God saw the true shape of his heart and pronounced him forgiven and accepted. Luke chapter 19 tells the story of **Zacchaeus**, the fraudulent tax collector who was changed by a face-to-face encounter with Christ.

There may come times in your life when you feel the shame brought on by sin, guilt, and disobedience. There may be times when you begin to believe that you are unworthy to be called a child of God. There may be times when you become so ashamed of your actions that you can’t even lift your head.

When those times come, remember what Paul says in Romans 8: “If God is for us, who is against us?” He concludes that chapter by proclaiming that there is nothing in all the earth that can separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Wrap Up

So, what do we do with our shame? First of all, **admit** the source if it. Seek **forgiveness** if you have committed an offense against God or another person. If the source of your shame is external; if it comes from someone else convincing you that you have no worth – then realize that it is only God’s **opinion** of you that really counts and God loves you enough to sacrifice his only Son for you. And finally, **accept** the fact that you are precious in God’s sight. You are loved and accepted.

There is no reason for you to be covered in your shame. It is true that we are not flawless; never have been, never will be. But we are **forgiven**. There really isn’t anything else we need to know.

We need not be **defined** by our shame. We need to be **defined** by God. And God defines us as precious children, worthy of all the goodness of creation. Even though Adam and Eve sinned, God never abandoned them or deserted them. Neither will we be abandoned or deserted. God is **stronger** than our shame.