



Shame on You

John 4:1-30; 2 Corinthians 5:21

OPEN

Have you ever said the words *shame on you!* to someone (either jokingly or in a serious tone)?

How did the person respond? Describe their words, face, body language, and/or future interactions with you.

DISCUSS

Read the story of the *Woman at the Well* – John 4:1-30

- This was a seemingly sinful woman (and a Samaritan no less—Jews hated Samaritans), and everyone in town knew it. How did Jesus interact and respond to her? How do the disciples respond when they see Jesus talking to her?
- How does the conversation reveal hints of shame in the woman?
- How does the woman respond to this conversation?
- Often disconnected from this story are two passages.
 - John 4:34-38: How does Jesus see the situation at hand?
 - John 4:39-42: What is the result of Jesus' grace-based approach (instead of *shame on you*) in this story?

UNDERSTANDING SHAME

Several weeks ago, we noted the difference in guilt and shame.

“**Guilt** is the awareness that we’ve crossed a moral or relational boundary we should not have broken. It’s that bad feeling that makes us do something creative – like confess or make amends or seek help in trying to repair the situation...**Shame** is the sense that we are hopelessly stained, destined for judgment and rejection, with really only one recourse left: *We’ve got to hide not only what we’ve done but who we are.*”



Can you relate (or do you experience) any of these feelings identified by author Lewis Smedes (*Shame and Grace*):

- I sometimes feel like I'm a fake.
- When I look inside myself, I seldom feel as if I am up to what is expected of me.
- I feel inferior to the really good people I know.
- I feel as if I just can't measure up to what I ought to be.

How do people react when they live with shame? At least four unhelpful ways: They run from those around them, they avoiding encounters to hide and cover themselves from emotional exposure, they blame, or attack other people. How have you witnessed (or experienced) these (or other responses) to shame?

What hope does 2 Corinthians 5:21 have for us?

Respond to the quote below from this week's sermon:

"Shame blossoms in the dark room of our minds. It begins to go away when it's shared with a trusted friend, or a counselor, or a pastor. Shame is an emotional sore that always festers when it isn't addressed. One thing I've discovered in my own life is that when I share my struggles honestly to a trusted person, I experience a tremendous sense of freedom."

YOUR NEXT STEP...

Memorize 2 Corinthians 5:21 this week.

"God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God."

In your prayers, ask the Spirit to reveal to you areas of shame you have been carrying (vulnerability).

Who is one person (or group) you could share your feelings, emotions, or reality of shame (close friend, mentor, pastor, counselor, small group)?