



Tested Shame (May 4)

Series Summary: Situations and emotions come up in life that test our faith. The question is not if these situations and emotions will come about. Instead, the question is how will we respond when they do?

Big Idea/Question: As followers of Jesus we should live in biblical conviction, and not shame

GET THEM TALKING

What are some things or events that put our faith to the test?

How do our worst mistakes (sinful acts) put our faith to the test?

GROUP DISCUSSION (The woman caught in adultery)

John 8:1-6 but Jesus went to the Mount of Olives. **2** At dawn he appeared again in the temple courts, where all the people gathered around him, and he sat down to teach them. **3** The teachers of the law and the Pharisees brought in a woman caught in adultery. They made her stand before the group **4** and said to Jesus, "Teacher, this woman was caught in the act of adultery. **5** In the Law Moses commanded us to stone such women. Now what do you say?" **6** They were using this

question as a trap, in order to have a basis for accusing him. But Jesus bent down and started to write on the ground with his finger.

What were the Pharisees doing? How were the Pharisees trying to trap Jesus?

Leader Note / Answer: The Pharisees wanted to discredit Jesus and his teaching. To do so they hatched a plan to use this woman who was caught in adultery to trap Jesus. Their assumption was that Jesus would either ignore her sin and then be accused of throwing out the Old Testament law that condemned adultery. Or Jesus could condemn the woman to death and appear to the crowd gathered as being cruel. But the Pharisees did not count on Jesus' response.

John 8:7-11 When they kept on questioning him, he straightened up and said to them, "Let any one of you who is without sin be the first to throw a stone at her." **8** Again he stooped down and wrote on the ground. **9** At this, those who heard began to go away one at a time, the older ones first, until only Jesus was left, with the woman still standing there. **10** Jesus straightened up and asked her, "Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?" **11** "No one, sir," she said. "Then neither do I condemn you." Jesus declared. "Go now and leave your life of sin."

Vs 7 - What was Jesus getting at when he said "Let any one of you who is without sin be the first to throw a stone at her"?

Why did the men who had gathered to stone (kill) the women begin to leave when Jesus said this?

Why do you think the oldest left first?

Leader Note: The text does not clearly state why the oldest left first. But my hunch would be that the oldest were more aware of their own failings, shortcomings, and sins. Time has a tendency of humbling us.

Jesus told the woman that he did not condemn her and that she should go and leave her life of sin. Why is it so important that he said both?

Leader Note: Jesus preached a Gospel of grace and mercy. But that does not mean that he turned a blind eye to sin. Far from it! Jesus died for our sins on the cross for our sins so that we may have eternal life. If we believe in him but then never leave our lives of sin we have treated his grace and mercy as if it were cheap. Jesus' mercy does not give us a license to sin. Instead, his mercy should lead us and empower us to leave our sinful habits behind.

VIDEO TEACHING

We see in Matthew 26 that Jesus boldly predicted that Peter, one of his closest friends and disciples, would deny him three times in one night. Peter of course is offended by this. But Jesus was 100% correct in his prediction.

Matthew 26:69-75

Peter is heartbroken because he knows that he has rejected and abandoned Jesus in his time of greatest need. He felt shame and regret and likely was questioning if he could ever be used by God again. So he went back to fishing (his career before following Jesus). But Jesus pursued after Peter and spoke with him one night about this.

John 21:15-21

Jesus was conveying to Peter that the right response to sin is not shame. Shame cast a spotlight on our sin while minimizing God's grace. Instead, we are called to walk in conviction. Recognizing our sin as wrong while still placing our confidence in God's grace and mercy.

Transition to small-group - How do we walk in conviction? Confession and Repentance. Let's talk about what that is and how we confess and repent.

GROUP DISCUSSION

(Confession & Repentance)

Why is it so important that we continue to confess our sins to God even after we have believed in Jesus and received forgiveness for all of our sins?

1 John 1:8-10 If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. **9** If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness. **10** If we claim we have not sinned, we make him out to be a liar and his word is not in us.

Vs 8- What does verse 8 teach us about our need for confession?

Leader Note / Answer: It is easy for us to think to ourselves "I don't have anything to confess to God." But is that true? The passage above calls that claim into question for everyone, including faithful believers in Jesus. We must be honest with ourselves and our wrongs. Hiding them from God is impossible and ignoring them only hurts us

and our walk with the Lord.

Why is it so important that we trust that He (God) is faithful to forgive us of our sins?

What do we do if we don't "feel" forgiven?

Leader Note: Our feelings can easily lead us astray because our feelings can, and often are, influenced by our sinful nature. That is why we should not allow our feelings to dictate to us what truth is. At that moment you may not feel forgiven. But your feelings are not God. Instead of blindly trusting what you feel in that moment as truth, submit that thought to the truth of scripture. This is what Paul was referring to in 2 Corinthians 10:5.

What does it mean to repent of our sin?

Leader Note: Repentance is an act of acknowledging past wrongdoing, expressing regret or contrition, and committing to right behavior and obedience to God. It is a transformative process that involves turning away from sin or transgression and turning back to God.¹

For Further Study: Proverbs 26:11 points out in graphic language how much we struggle to turn away from our sinful habits and actions. Instead, we turn to them again and again even when we know how much they cost us.

¹ Lesley DiFransico, "Repentance," ed. Douglas Mangum et al., Lexham Theological Wordbook, Lexham Bible Reference Series (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2014).