

# more than SUNDAY

Part 5: Stuck in Shame  
Scripture: Mark 15  
March 29, 2026

## Group Discussion Questions

1. The message compared shame to being stuck on a runway, unable to take off. In what ways can shame keep people “stuck” in their faith or personal life? Have you ever experienced something like this?
2. In Mark 15, Jesus remains silent while being falsely accused and mocked. Why do you think Jesus chose not to defend Himself? What does His response teach us about trusting God in difficult situations?
3. The story of Barabbas shows a powerful picture of substitution—Jesus taking the place of the guilty. How does this help you better understand what Jesus did for you personally on the cross?
4. The message explained that Jesus endured shame so that we could be forgiven and set free from guilt. Are there past mistakes or sins that you still struggle to move beyond? How might the truth of the cross change the way you view those things?
5. Shame can also come from what others have done to us, not just from our own actions. Why is it comforting to know that Jesus experienced betrayal, humiliation, and injustice Himself?
6. Hebrews 4 teaches that Jesus sympathizes with our weaknesses and invites us to approach God’s throne of grace. What does it look like practically to bring your pain, shame, or struggles to Jesus in prayer?
7. The sermon emphasized that in Christ we receive a new identity. What are some ways shame tries to define how we see ourselves? How does the gospel redefine who we are?
8. Following Jesus sometimes means being misunderstood, criticized, or treated unfairly. How can Jesus’ example help us respond with grace instead of retaliation?
9. Forgiveness often means absorbing a wrong rather than passing it along. Why is forgiveness so difficult, and how does remembering God’s forgiveness toward us help us forgive others?
10. After hearing this message, what is one practical step you can take this week to move from shame toward freedom—whether that’s confessing something to God, seeking prayer, forgiving someone, or reminding yourself of your identity in Christ?

## More than Sunday: Part 5

Mark 15

### When Life Leaves You Stuck

Several years ago, my family and some friends were flying out on a trip in late June. Everything started smoothly. We arrived at the airport, checked our bags, passed through security, and boarded the plane. Once seated and settled, the cabin door closed and the captain announced, “We should be taking off shortly.” That’s exactly what you want to hear.

The plane taxied out to the runway and joined the line of aircraft waiting for takeoff. Then it started to rain. Not a light drizzle or a brief summer shower. This was a full downpour—thunder, lightning, and relentless rain.

We waited. And waited.

At first I thought, “This will pass soon. Storms don’t last forever.” But the rain didn’t stop. For three hours we sat on the runway—ready to take off but completely stuck. Eventually we missed our connecting flight, and the rest of the travel day unraveled.

It was frustrating and exhausting.

In many ways, **shame** can feel like that plane on the runway. We may want to move forward in our faith, to grow and experience freedom in Christ. But shame keeps us grounded. It keeps us stuck.

### The Obstacle of Shame

This reflection comes from a series called “**More Than Sunday.**” On Sundays we gather to worship, sing, and hear God’s Word. It can feel like the spiritual high point of the week.

But then Monday comes. And Tuesday. And as the week unfolds, real life brings challenges, doubts, and struggles.

In this series, we’ve been exploring the questions and obstacles that often surface between Sundays—the things that quietly stall our faith.

One of the biggest obstacles many people carry is **shame**.

Shame is powerful. It can keep us from moving forward spiritually. Some people carry shame over sins from their past—choices they regret and wish they could undo. No matter how much time passes, the weight remains.

Others carry shame because of what has been done to them. Abuse, cruel words, betrayal, or deep wounds that reshape how they see themselves.

Shame can leave us feeling stuck, unable to move forward into the life Jesus calls us to live.

So the question we must wrestle with is simple but profound:

## **What do you do with your guilt and shame?**

### **The World's Answers**

If you search online for answers, you will find plenty of advice. Articles suggest things like:

- Acknowledge your shame
- Eliminate negative self-talk
- Accept that perfection doesn't exist

Some of that advice can be helpful. But if you've ever carried real guilt or deep shame, you know those suggestions often feel incomplete. They rarely remove the weight of shame.

When it comes to our guilt and shame, we need something deeper.

### **Looking to the Cross (Mark 15)**

To find that deeper answer, we turn to Mark chapter 15, where we see Jesus endure incredible humiliation and suffering.

This chapter tells the story of Jesus' trial and crucifixion. By walking through this passage, we see how Jesus endured shame for us—and how His sacrifice changes the way we deal with our own shame.

### **Jesus Before Pilate**

After being tried by the Sanhedrin—the council of Jewish religious leaders—Jesus is brought before Pontius Pilate, the Roman governor of Judea.

The Sanhedrin accused Jesus of blasphemy. Throughout His ministry, Jesus had made bold claims about His identity, declaring Himself to be the Messiah and even the Son of God. These claims stirred intense opposition from the religious leaders.

Yet the Sanhedrin did not have the authority to execute someone. Only Rome could carry out a death sentence. So they delivered Jesus to Pilate, hoping he would order His execution.

Pilate's first question is political rather than religious:  
*"Are you the king of the Jews?"*

Jesus replies, "You have said so." In the original language, His response is somewhat ambiguous—acknowledging His kingship but not in the political sense Pilate expects. As the Gospel of John records, Jesus later explains that His kingdom is not of this world.

Meanwhile, the religious leaders continue piling on accusations.

Pilate presses Jesus again: *"Aren't you going to answer? Don't you hear what they're accusing you of?"*

But Jesus remains silent.

For most of us, that's difficult to imagine. When we are falsely accused or misunderstood, our instinct is to defend ourselves immediately.

