

# Special Messages From 2017

## Original Shame

Unedited Transcript

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Thank y'all. I'm so glad to be back. I wasn't quite sure if Pat would ask me back after the last time, but he did so I'm glad to be with you all this morning. I would love to start our time together praying. So if you would pray with me, that would be great.

Father God, we come before you, knowing that we need you. This morning, Father, I pray that you would speak whatever it is each of us most need to hear today. Father, I thank you for the men in this room. I thank you that you love them. I thank you that you've called them to good works that you laid out before the foundation of the earth. I pray for our discussion today that you would help us see that which you've called us to. Father, I think it's crazy that you use me in this way and I thank you for it. I thank you that I get to do this. I surrender myself to you. I surrender my thoughts and my heart, the things I've thought about and prepared for this morning. I give it all to you to be used however you so choose, but please Father, by your spirit come and speak to us, your children. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Today, this morning, I thought we'd talk a little bit about shame. Shame is one of those topics that I think sometimes we avoid. I think it's a hard topic to talk about, but I think as men, we all really want to be known for having what it takes. One of our greatest fears is being found out, that we don't, that we don't measure up, that we're not really as good as people think. Today that's what I want to talk about. I want to talk about shame and the power of shame and how shame is what keeps us from being truthful, from being known and seen by other people.

Before we go into shame, I want to make a distinction between shame and guilt. Guilt is what you feel when you've done something wrong, when you've clearly violated some principle, some part of God's design and law, you feel guilt. Guilt is feeling bad about something you've done. Shame is more about feeling bad about who you are. It's kind of this beneath the guilt is this sense of "I'm not good. I'm not good enough." I really think that we see that this originated back at almost the beginning of our story, back at the Garden of Eden. I want us to look at this very familiar passage in Genesis 2 and 3. I think we'll see, not only is this where we get our idea of original sin, but also our idea of original shame.

I'm going to start reading in the 25th verse of chapter 2. "The man and his wife were both naked and they felt no shame. Now the serpent was more crafty than any of the wild animals the Lord God had made. He said to the woman, 'Did God really say you must not eat from any tree in the garden?' The woman said to the serpent, 'We may eat from the fruit from the trees in the garden but God did say you must not eat from the fruit from the tree that is in the middle of the garden and you must not touch it or you will die.' 'You will surely not die,' the serpent said to the woman, 'for God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened and you will be like God knowing good and evil.'"

"When the woman saw the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye and also desirable for gaining wisdom, she took some and ate it. She also gave some to her husband who was with her and he ate it. Then the eyes of both of them were opened and they realized they were naked, so they sewed fig leaves together and made coverings for themselves. Then the man and his wife heard the sound of the Lord God as he was walking in the garden in the cool of the day. They hid from the Lord God among the trees of the garden, but the Lord God called to the man, 'Where are you?' He answered, 'I heard you in the garden and I was afraid because I was naked, so I hid.' He said, 'Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree that I commanded you not to eat from?' The man said, 'The woman you put here with me, she gave me some fruit from the tree and I ate it.'" This is God's word.

We get a picture of shame in this story. We get a picture of shame that followed their sin, that followed their disobedience. It said in verse 7, the eyes of both of them were opened and they realized they were naked. From that moment on you get a sense that their lives now are going to be affected by shame, but I actually think shame existed before they sinned.

If you go back, what led to Adam and Eve sinning in the first place was shame. Think about what the serpent said to Adam and Eve. The serpent looked at Adam and Eve and he said, "Hey, do you know you're not really all that you could be? Actually there's so much more that you could be. In fact, the God that you are in relationship with, he's a withholding God. He's keeping you from being enough. He's keeping you from being like Him." It was really that, that shame that entered in through that lie of the serpent, that led to Adam and Eve's disobedience.

I have five kids and one of my favorite things to do with my kids is to read to them from a children's Bible called "The Jesus Storybook Bible." In "The Jesus Storybook Bible" the title of this chapter is called "The Terrible Lie." It's not called the terrible sin. It's called the terrible lie. In it, the author says this. She writes, "A terrible lie came into the world. It would never leave. It would live on in every human heart, whispering to every one of God's children, God doesn't love me."

You see before Adam and Eve chose to disobey God, shame was entered in through this lie, this lie that said, you don't have what it takes. God, God's a withholding God. God doesn't really love you. You could actually be way more than you are right now. Really behind every sin problem starts with a shame problem. How do we then respond to shame?

I think we respond to shame in the exact same way that Adam and Eve responded to shame. We respond to shame through disconnection, through cowardice and through blame. We see this play out in this story. First of all, disconnection. What happens immediately after Adam and Eve's sin is shame tells them, "You got to start covering stuff up." You got to start deciding what parts of yourself you're going to allow others to see and what parts you're going to hide. They sewed together some fig leaves, but how we do it is we decide, all right this is the kind of person that I'm going to present to other people. That's the way we hide. That's the way we disconnect from who we truly are.

