

## The Antidote to Shame: Psalm 32, 5/14/23

If you have children or grandchildren, or are up on pop-culture- you might have heard of the YouTuber Mr. Beast. He has one of the most subscribed channels on YouTube and he is probably most known for his extreme gameshow-style videos where contestants can win incredible amounts of cash and prizes. My favorite Mr. Beast video he rented the 2<sup>nd</sup> largest mall in America, American Dream Mall to play a massive game of hide-n-seek with 100 contestants and everyone who lasted 10 hrs. without being found he gave them 10k, 32 winners in the end. Now I think I would have had an extra 10k in my pocket if I played, because I don't want to brag, but I'm kind of master at hiding. I was always the last one to be found when we played sardines at church. And not much changed when we had kids, and we'd play hide-n-seek in the house...eventually everyone would give up and just start watching TV meanwhile I'm sweating, I can barely breathe curled up in the crawl space of our basement.

But there's the thing, I was not only good at hiding myself physically, I was good at hiding myself spiritually. There were areas of my life I didn't want anyone...especially God...to see. And so I would hide those things, hide behind acting like a good Christian, hide behind my personality, hide behind distractions... and as good as I thought I was, I came to realize just how miserable and exhausted and trapped I was. Some of you know exactly what I'm talking about. This is your story. This is the experienced known as shame. **Shame is the feeling that we need to hide from God and from others.** Shame is a universal emotion, across every culture that everyone struggles with throughout their lives. Shame is as old as the origins of humanity. When Adam and Eve sinned, what was their first instinct. To hide themselves from each other and from God. And we've been doing it ever since, and some of us are really good at it...hiding sins and addictions, hiding insecurities, hiding parts of yourself you don't want anyone, even God, to see. And you feel miserable, exhausted and trapped...Good news is there is an antidote to shame that we want to discover in Psalm 32, and by living out of the truth of Psalm 32 in my life here is what I have discovered- dealing with my shame before God has opened me up to a freedom, rest and security that never knew were possible. Not only with God, but with other people. In this incredible Psalm of King David we are going to see three things. **Shame's Purpose, Shame's Trap, Shame's Antidote**

### Shame's Purpose

Before we go too far, we need to realize that shame isn't all bad. There is a difference between what psychologists call healthy vs. toxic shame, or more biblically **well-placed vs. misplaced shame.**<sup>1</sup> Shame isn't all bad just like physical pain isn't all bad. If I lean up against a hot stove, I'm grateful for the pain that lets me know that I'm hurting myself. Like an indicator light. **Well-placed Shame is God's messenger to let you know something is hurting you.** And this is what David is experiencing- **<sup>4</sup>For day and night your hand was heavy on me...** David felt the conviction, we might say his conscience was nagging him and he saw it as God's messenger that something was hurting him spiritually- and that something was sin. 7x in just 5 verses David talks about his sin before God. Likely the shame David was experiencing here was because of his abuse of

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<sup>1</sup> Thanks to John Piper for these categories.

power in using Bathsheba for sexual gratification and trying to cover it up, read that story in 2 Samuel 11-12. Suffice to say, that this is well-placed shame. Well-placed shame is whenever we feel conviction because we violated God's standards and moral vision for life. That comes from the Holy Spirit. Now this is critical because the way to know the difference between well-placed and misplaced shame is to have a universal standard of truth, which is God's Word. So let's talk about Misplaced shame, happens in three ways: **1) We feel shame when there is no biblical reason for it**- We asked the students what are things they hide- "That I eat in fruit in the shower." That's strange, but it's misplaced shame. In fact, very efficient...clean and eat. If we tried our best in a race but we still didn't place in the top 5. That's misplaced shame. Or if we have a disability that limits us in some way. **2) When it is from the opinions or pressure of others**- This week I was in the car on 202N with my son Nate and the traffic in the right lane was backed up because there was a line trying to turn into the McDonald's drive-thru. And I said, those people should be ashamed of themselves. But that would be misplaced shame because who cares what I think, that's my problem not theirs. Your parents expect you to get into an Ivy League school, or you experience shame because you stand out because of your faith. Some of the values and morals of our world today come in direct conflict with our faith, Christians are being told that we should be ashamed that we hold to an ethic of abstinence until marriage, or marriage between a man and a woman or the distinction of male and female. **1 Peter 4:16** *However, if you suffer as a Christian, do not be ashamed, but praise God that you bear that name.*

