

Let us pray,

Lord, help us to see the weight of our secrets. Help us create a community that can set those secrets free.

Amen.

We all have secrets right?

We all have things that we do by ourselves, with our significant other, with our family, with our friends, that we wouldn't want the world to know.

Our secrets can hold shame, they can hold fear, they can hold resentment, anger, sadness.

These secrets of ours are secrets because we want people to see us how we want them to see us.

There is fear in all of us, in letting the other know who we truly are.

Being vulnerable, completely open to ridicule, to judgement, to feeling weird or maybe even facing punishment depending on what we did in secret.

Its hard.

We hold these secrets thinking that we are protecting others or even ourselves, and yet every secret comes with a burden.

An added weight to our shoulders.

These secrets make us lie and change the truth.

These secrets of ours, and the holding of these secrets may be more detrimental to our spiritual life than the things that we are keeping secret.

Now I don't want us to get confused about what I mean by secret.

There can be things that are private, that only a certain person or group of people are privy too.

But that doesn't equate to the same thing as a secret.

Like our romantic lives with our partners.

The public doesn't need to know that, its not a secret, its not a source of shame or embarrassment, but its also not really something everyone needs to know about.

There is a difference between appropriate sharing and keeping a secret.

For example, I don't lose sleep at night worrying that you all don't know about my bed time routine.

Its not really a secret, but its not something I need to share either.

Where a secret, at least how I am talking about it today, would be something that I know I should not have done or have been doing, or someone else should not have done or have been doing, or it might not be bad at all, but I know that those around me would look at me differently, or the other person differently, therefore we keep the secret, to keep up appearances.

Its these types of secrets that are killing us.

We all have them, and yet we all act as if we don't.

And the more perfect of a outward shell that we try to produce,
the more secrets we continue to hold onto.

The more perfect we try to have others perceive us, the more
burdened we become with our own secrets.

And why do we do this?

We do it because deep down, we believe that we have to earn
each others love.

Respect is earned not given.

Im sure you have heard that before.

Well similarly,

In our world, Love is earned, not given.

How many of us, look at others who we believe are living in sin,
and we withhold our love from them.

We may say, well I would never hurt them, but they need to learn
that what they are doing is wrong.

But here is the thing, are we willing to say the same thing to ourselves to the secrets that we hold?

Or do we hold that judgement just for those who are willing to not live in secret.

Jesus is trying to show us that we have an identity problem.

We have two identities, or maybe more, one or more that the world sees, and one that God sees.

And Jesus doesn't want us to have multiple identities.

He wants us to be who we are.

To be free to be who we truly are in the community of God, without judgement.

We too often put ourselves in the seat of God.

We too often think that this one person, me, is able to judge the world.

But the reality is, if we zoom out, we are just a speck of dust in the cosmic perspective.

Many of us think that if we were put in charge, we could fix the world.

But we forget that we are not called to be saviors, we are called to be sheep.

This isn't to say that our lives are meaningless or we can't enter into leadership roles.

I am not saying that at all.

But what I am saying, is that our lives and our understanding of the world, is not more important than any other life or perspective.

We don't get to be the judge, the jury and the executioner.

Instead, we should be the friend, the parent, the partner, who holds us and is there for us, even when they know our secrets.

To be the beloved community, we need to be courageous enough to be broken.

To be the beloved community, we need to be open enough to be imperfect.

To be the beloved community, we need to stop our judgement of one another, and yet learn to love each other in our imperfections, in our sins.

Jesus did not save perfect people, he saved sinners.

He did not say, that we are saved only when we become perfect like he is perfect.

He said, we are sinners who are saved by Grace.

So we are called to be gracious to others.

When people are their authentic selves around us, we should not judge.

We should not sneer, or whisper, or say things behind their backs.

Instead, we should be proud of them.

Because they have the courage to be who God sees them as.

May we learn to give up our secrets, may we learn to be who God sees us as.

Not perfect, but authentic.

We think God wants perfection, God doesn't.

God wants authenticity, not the fake persona that we created.

God wants our burdens to be lifted, to be freed from the shackles of shame, and to allow Jesus to be the savior of our souls.

I want to be clear.

God doesn't like sin.

And I don't want to pretend that sinning is good.

And its also important to recognize that not all of our secrets are sinful.

Sometimes we are just afraid to look weird or different.

But can we all stop pretending that we are not all just a bunch of lost sheep.

A bunch of weirdos in our own way.

That all of us are sinners, all of us have reasons for God to be upset with us and our choices.

All of us have quirks.

So instead of pointing fingers at others, can we point our fingers at Jesus.

And be reminded that we are saved by Grace through Faith.

Not through our perfection, but through God's perfection.

May the light shine in our darkness, and free us from our shame.

Sin boldly, not because God loves sin, but because God wants us to be authentic.

Because it is no longer about not sinning.

It is about pointing towards Jesus, and freeing people of their sin not through judgement, but through Grace and Mercy.

May God's Grace and Mercy, overwhelm you and give you the strength to be your authentic self.

Amen.