For some of us, maybe it's that we have decided that what other people are going to think about us is that we're just really good. We're really dependable. You can trust us. We rarely show anger. We're just kind of the consummate nice guy. I have a friend who is that and he said as long as I was good, no one ever asked me about my heart. Even though like underneath all that, he struggled with anger. He had some secret sin, but as long as he presented himself to others as just kind of this good, dependable always had a smile on his face kind of guy, nobody would ask him questions that got to his heart.

Maybe it's more of like an apathetic guy. A guy who says, I'm just not going to let anything bother me too much. I'm pretty carefree. I'm not going to want anything too badly. I'm not going to go for anything too much. I really, when I ... I was a youth pastor for seven years. This is what I saw mostly with teenage boys. Teenage boys just kind of choosing this like, I just don't care about anything. If I don't care about anything, if I don't want anything too badly, then I can't be let down, I can't be disappointed.

Last time I was here, I'm pretty sure I quoted the CNN article that I had read because I just found it an astounding truth. In the CNN article, it said that we have emasculated men with porn and video games. I think that's so true and I saw this especially with teenagers. If your greatest fear - if the shame that you kind of live with all the time says you don't have what it takes, then it makes perfect sense that you would pursue a girl who can't say no and you would fight an enemy who can't draw blood.

For some of us, that's us. We're just kind of, we put on this kind of mask, this covering of nothing bothers me. I don't really care about too much. I'm not going to risk too much, and then others of us maybe use the Bible as our covering. We take our Bible and we use it as a fig leaf. We say if we just quote enough scripture. If we say, "All things work together for the good of those who love God and they are called according to His purpose." If I can just quote enough scripture, then everything will be okay.

All of these are just ways to kind of mask the parts of ourselves that we're ashamed of, the parts of ourselves that we're afraid if someone saw this, they would reject us. The first thing Adam and Eve do is they disconnect from each other. All of a sudden they decide, all right, I'm going to let you see these parts of me but I'm not going to let you see these other parts of me. I'm going to decide what parts of me you see and what parts you don't.

The other thing that happens is they disconnect from themselves. Shame is also the ruin of our psychological relationship with ourselves. We begin to be self-deceived. I don't know if you remember the TV show, "The Super Nanny." It was a reality show where the super nanny would come to people's households who had crazy, wild children and then would teach the parents how to be better parents and to get their house in order. I guess they were filming one of the episodes here in Orlando one time and at the time I only had three kids but me and my wife had taken our three kids to Tijuana Flats and were enjoying a meal and the producers of that show came over and asked if we would want to be on the show, "Super Nanny."

You know, I thought we were having an okay like dinnertime. It was actually pretty good. I didn't think the kids were being too crazy, but my response to them was absolutely not because I know when you watch that show, you look at the parents and you say, how can they not see this? How can they not see that their parenting is a disaster? I knew that if I got on ... Like I said, I thought we were having a pretty pleasant evening, but according to these producers they saw something that I didn't. In some ways, I was self-deceived and I knew if I went on that show, I would see just how self-deceived I am.

We do that all the time and you see that throughout scripture. God sends prophets to God's people constantly to say, you're self-deceived. You're living this way. Do you not see that this is what you've become? They disconnected from who they are. The reason the apostle Paul spends so much time in his letters talking about community and the need to speak truth and love to one another is because we as people now are disconnected from truly knowing ourselves. Sometimes it takes someone from the outside to be able to call out something in us that we can't see.

The first way we respond to shame is we disconnect. We disconnect from other people and we disconnect from ourselves. The second thing is we become cowards. Adam and Eve, as soon as they hear the sound of God in the garden, they hide. The voice of God now makes them tremble and run away. Now if you think about the story, what had they just heard? They had just heard God say to them, you are very good. God's voice had brought them such comfort and delight and now because shame has entered the story, as soon as they hear God, their response is fear. Their response is cowardice. Their response is to run and hide. Shame occurs anytime we allow anyone other than God to define us.

Anytime we allow anything other than God to give us our worth, we experience shame. One of the things that I guess I'm curious about in this story is God and man have this relationship where God was just there. Adam and Eve enjoyed the presence of God every day, just all the time. There was no sin that had separated them. When I read this story, I think where was God? What happened to God during this interaction with this serpent? You know God didn't start being omnipresent after the fall. He was there. Adam just stopped listening to him.

In that moment, Adam stopped listening to God and because of that, disaster. When we experience shame, do we hide like Adam and Eve did and run and find a tree somewhere and hide behind? No, but I think we hid through numbing ourselves. I think a lot of times, especially as men, we tend to keep ourselves from hearing the voice of God by busying ourselves, by becoming workaholics, by over-medicating, by overeating, by over-exercising. We are constantly filling up our schedules, we're filling up our time. We're doing things that numb us so that we're not still and silent enough to hear from God.