**3) When you have confessed your sin but you still feel shame.** We will talk about what confession means later in the message, that's misplaced shame, that's the enemy's shame that comes in right behind the Holy Spirit's conviction and he tries to rub your nose in it. He tries to whisper that you will never really be forgiven, or that you are a failure, that God can't love you, or that you should be benched. Some of you have benched yourself because you sit in this misplaced shame. And this brings us to..

### **Shame's Trap**

I want you to see two words David uses that encapsulate the trap of shame. **Psalms 32:2-3** *Blessed is the one...in whose spirit there is no deceit. When I kept silent, my bones wasted away through my groaning all day long.*

The Trap of Shame is to hide in self-deception and silence. An in attempt to hide his shame from God and others, David deceived himself, he wasn't living authentically with God and even with himself. We are really good self-deception- Any time we attempt to justify our sin, blame others for our actions, minimize what we did or explain it away we are deceiving ourselves. Isn't this what our first ancestors did? When God confronted Adam- "It wasn't my fault, it was the woman!" Eve said, "Don't blame me it was the talking serpent." Maybe you say: "Well, the reason I yell and violent sometimes is because it's in my genes and the family I grew up in." Or, "I've worked hard and I deserve more than I've been given so what's the big deal skimming a little off the top?" Or, "My wife isn't responsive to me sexually and so that justifies my pornography habit." The trap of shame is hiding in self-deception.

David says he also hid in silence. Silence is how we attempt to avoid shame. And if you took a second to think about it, you would begin to become aware of the ways that we attempt to avoid your shame- Faking- happy, confident, healthy, funny... others through distraction and busyness or workaholism...others through getting attention, acceptance or approval- constant posts on social media and need for likes and comments about your appearance...or maybe through numbing yourself with substances or even physically hiding yourself from people through isolation. These are all traps that shame uses to hide.

And for all the attempts to hide shame- David's experience, and our experience is that burying shame just buries it alive...it just festers and it's exhausting. Listen to David's description:

<sup>3</sup>*For when I kept silent, my bones wasted away through my groaning all day long. <sup>4</sup>For day and night your hand was heavy upon me; my strength was dried up as by the heat of summer.* David experienced physical and mental signs of sickness. Of course modern science has linked his kind of toxic shame to all kinds of emotional health issues like depression, body dysmorphia, eating disorders and self-harm as well as physical health issues like high blood-pressure, and susceptibility to sicknesses.<sup>2</sup> Our bodies keep the score, they tell the real story.

Whether we try to think it away, blame it away or drink it away or eat it away...shame will trap us in brutal, exhausting prison. But there is a freedom, there is a solution to shame that David leads us to. Notice at both the beginning and the end of this Psalm, we know David found this freedom. Happy...v.11 *Be glad in the Lord, and rejoice, O righteous, and shout for joy, all you upright in heart!* How did David find it?

### Shame's Antidote

**Stop Hiding: v.5** *I acknowledged my sin to you, and I did not cover my iniquity; I said, "I will confess my transgressions to the Lord,"* David stopped hiding from God when he confessed his sin. What is biblical confession. Confess does not simply mean that we say that we did something. See the imagery David uses in v.9 *don't be like the mule*... When a mule consents to go with you, it's not because it loves you or wants to be with you, it's because the bit in its mouth that you are pulling is *painful*. You can confess something and not feel any differently about it, you are doing it because you are being forced...it's not from the heart. Ever make your kids apologize...say sorry...SORRY. But our adult confessions aren't so great sometimes either..."I'm sorry that you were offended... Means, "I'm not sorry for what I did; I'm sorry you are upset about it." That's not confession. That's selfish justification. Some of you are like, "Ooh, this message just got into marriage counseling." You can also fake confess because you are sorry you got caught and embarrassed about the pain of that.