But Jesus does not argue. He does not protest. He does not defend Himself.

Pilate is amazed.

This moment echoes the prophecy of Isaiah written seven hundred years earlier:

*"He was oppressed and afflicted, yet he did not open his mouth;  
he was led like a lamb to the slaughter." (Isaiah 53:7)*

Jesus' silence is not weakness. It is strength. The King of the universe stands before His accusers and willingly chooses not to resist.

### **The Choice Between Jesus and Barabbas**

Pilate attempts to avoid condemning Jesus by using a Passover custom. Each year during the festival, one prisoner could be released at the request of the crowd.

One of the prisoners that year was a man named Barabbas. He had participated in a violent uprising against Rome and had committed murder during the rebellion.

Pilate assumes the crowd will choose Jesus. After all, Jesus had been popular with the people.

But the chief priests stir up the crowd. Soon the people begin shouting for Barabbas instead.

Pilate is stunned. He asks the crowd a crucial question:

*“What shall I do, then, with the one you call the king of the Jews?”*

The answer comes quickly and loudly:

*“Crucify him!”*

Just days earlier, the crowds had welcomed Jesus into Jerusalem with shouts of “Hosanna.” But now their expectations had changed. Jesus had not overthrown Rome as they hoped. Disappointed and manipulated by the leaders, they demanded His death.

Pilate, fearing a riot and concerned for his political position, gives in. He releases Barabbas and orders Jesus to be flogged and crucified.

### **The Mocking and Humiliation of Jesus**

Before the crucifixion, Roman soldiers subject Jesus to brutal humiliation.

They dress Him in a purple robe to mock His kingship. They twist together a crown of thorns and press it onto His head. They kneel before Him in sarcastic worship, shouting, “Hail, King of the Jews!”

They strike Him, spit on Him, and ridicule Him.

This is cruelty turned into entertainment.

Then Jesus is led away to be crucified.

### **The Shame of the Cross**

At the crucifixion site, Jesus is nailed to a cross between two criminals. The innocent one is counted among the guilty.

People passing by mock Him. Religious leaders insult Him. Even the criminals beside Him initially join in the ridicule.

This scene echoes the prophetic words of Psalm 22, which describes mockery, suffering, and humiliation in remarkable detail.

The entire scene is saturated with shame.

And yet Jesus endures it without retaliation.

He absorbs the insults, the injustice, and the humiliation.

But why?

Because He is doing it **for us**.

## **How the Cross Meets Our Shame**

The suffering of Jesus in Mark 15 speaks directly into the different ways shame affects our lives. The cross meets us in three specific areas.

### **1. Jesus Experienced Shame So You Could Be Forgiven**

First, Jesus endured shame so that we could be forgiven and set free from the guilt of our sin.

One of the most powerful pictures of this truth appears in the story of Barabbas.

The name Barabbas literally means “son of the father.” It is a surprisingly generic name —almost representing humanity itself.

Here is the innocent Son of God standing beside a guilty “son of the father.” And in the end, the guilty man goes free while the innocent one is condemned.

The message is clear: Jesus takes the place of sinners.

In many ways, we are Barabbas. We are the guilty ones. Yet Jesus takes our punishment and bears our shame.

The book of Hebrews captures this beautifully:

*“Fixing our eyes on Jesus... For the joy set before him he endured the cross, scorning its shame.” (Hebrews 12:2)*

Why would Jesus endure such humiliation?

Because of the joy set before Him. Part of that joy is **us**—redeemed, forgiven, and restored.

The cross was humiliating. But Jesus endured that shame so that we could live in freedom.

### **2. Jesus Experienced Shame So He Can Understand Your Pain**

Shame does not only come from our own sins. Sometimes it comes from what others have done to us.

The betrayal, abuse, and cruelty people experience can leave deep wounds.

But Jesus understands.

Hebrews reminds us that Jesus is our great High Priest who sympathizes with our weaknesses. He knows what it is like to be betrayed, falsely accused, abandoned, and humiliated.

Consider what Jesus endured:

- Betrayed by Judas
- Abandoned by His disciples
- Denied by Peter
- Falsely accused in a sham trial
- Mocked, beaten, and stripped
- Executed despite His innocence

Jesus experienced shame from every direction.

Because of that, we can approach God's throne with confidence, knowing Jesus understands our pain and struggles.

For those who feel stained or unclean because of what others have done, the cross offers a new identity. In Christ, the past does not define you. Through Him, you are made pure and restored.

### **3. Jesus Experienced Shame So We Can Love Others**

Finally, the cross shapes the way we treat others.

Following Jesus does not mean we allow people to abuse or exploit us. But it does mean we will sometimes be misunderstood, misrepresented, or mistreated because of our faith.

When that happens, we face a choice.

Will we respond with anger and retaliation? Or will we respond with the same grace we have received?

Forgiveness always involves absorbing a wrong instead of passing it along.

Jesus entrusted Himself to the Father even when falsely accused. As His followers, we are called to extend grace, forgiveness, and love—even when it costs us something.

Faith that transforms our lives on Sunday must also shape how we live the rest of the week: in our homes, workplaces, and communities.

## **Moving From Shame to Freedom**

Shame can leave us feeling stuck and discouraged.

But the cross tells a different story.

Jesus took our guilt and shame so that we could be forgiven, restored, and welcomed as sons and daughters of God.

Nothing we have done—and nothing that has been done to us—can separate us from His love.

**Through the cross, shame no longer has the final word.**

**Freedom does.**