Scripture says that God appears and speaks in the still small voice, and so the way that I think you and I act cowardly, the way you and I hide from God is just through busyness, through doing activities that keep us busy and numb so that we can't hear from him because we're afraid if we get still and silent enough we might actually hear Him. We might actually hear what He would say to us.

We respond to shame by disconnecting from ourselves and from others. We respond by hiding and numbing and acting cowardly. Lastly, we blame. Verse 12, when God comes to Adam and says what have you done, Adam says, "Well the woman you put here with me, she made me do it." Yeah, her fault. If you think about it, God had just made Eve for Adam and when God presented Eve to Adam, you know this beautiful, naked woman, he had never seen anything like that before, the text tells us that Adam burst forth in song.

I mean this woman, this gift of God got Adam so emotional and worked up that his only response was to write the very first love song. He says this is flesh of my flesh and bone of my bones. I mean it's like he's overjoyed by this incredible gift of God. Then as soon as it gets a little bit hard, his response is throw her to hell, right? This woman, this gift of God, he immediately says it's her fault, take her, punish her.

What should he have done? Well I think Adam was built and I think you and I as men are built to take the blame. I think Adam should have said, when God said what have you done, he should have said it's my fault. Don't punish her. Punish me. I'll take her place. Adam should have, when the serpent started spewing out the lies about their worth, what should Adam have done? It was his responsibility to stomp on the head of the serpent, even if that meant the serpent would get his fangs into his ankle and venom would ultimately kill him, that should have been what he did. That's what Adam was designed for. That's what Adam was called for, but instead he blames the woman.

Yesterday, at Glenn Ridge Middle School where my son goes to school, they had a bomb threat. It ended up being okay and it wasn't real, but Oliver was telling me that, at first it started out as a drill, and then over the PA system it said, "Bomb threat detected, get out immediately," and you say that to a bunch of middle schoolers and mayhem's going to break out. Oliver said everyone just started running and his teacher, he said, ran out in front of all the other students and kept running. The teacher left the students, and when he told me that I said God please don't ever let me be that guy. He was more concerned about his safety than the safety of others and Adam should have been more concerned about his wife's safety than his own safety. That was his job. That's what we're called to.

You and I are called to sacrifice for the sakes of our wives and our children and those who are disadvantaged, those who are vulnerable, the poor and the widows and the orphans. That is our call. Adam missed it. He didn't just blame the woman. Did you hear who else he blamed? He blamed God, right? He said "The woman you put here with me. It's your fault." How often when we are struggling, especially if we have a besetting sin or something that's just really hard to overcome ... At least this is me. How often have I shaken my fist at God and said, "You made me like this. If you were really good, you would fix this for me. This is your fault that I keep struggling this way. This is your fault that I keep falling this way."

Adam, in response to his shame, not only blames other people but he blames his Creator. That's the response. Our response to shame is that we disconnect from other people and from ourselves, we hide, we act cowardly and that we blame others and God. What is God's response? What's God's response to our shame? Well I think first off, He seeks us in our shame.

When God comes after Adam, after his disobedience, He doesn't come after Adam with wrath. He doesn't say, "Adam, how dare you? I'm coming after you." What does God do? He says, "Where are you?" He asks him a question. God knew where Adam was. It wasn't like God needed the information but he decides to come after Adam in his shame by asking him a question. What do questions do? Questions invite relationship. Questions say, "Hey, I want to build something with you. I want to listen to you. I want to build trust with you."

In a sense, after Adam has disobeyed God, after Adam has acted counter to what God had designed him for, after he's turned his back on God, God comes after him not in anger and wrath but with a question that says, "Hey, Adam I want you to trust me again. I want you to trust me with your shame." We see this in the person of Jesus throughout all of the gospels. When Jesus interacts with people he's constantly asking them questions. No matter who they are, no matter what they've done, if they're the most religious of men or the most blatantly sinful of men, he's constantly asking people questions. He's constantly inviting people into relationship.

We see this with the Apostle Peter after Peter's denied Jesus at his crucifixion. When Jesus comes back and he restores Peter what does he do? Does he say, "Peter, you did this? I'm telling you what you did." No, He asked Peter a question. He says, "Peter do you love me?" He knows the answer to that. He knows Peter's heart and Peter even says, Lord you know that I love you. But we have a God who instead of coming after us with condemnation and a God who comes after us in wrath, comes after us with questions, which says that he's a God who's constantly inviting us into relationship. He's constantly inviting us to trust Him again with whatever shame or guilt we have.

