

The Gospel Message seen through the Cultural Lens of “Shame and Honor”

(Gen. 1:26-31; 3:6-10; II Cor. 5:17-21)

Setting the Table: Some challenges of communicating the Gospel across cultures:

1. Working in a different language –
2. Bumping up against different worldviews –
3. Encountering different religions –
4. Dealing with different cultural values –

Paul experienced this, so he asked the Colossians to pray two things for him. The second: “.....that I may make it clear in the way I ought to speak.” Col. 4:3,4

Experiment: Why are two eyes better than one??

Lens #1: We as westerners generally see things through the cultural lens of Guilt/Innocence. Here’s what that looks like:

Lens #2: The lens that is most prominent in eastern societies is the Shame/Honor cultural lens. As we shift our gaze through that lens here are some values that we discover:

A. Scripture #1: Glorious Beginning in a Spectacular Garden

Gen. 1:26 “Then God said, “Let us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness, and let them rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.

1:27 “God created man in His own image, in the image of God created He him; male and female he created them.”

1:28 “God blessed them; and God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth, and subdue it; and rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over every living thing that moves on the earth.”

1:29 “Then God said, “Behold, I have given you every plant yielding seed that is on the surface of all the earth, and every tree which has fruit yielding seed, it shall be food for you;

1:31 “God saw all that He had made, and behold, it was very good.”

2:25 “And the man and his wife were both naked and were not ashamed.”

A.1 Consider how people from Honor/Shame cultures might view this passage:

B. Scripture #2: The Story continues with focus now on a Tree in the Garden

Gen. 3:6 “When the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was desirable to make one wise, she took from its fruit and ate; and she gave also to her husband with her, and he ate.”

Gen. 3:7 “Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loin coverings.”

3:8 “They heard the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God among the trees of the garden.”

3:9 “Then the Lord God called to the man, and said to him, “Where are you?” **3:10** “He said, “I heard the sound of You in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; so I hid myself.”

B.1 Through one act of disobedience, Honor is turned to Fear and Shame

C. Scripture #3 But God has taken the initiative to “restore our face” through the obedience of His Son, Jesus.

II Cor. 5:17 “Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old things passed away; new things have come.”

5:18 “Now all these things are from God, who reconciled us to Himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation,”

5:19 “Namely, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and He has committed to us the word of reconciliation.”

5:20 “Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were making an appeal through us; we beg you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God.”

5:21 “He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.”

C.1 Though shamed and dishonored by man, God amazingly provided a way for us to be restored to a place of honor and filial relationship once more. Our shame and sin laid on Jesus. His righteousness and honor become ours.

(Mustafa’s Hang-up)

Conclusion:

1. Be reconciled to God
2. Lead others to become reconciled to God