

Personal Failure: Honor, Shame, Prophecy, and Accusation

I. REVIEW: JESUS' COMMAND NOT TO LET TROUBLE DOMINATE OUR HEART

- A. Jesus commanded the disciples not to let trouble dominate their hearts (14:1).

1 "Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God [a fact], believe also in Me." 27 My peace I give to you... Let not your heart be troubled... (Jn. 14:1, 27)

- B. John 13-17 tells how to engage our troubled hearts to overcome *grief, fear, shame, and betrayal*.
- C. Peter's denial of Jesus brought a crises of shame upon his heart and life. We know the end of the story so it's easy for us to jump too quickly to the restoration. For Peter, he undoubtedly, was in a swirl of shame and confusion feeling that the "on this rock I will build my church" declaration Jesus gave was ancient history and he missed his opportunity to walk in his calling.

II. SHAME CULTURE: GIVING VOICE TO THE ACCUSER

- A. The fear of rejection with shame is perhaps the most common destructive and painful emotion that we can experience. Many psychologists disagree in how they distinguish between guilt and shame. One view is that a person who feels guilty sees that "what they did was wrong" and thus they feel responsible to correct it. The one with shame concludes that "who they are is wrong." They lash out in anger at themselves and others and thus either avoid or attack people.
- B. The accuser of the brethren looks with near sighted vision *defining who we are* by our weakness and failures. He preys upon our weakness and failures looking for opportune time to overwhelm us with shame to get us to quit in our pursuit to love God. He does this by bringing accusation before God, having his demonic principalities whispering in our ear his accusation and by getting others to voice those accusations out loud.

...for the accuser of our brethren, who accused them before our God day and night, has been cast down. (Rev 12:10)

- C. Many who are highly judgmental struggle with shame. They vent their disgust of themselves by speaking critically of others. What we say about others says a lot about how we see ourselves and how we believe the Lord see and evaluates us.
- D. The sweet conviction of the Spirit highlights areas we are wrong/guilty and imparts grace to turn from our ways giving hope for the future. Shame condemns and demands humiliation, penance paid and the sinner to wear a badge of dishonor. Shame leads to despair rather than hope. The contrast of guilt and shame in secular terms parallels the contrast of conviction and condemnation in biblical terms.

III. HONOR FOR SHAME: THE BEAUTIFUL EXCHANGE BECAUSE OF THE CROSS

7 Instead of your shame you shall have double honor... (Is 61:7)

...for the accuser of our brethren, who accused them before our God day and night, has been cast down. 11 And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, and they did not love their lives to the death. (Rev 12:11)

- A. And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb: Our first line of defense against the accuser of the brethren is *the blood of the Lamb*. What the blood says about our past, present, and future is the defining truth of our lives. The blood is giving testimony and speaking a better word.

24 to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling that speaks better things than that of Abel. (Heb 12:24)

- B. And by the word of their testimony: The second component to overcoming the accuser is *the word of our testimony*. Does our declaration agree with the better word that the blood speaks? Prophecy is the testimony of Jesus. We must ask ourselves, how would Jesus testify in each situation? We overcome by aligning our testimony with His. We say what He would say. We say what the blood would say. Key to overcoming is agreement with the blood and Jesus' testimony.

- C. Jesus went to the cross to prepare a place for us. That "place" was prepared when He died to atone for our sin. He had to suffer God's wrath in our place to *remove every obstacle to our acceptance by God*. Jesus, the innocent One became guilty so that the guilty ones could stand as innocent before God. He qualified us join Him now and forever.

21 For He [the Father] made Him [Jesus] who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him. (2 Cor. 5:21)

24 being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, 25 whom God set forth as a propitiation by His blood... 26 that He might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus... 28 a man is justified by faith apart from the deeds of the law. (Rom. 3:24-28)

5 they looked to Him and were radiant, and their faces were not ashamed. (Ps 34:5)

26 You shall eat in plenty and be satisfied, and praise the name of the Lord your God, who has dealt wondrously with you; And my people shall never be put to shame. 27 Then you shall know that I am in the midst of Israel; I am the Lord your God and there is no other. My people shall never be put to shame. (Joel 2:26-27)

11 For the Scripture says, "Whoever believes on Him will not be put to shame." (Rom 10:11)

IV. THE ASSURANCE OF BEING ENJOYED BY GOD: POWER OVER SHAME

- A. God designed the human spirit with the longing for the assurance that we are enjoyed by God even in our weakness. This assurance grows in us as we gain understanding of His affections. He delights in the relationship He has with sincere believers (Isa. 62:4; Ps. 149:4; Song 7:10; Lk. 15:20). David was a student of God's emotions. His insights into God's emotions are seen throughout the Psalms.

