

## Jesus: King of Shame

**St. Mark Lutheran  
Advent I-two services**

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*To you, O Lord, I lift up my soul. O my God, in you I trust; let me not be put to shame; let not my enemies exult over me. Indeed, none who wait for you shall be put to shame; they shall be ashamed who are wantonly treacherous. Psalm 25:1-3*

Fellow baptized saints, do you remember a time when you were very ashamed of something you had done? There was that awful moment when you realized that what you had done was really wrong, and you hoped nobody would find out because you would be really embarrassed. Or maybe it happened another way. You have done something bad, but you think you have it covered. But someone finds out and blows your cover and it comes out! You feel like a fool. You are disgraced. You'd like to run but there is no place to hide.

If we trace sin all the way back to its origin in the Garden of Eden, we see that sin has a companion. There is something that went along with the sin that Adam and Eve experienced. Previously, they had lived in the Garden and were without sin. They lived in community with God and He would come to walk with them in the Garden. Genesis 2:25 tells us that when man was created he was naked and knew no shame because man was innocent of evil.

Then along came the crafty serpent. He tempted Adam and Eve to eat of the forbidden fruit. They were lured by the promise of becoming like God, and they disobeyed God's command and sin entered the human race. Their eyes were opened and they realized that they were naked. Where sin exists, shame often follows. Shame seems to be a negative emotion that comes from extreme guilt or an awareness of great wrongdoing.

Shame is powerful. Have you noticed the power of shame increases with the importance of the person discovering it? You aren't nearly as concerned if a homeless person is aware of your shameful act, but if your boss or co-workers are aware of it, that's much more humiliating. A teenager can bear some shame in front of mom or dad, but if it becomes known to their friends, that's much more difficult to bear.

Shame causes a number of problems. It often creates distance between you and other people. People generally try not to be associated with those who have been disgraced. You are likely to be much more alone in your shame. People fear that if they are seen around you they'll be "painted with the same brush," that is, people tend to look down on those associated with those who have been disgraced. They tend to get far away so they don't get dirtied by the fallout over what you did.

In addition, there is a problem in how you feel about yourself. You may feel defiled, dirty, unclean. Your sin is an embarrassment, but it is also an enemy. Your self-worth takes really big hit. You may well be filled with regret and remorse, but you don't know what you can do about it. Satan himself may get involved in this. He may send you thoughts like, "Even God can't stand you anymore. He doesn't want you anywhere around him." John 13:2 tells us that Satan even influenced the heart of Judas Iscariot to betray Jesus Christ.

But there is another voice to be heard out there. Someone is saying something like, "Beloved, I am not afraid of your shame. I am here for you. I didn't come to expose you, but to cover you. I don't come to reveal you, but to hide you in me. I am your King."

"I am going to take your shame away. I am going to unite it to myself and make it my own. I am your King. Your shame is mine, and my righteousness is yours. I am your King." Yes, Jesus comes and offers to take away our sin and our shame. He is willing to take it on himself.

Back in the Garden, when God covered Adam and Eve's shame and nakedness, God shed blood. He killed another living being in order to cover Adam and Eve's shame with skins. This foreshadowed God's plan to save us. That would involve Jesus Christ. He is the blood-shed one, our cover, our clothing. the one whose righteousness covers all of our shame. And he comes to us with full restoration, calling on us to even trust in his redemption of our souls.

An ancient verse from the Holy Scriptures applies to those who have been shamed. It is written in Zechariah 9:9, "Behold, your king is coming to you; righteous and having salvation is he."

Satan wants us to give up on ourselves and give up on our spiritual development. Shame can be immobilizing. But actually, God isn't the way Satan would have him understood at all. Jesus told a parable in Luke 15 about a son who rejected his father and his family. He demanded his share of the inheritance, and when he got it, he went away and wasted his wealth with wild living. Then there was a famine and he was greatly in need. He came to his senses and realized going back to his father and home was better than starving to death.

He decided to return home. But what was he going to say? He decided he would say to his Father: "Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son; make me like one of your hired men."

And how did his father react? When his son was still a long way off, his father saw him, and he ran to him and threw his arms around him and kissed his son. He ordered his servants to find the best robe and put it on him, and a ring was put on his son's finger, and sandals were put on his feet. Then there was a feast to celebrate the great occasion.

Many of us have been like the lost son in the parable, more or less. And some of us may have been carrying some shameful act on our mind and soul for years, suffering with shame and afraid of disgrace. This can be the day you are relieved of that burden. Talk to God about the matter. Let the lost son's words be your words: "Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I am not worthy to be your child." Then ask him to forgive you. Or you can pray the words of Psalm 25, "To you, O Lord, I lift up my soul. O my God, in you I trust; { please forgive me}, let me not be put to shame. " For Christ's sake, and ours. Amen.

\* \*\* {please forgive me} words inserted by Pastor to make it a prayer of confession

