

The Monster of Shame

Matthew 22:37, Genesis 2:21-25, Genesis 3:6-11

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Adam and Eve fell in the Garden and believed Satan's lies and in the process, according to Romans 5:12, passed down sin and their now captured thought processes.

Romans 5:12, "Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all people, because all sinned."

So, in the Garden, not only did we lose relationship, dominion, and authority we also lost our mind.

Then Jesus came, determined to restore everything we'd lost. Remember the command He declared in Matthew 22... that we have a part to play in this path to deliverance and restoration.

Matthew 22:37, "Jesus replied: "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind."

Like I stated last week, most of us have allowed Jesus to save our heart and soul but we haven't allowed Him to renew or redeem our mind.

This is why we must understand that we can have a new heart and a saved soul yet, still have the same mind. Because we wrestle against principalities (principles), we think differently.

So, let's see what monster is prowling the recesses of our mind on a regular basis.

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Genesis 2:21-25, *“So the LORD God caused the man to fall into a deep sleep; and while he was sleeping, he took one of the man’s ribs and then closed up the place with flesh. Then the LORD God made a woman from the rib he had taken out of the man, and he brought her to the man. The man said, “This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called ‘woman,’ for she was taken out of man.” That is why a man leaves his father and mother and is united to his wife, and they become one flesh. Adam and his wife were both naked, and they felt no shame.”*

This is the Garden before the fall. Then they ate the fruit to gain wisdom, and in that moment, they’re overtaken by mind monsters. We saw this last week when we studied Genesis 3:6-11.

We learned that one of the monsters that sets up rule in our mind was anxiety, fear of something that’s yet to happen.

Today, I want us to look at the second monster identified in these first few moments when our spiritual parents lost their minds.

Genesis 3:7, *“At that moment their eyes were opened, and they suddenly felt shame at their nakedness.”*

I believe that, in that one moment, the principle that was established in our mind was the mind monster of shame.

Look at their immediate response. They recognized their nakedness, which caused them to cover themselves and hide.

They confused a proper reaction of guilt and allowed the monster of shame to overtake them instead. They had sinned. Guilt was acceptable. Guilt is an appropriate reaction to an action.

Guilty is what I am when I sin. Guilt is responsibility. Shame, however, is identity based. They move from doing wrong, feeling wrong to thinking wrong. It isn't that I did something bad, I am bad.

What I do is who I am and I'm naked. So, now I'm unworthy of the relationship I once had and enjoyed. They moved from doing wrong to believing they are what they had done.

Isn't that how shame works? We allow what happened to us last year, 5 years ago, 10 years ago, 30 years ago to label us and we become trapped.

We can't believe that it was just something we did or something that was done to us, instead we become convinced that is who we are. Our issue becomes our identity.

But the real problem with the monster of shame is to what it leads. It leads us to try and cover ourselves. How do we cover ourselves? From the Genesis account, I can identify at least two ways.

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First, Shame leads to games. Shame caused Adam and Eve to try to cover themselves. They were trying to perform, to live up to being worthy, to present themselves as covered.

You could call that perfectionism, i.e. I have to fake it till I make it, I have to act like I have it all together, I have to prove I am good enough.

Shame leads to us trying to cover ourselves to make us presentable. Shame leads us to play games, i.e. I have to get my game going or, I have to prove I'm something I know I'm not. Smoke and mirrors.

If I'm successful, I'll be enough. If I'm rich, I'll be enough. If I'm applauded, I'll be enough. If I'm punctual, I'll be enough.

My goodness will cover my shame. My efforts. My design. We discover, like Adam and Eve, that it doesn't work. It just gives a place for a mind monster to hide, and shame leads to blame.

Adam blamed God. I wouldn't have done this if you hadn't given me this woman. It's your fault God.

I wouldn't be an abuser if God would've... I wouldn't be a drunkard if God would've... I wouldn't have gone this deep into debt if God would've...

Then Adam blamed Eve. It wasn't me it was her. I wouldn't be a porn addict if so and so hadn't shown me that. I wouldn't be a cheater if so and so would've been a better model for me.

Then Eve blames the snake. When we've blamed everyone else for our actions and can't find anyone else... The devil made me do it.

We cover our sin in criticism. We never own anything. We cover ourselves in criticizing everyone else and blaming everyone else.

I can promise you that someone who has a good blame game going is covering themselves. They're probably fighting shame!

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But shame is destroyed when you're unwilling to hide. You know you're in bondage to shame when you try to cover what God already sees. Adam said, "*I was naked!*"

God responded by asking, "*Who told you that you were naked?*" Notice, God didn't address their nakedness, He addressed the origin of that knowledge. God dealt with their nakedness as a given.

In other words, He'd already seen their nakedness. They were already exposed to Him. They were embarrassed by what He had already seen. They were uncomfortable with what He was comfortable!

Therefore, the only thing that produces shame in us is what we think we hide from God. What we're hiding becomes leverage used by the enemy to keep us distanced from God.

What we hide becomes a wedge between us and God. Yet, regardless of what we try to do, He sees it.

We can only destroy shame when we acknowledge that He sees it and refuse to try to play hide and seek with Him.

