

RECAP

As we wrap up our series on shame, what are some of the things that you have learned and discovered about shame?

What truth or insight would you say has been most impactful for you?

What does it look like for you to apply these truths to your life? Is there a next step God is inviting you to take towards experiencing healing and freedom from your shame?

IDEA 1

Laura invited us to look at the example of Jesus to see how he brought healing to others' shame

In John 4 we see Jesus interacting with a Samaritan woman at a well. Something about their conversation has dismantles her shame in such a way that she doesn't run and hide, rather, she goes and tells, she tells everyone in her community - "Come and see a man who told me everything I ever did!" (John 4:29)

What was it about the way Jesus interacted with the Samaritan woman at the well that dismantled her shame?

What are the ways we can follow in Jesus' example to dismantle people's shame?

How can we as a church community/life group increasingly become a people and a place committed to the healing of shame? A people who declare with our lives and our voices "Come as you are?"

IDEA 2

In John 9, Jesus brings healing to a blind man. When the disciples first encounter the blind man, they ask - who sinned? Jesus quickly lets them know that this is actually the wrong first question. He says - "I'm here to do my Father's work", and then He simply does it - He heals the man's eyes. As we watch the story unfold, we see that Jesus is breaking a number of rules, yet again. This man is a beggar, an outcast, and yet Jesus walks right up to him and gives the outcast all of His attention. This man is believed to be such a sinner that God is punishing him with blindness, and yet Jesus intimately touches the man's eyes with His own fingers, mud and spit. This man, discarded and blamed by his community, is seen and healed by Jesus.

Like the disciples, what are some of the misguided questions and unhelpful ways we can respond to other's vulnerability?

How does Jesus' encounter with the blind man encourage you to respond to others in their vulnerability?

PRACTICE FOR THIS WEEK

Laura gave us a couple different ways to consider responding to the sermon

1. Let's show up with vulnerability

- **What is one step towards being more vulnerable that you can take this week? What does it look like for you to take risks in bringing your vulnerable self to your life group?**

2. Let's show up and bear witness

- **Rather than talking about God, what does it look like for you to go to God together with someone who has been vulnerable with you?**
- **What ways can you make others feel seen and known in their shame?**

EXPERIENCING GOD TOGETHER

The Spiritual Practice below is a great way to experience the healing of shame in community. As a group, take a few minutes to familiarize yourself with the practice and then take as long as you need to go through each of the steps.

Spiritual Practice

Isolation is one of shame's primary tools. That's why one of the ways to combat shame is community. As we bring our shame into the presence of loving community, we find healing and freedom.

Scripture tells us, it's as we "*confess your sins to each other and pray for each other... [that we] may be healed.*" (**James 5:16**)

The spiritual practice below invites you to bring to light your areas of shame to others in your Life Group. Confessing these areas to one another can bring healing.

Before You Begin

Read through the reminders below together:

- What is shared during this time is confidential and will not be repeated outside of the group.
- Confession is an affirmation of the Gospel—we are saved by grace alone.
- Sharing shame is also an opportunity to deepen our relationship with others—to be seen, known, and loved by them. As John reminds us in **1 John 1:7**, "*if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another*"
- We reflect the image of God as we listen and respond to other's shame with empathy, love, and acceptance.
- God loves you and He likes you.

Share with One Another

- Break into groups of 3 (it may be helpful to plan this out ahead of time. Groups of 2 or 4 work as well).
- Decide on who is going to share first.
- For the person sharing, look back at the spiritual practices that you've been engaging with over the last 4 weeks. Share what you wrote in one of your "Review Your Week" sections.
- Next, share how God responded to you in your shame. (The "Respond to God" section.)

Respond in Love

- For those listening, take some time to respond—to share love, empathy, and acceptance.
- Things that are helpful to respond with:
 - Affirmation of the courage to share.
 - Affirmation of love for them in light of their confession.
 - Affirmation of how God sees/feels about them.
- Things to avoid in response:
 - Trying to fix.
 - Minimizing how they feel; e.g., "you shouldn't feel bad about that."
 - Sharing an experience that takes the focus away from them and onto someone else.

Pray Together

- End by praying for the person who just shared.
- Pause as a group to ask if God might have anything to say specifically about this person. You might want to ask God, “what is your heart toward _____ right now?” Listen for His response.
- Some Scriptures you could include in your prayers are:
 - *“There is now no condemnation for those in Christ Jesus”*
(**Romans 8:1**)
 - *“This is my beloved son/daughter, with whom I’m well pleased”*
(**Matthew 3:1**)

Repeat this process until each person in the group has had a chance to share. Allow those who don’t want to share the ability to pass.

Debrief

Finally debrief this experience in your group of 3 (you may also like to open this debrief time to the whole group.)

Discuss the following questions:

- How did you feel sharing your area of shame?
- How did you feel listening to someone else’s?
- How does it feel now that you’ve shared with one another?