God seeks us in our shame and he also takes our blame. Adam blames God for their disobedience, for giving him Eve. God's response, which we didn't read the whole passage, but in God's response, God

never responds to that accusation. He never responds to the blame that Adam has put on him. He remains completely silent about it.

Well, in Jesus, we see the ultimate silence. As God put on flesh and as he's being blamed and accused and tortured and ultimately crucified, we're told that he remains completely silent. The prophet Isaiah said this, "He did not open his mouth. He was like a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before his shearers is silent, so he did not open his mouth." In Jesus, we see God taking our blame. The blame that we throw at him, Jesus takes.

I taught on this passage at a church in Africa. We have a relationship with a couple ministries in Ethiopia and I was teaching on this, and that night we had a celebration kind of dinner. The pastor thought it would be in light of this passage great if they brought a live lamb for me to slaughter for the meal. With great shame, I admit to you all, I could not do it. I just, I didn't have it in me. I watched. I said, "All right even though I can't kill this lamb, I'm going to watch. I'm not going to look away."

You all, it was amazing. The lamb was silent. As the lamb's throat was slit and as the blood was spilling out, the lamb never made a sound. It just laid there. That's the picture we have of who God is. That when we blame, when we accuse him, when we shake our fist at him, that God responds by taking that blame, that on the cross Jesus broke the silence only to say, Father forgive them they know not what they do.

God seeks us in our shame. He asks us questions that invite relationship. He takes our blame, and then lastly, He covers us. Towards the end of the passage, I didn't read this but in verse 21 it says, "The Lord God made garments of skin for Adam and his wife and he clothed them." After the fall, now that sin has entered the world, it's no longer safe for us to go around unclothed. It's no longer safe for us to expose everything about ourselves to each other. That oftentimes is going to be used against us. It's just not safe.

God knew that. What did God do? God said well I'm going to provide a covering for you. You've made a covering of leaves that actually isn't very sufficient, but I'm going to actually make you garments of skin. In that little verse, there's so much action that took place that's not recorded in the text, but you know, in order for God to make these garments of skin for Adam and Eve, that meant there had to be death. That God had to rip apart some animal, blood had to be spilled in order to make a covering suitable to protect Adam and Eve.

I can't help but think that as that's happening, as that action is taking place that God's thinking about the fact that one day, He would have to be ripped apart, that one day His blood would have to be spilled in order to make a covering strong enough for us to be able to walk through this world knowing that we're loved, knowing that God has given us everything we need in order for us to be able to say, I have what it takes. He's given me everything it needs for me to have what it takes.

2 Corinthians 5:21 says, "God made him Jesus who knew no sin to be sin so that through him, in him by believing in him, you and I might become the righteousness of God." What that's saying to us is that we don't just have a garment made by God of old animal skins. We've been actually clothed in the righteousness of Christ. If we believe that, if we take that truth to our heart, that helps us move through this world in the way that we were actually built to move through it. As you and I experience shame, if we know we're covered in Christ's righteousness, that when God looks at us, He sees the perfect

righteousness of his son, that there's nothing that can separate us from God's love now, that there's no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. If I really believe that, if I believe I walk out into the world with that covering, then all of a sudden, I can move towards connection with people. I can tell people the truth.

I don't have to decide all right these parts of myself I'm going to hide and these parts I'm going to reveal. I can also be truthful about looking at myself. I don't have to be disconnected from my own emotions, from my own struggles. I can look at them and be honest because I know that it doesn't affect my standing. It does that.

It also makes it to where, when I look at God, and I want to blame him for my struggle, when I want to blame him and say, "If you really loved me, you would fix this, if you really loved me you would take away my desires for these sinful things. If you really loved me, you would do this or that." All of a sudden, I look at Jesus, and I look at the fact that I'm covered in His righteousness, and I see the cost of that and it makes blaming God a lot more stupid. I don't want to blame him. He gave everything for me.

Then lastly, knowing that I'm covered by Him says that I can stand before him, knowing, not only am I completely forgiven, but I'm completely loved. My encouragement to all of us as we move in life as men is that we would know our covering, that we would know we've been covered by that and that that actually frees us to be the men that God's called us to be. Now I have what it takes to be able to sacrifice for the sake of my wife. I now have what it takes to sacrifice for my kids or for the vulnerable or for the less fortunate or for those who can't fight for themselves, because I know I am covered by Jesus.

Let's pray. Father God, I thank you that in this very first story of our failure and our sin and our shame, you give us a picture of who you are, that you seek us out, that you take every bit of our blame, and that you cover us. I pray as we go through whatever it is we have before us today or next week that we would remember that. We would remember that you are constantly inviting us to trust you, that you've paid for every bit of the sin that we've done, and that we're covered. Make that truth sink deep into our hearts, and help us become the men that you designed us to be. We pray all of this in the One who saves us name, Jesus. Amen.