Here's what **confession is: when we agree with God about our sin with genuine sorrow.** This is what David did. He agreed with God and called it what it was...he used three different words for sin. He allowed the light of God to fully expose his sin that he was trying to keep in the darkness. When we expose our sin we strip away all the excuses, all the finger pointing, all the little half-truths and minimizations, and that light also begins to melt our hearts...we allow

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/the-scientific-underpinnings-and-impacts-of-shame/>

ourselves to feel what we have done. This is true confession, coming out of hiding and the beginning of true freedom from shame...but it's not the end, and it's not enough.

**Blank Slide:** If you have ever come clean with something you were hiding you know the psychological liberation you feel. Ahhh...like a burden was just lifted off your shoulders. It's an amazing feeling. Imagine you were embezzling money from your company, and it was eating you alive, living with the shame. And you finally decided to confess to your boss and after you do you feel this incredible weight lifted, you are so much lighter, you feel free...but has the confession made the crime go away? Poof! Like a magic eraser. Nope there are consequences- all you've done is shared the burden of your crime so that now your boss, or the company or the law is on the hook to do something about it too. **Someone must bear the burden, someone must face the consequences, someone must pay the debt.** Either you will, or the company will have to eat the costs, or both...but it doesn't just disappear.

And so confession of our sin to God, even we agree that it was sin, even when we genuinely feel bad, isn't enough. Because we have committed cosmic crime against God and against his divine law...that's what sin is. Someone has to bear the burden of shame, someone has to face the consequences of sin, someone has to pay the debt. And that would be bad enough if we just had one sin against God, but we have truck loads. So we are...quite literally...in a hell of a place. You say this is exactly why I'm hiding Nate! So what do we do?

**V.1 Blessed is the one whose transgressions are forgiven, whose sins are covered. <sup>2</sup> Blessed is the one, whose sin the Lord does not count against them.** How can David say that? That's not how God works, he can't overlook our sin anymore than a judge can overlook a crime...he's too just. It's because David knew about a divine legal substitute for sin. He knew that God had promise to provide someone that would bear the burden of our shame, someone that would face the consequences of our sin, someone that would pay the debt ultimately in our place. David didn't know his name, but we do- Jesus the Messiah. Out of his deep love for us, Jesus took on the burden of our shame. He was stripped bare, exposed in shame before the world on the cross, so that we could be covered. He did there on that cross as our divine legal substitute so that we could be forgiven and freedom from shame. **1 John 1:9 If we confess our sin, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sin and cleanse us of all unrighteousness.** Didn't say- God is faithful and kind...He says just. Because if Jesus covered it and paid it already, it wouldn't be just if God doesn't forgive us, because then it would be paid twice.<sup>3</sup>

And so the only antidote for our shame is to **stop hiding- that's confession, and hide in the Lord- that's forgiveness.** We hide in the divine substitute, Jesus Christ and the reality that our sin and shame has been forgiven, covered and no longer held against us. This is why David could say **<sup>7</sup> You are my hiding place; you will protect me from trouble and surround me with songs of deliverance.** I love that imagery...we all have soundtracks of shame in our heads that at times sound really loud. Your too messed up, you are going to be just like your father, who could possibly love you? You are a failure. If people knew what you were really like, no one would

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<sup>3</sup> Thanks to Tim Keller for this concept.

accept you. But Jesus is our hiding place and Jesus has another soundtrack “Songs of deliverance” that is louder and can drown out all those other songs. You are forgiven, you are loved, you are accepted, I will never leave you, you are no longer condemned, I have washed you clean, you are free, you have a bright future!

So let me close with this: *v.6 Therefore let all the faithful pray to you while you may be found; surely the rising of the mighty water will not reach them.* Seek God while he can be found... because there is coming a time where you can't. There is coming a time when the waters of judgment will come, like a flood, and it will be too late. You will have to stand before God- you will have to bear the burden of your shame, you will have to face the consequences of your sin, you will have to pay the debt. Wages of sin is death. Eternal separation from God. But right now, you have the opportunity to stop hiding and hide in the Lord.

Communion and Prayer.