We destroy shame when we live open and transparent before Him and before those He has placed in our life. James saw this connection.

James 5:16, "Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective."

Our ability to live whole, healed, and shame-free lives is linked to our willingness to live unhidden and uncovered.

Shame keeps us in the shadow land. No one ever really gets a glimpse of the real you.

We are distanced from God and from those around us when we believe that what we've done or has been done to us is who we are!

It's time to destroy the mind monster of shame by coming out of hiding. Too many of us get redeemed and we become a recluse.

Too many of us get saved and then we become secret! Healing comes when we refuse to hide.

Shame is destroyed when you no longer focus on actions but on relationship. Adam and Eve were fixated on what they had done rather than on who they were.

Notice that first thing God asks after they fall. He asks, "*Where are you?*" That's a positional question. He didn't ask first, "*What did you do?*"

God's attention wasn't riveted on their actions as much as it was on their location - separated, hidden, at a distance rather than waiting for their walk.

Shame causes us to focus on our actions and forget to focus on our position. What's our position in Christ?

Colossians 1:22, "*But now he has reconciled you by Christ's physical body through death to present you holy in his sight, without blemish and free from accusation.*"

What is the verse actually telling us? Let me paraphrase it for you. "*Even though you were once distant from Him, living in the shadows of your evil thoughts and actions, He reconnected you back to Himself. He released His supernatural peace to you through the sacrifice of His own body as the sin-payment on your behalf so that you would dwell in His presence. And now there's nothing between you and Father God, for He sees you as holy, flawless, and restored.*"

We're no longer living like slaves under the law, but we enjoy being God's very own sons and daughters!

And because we're His, we can access everything our Father has—for we are heirs because of what God has done!

You have to know who you are more than you know what you did. If our relationship is right, then our actions follow. If my relationship is right with you as a friend, then there is no fear that I will steal from you.

If my relationship with my boss is right, then there's no fear that I'll sluff off and not do an honest day's work. Position assures condition. Shame tries to get us to forget our position.

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Conclusion

Shame is destroyed when we remember that God can't remember. Shame is overcome when we realize that God's memory is not as long as our own. Repentance causes God to be forgetful!

Psalm 103:11-12, *"For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is his love for those who fear him; as far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our transgressions from us."*

Hebrews 8:12, *"And I will be merciful to them in their wrongdoings, and I will remember their sins no more."*

Hebrews 10:10, 14, *"Under this new plan we have been forgiven and made clean by Christ's dying for us once and for all. And by his one perfect sacrifice he made us perfectly holy and complete for all time!"*

We say and proclaim that there's nothing God can't do. But in that statement, I've failed to teach you that there's something God can't do!

When we repent, He can't remember! His forgetfulness should destroy shame in our mind.

Shame brings our sin to our mind. Our mind is full of it. So, we conclude that God's mind must be full of it as well! When we bring it up, His response is always, *"What are you talking about?"*

Jesus arrived on the scene trying to deal with more than just our heart and soul. He came to give us back our mind. Let me illustrate one instance when this was so clearly seen.

In Luke 8 we meet Legion. Talk about a candidate for shame. A Jew living in a cemetery which made him unclean to friends, family, community. He should be filled with shame because of his actions.

He has injured and scared neighbors, cursed friends, and attacked innocents.

He's naked. He's out of control. He's unrestrainable. He drags the broken chains of previous attempts to harness his anger around like puppet strings.

He's isolated. He's separated. He's an outcast. A reject. Damaged. Deranged. He's out of his mind, but... he's on the mind of Jesus.

In Luke 8, Jesus gets on a boat and makes a special 8-mile journey across the width of the Sea of Galilee.

Then He gets out of the boat, encounters this mind monster filled man and immediately casts the demons out of him.

Notice what Scripture says after Jesus' actions in Luke 8:35, *"and the people went out to see what had happened. When they came to Jesus, they found the man from whom the demons had gone out, sitting at Jesus' feet, dressed and in his right mind; and they were afraid."*

Before we go any further, I want you to know that there are people in your life that are more comfortable with you when you're bound than when you're free!

There are people who prefer the bound version of you, the high version of you, the depressed version of you, or the shame filled version of you.

They've grown comfortable with your bondage because it makes their chains more bearable. But now, this man is clothed and in his right mind! No shame. No embarrassment. No hanging his head.

So, what did Jesus do next? He gets in the boat and goes back across the Sea.

This action causes me to conclude that Jesus went out of His way just for him. If that's the case, then Jesus will go out of His way just for us.

Some of us are bound. Living like we don't want to live. Separated. Isolated. Avoided. Damaged. Deranged. Full of despair.

Every attempt at freedom has been for naught. No assistance available from anyone.

Restraint seems to be our only option. Shame and embarrassment are constant companions. We have hurt ourselves and injured others.

I want to leave you with this thought this morning. Jesus came all the way across the divide of eternity from heaven just so that He could walk into the nightmare of our shame-controlled life.

He did that so that He could do more than just save us. He did that so that we could be clothed with His righteousness and His forgetfulness.

He did that so that we could be in our right mind. He did that so that we could overcome a shame filled life.