4 For the LORD takes pleasure in His people; He will beautify the humble... (Ps. 149:4)
4 ...but you shall be called Hephzibah...for the LORD delights in you... (Isa. 62:4)
18Who is a God like You, pardoning iniquity...? Because He delights in mercy. (Mic. 7:18)

- B. *We cannot thrive spiritually without confidence in God's affection towards us, even in our weakness.* The affection of God for us is a declaration of our value as a person. Confidence that God enjoys us and delights in showing us mercy (Mic. 7:18) strengthens our heart. Confidence empowers us to run to God instead of running from God when we see our sinfulness.

- C. What do we do when our heart is troubled with shame and condemnation related to our failure? We must realign our mind to agree with what God said: His peace will guard our hearts. Paul exhorted us to engage in prayer and thanksgiving ; that is, conversation with God that expresses thanks for the core biblical truths which are foundational to receiving His peace.

6 Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer...with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; 7 and the peace of God...will guard your hearts and minds... (Phil. 4:6-7)

2 ...be transformed [emotionally] by the renewing of your mind... (Rom. 12:2)

V. LIVING AS A VESSEL OF HONOR BY THE POWER OF GOD'S GRACE

- A. By God's grace, anyone can be a vessel of honor that is useful to Jesus in deep partnership.

21...if anyone cleanses himself...he will be a vessel for honor, sanctified and useful for the Master, prepared for every good work. 22Flee also youthful lusts; but pursue righteousness, faith, love, peace with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart. (2 Tim. 2:21-22)

- B. Paul declared that those who receive the abundance of grace will reign in life; therefore they must reckon or see themselves as alive to God or as under grace. (Rom. 5:17; 6:11, 14). These truths have many implications that affect how we approach and interpret our lives.

11Reckon [see] yourselves to be dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ...14For sin shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under law but under grace. (Rom. 6:11, 14)

- C. ***See yourself alive to God:*** We received a new position, power, nature, insights, and destiny. We are now accepted, enjoyed, indwelt, empowered, and commissioned by God, with a relevant purpose. We have the authority of Jesus' name and the indwelling Spirit, which enable us to resist sin, sickness, and Satan. Now we have a significant destiny in God. We are sons of God and the Bride of Christ, who function as kings and priests (Rev. 5:10).

13...present yourselves to God as being alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God...14for you are not under law but under grace. (Rom. 6:13-14)

VI. HOW JESUS RESPONDED TO THE DISCIPLES IN THEIR FAILURE

- A. On the night that Peter and all the others stumbled (Mt. 26:31), Jesus spoke of loving them (15:9; 17:23), called them His friends (15:15), prayed for them, and spoke words of life over them (15:8). Jesus never changes (Heb. 13:8); how He responded to the apostles then is how He responds to us. He declared truths over them before they stumbled—it is easier to believe truth before stumbling.

8 By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit... (Jn. 15:8)

9 As the Father loved Me, I also have loved you... (Jn. 15:9)

11 These things I have spoken to you, that My joy may remain in you... (Jn. 15:11)

15...I have called you friends... (Jn. 15:15)

- B. Jesus spoke words of life over Peter, assuring him that he would recover and be used by God.

31 The Lord said, "Simon...Satan has asked for you...32 I have prayed for you, that your faith should not fail; and when you have returned to Me, strengthen your brethren." (Lk. 22:31-32)

- C. Jesus re-enacted what happened when He met Peter (Jn 21:3-6 11; cf. Lk. 5:5-10). Peter denied Jesus 3 times, and He commissioned Peter to leadership 3 times—"feed my sheep (Jn. 21:15-17) .

15 Jesus said to Simon Peter, "...do you love Me?...feed My lambs." 16 He said...a second time, "Simon....tend My sheep." 17 He said to him the third time..."Feed My sheep." (Jn. 21:15-17)

- D. We must see the difference between rebellion and spiritual immaturity in those who sincerely seek to obey God. God is angry at rebellion but feels affection for immature believers who love Him.

20...his father...had compassion, and ran and fell on his neck and kissed him... (Lk. 15:20)