

Jesus' Affection for Shameful People

The Gospels reveal that Jesus loved shameful people – He talked with them, He touched them, He ate meals with them, He befriended them. It is important for us to see Jesus' affection for shameful people, because when we do we can begin to understand how Jesus thinks about us in our shame. We need to see ourselves as the man with leprosy, as the woman who'd been bleeding for twelve years, as the woman caught in adultery, as tax collectors and sinners, as prodigal sons and daughters, etc. When we see ourselves in these types of people, we will see how Jesus views us. He loves us. He comes to us. He befriends us.

Read Luke 4:16-21

1. When Jesus read from Isaiah 61, what does that passage in Isaiah say about the nature of his target audience? How might shame have been associated with these people in their particular life situations?

Steve said:

I've divided these passages into two categories that correspond to two categories of shame: innocent shame and culpable shame. When you have "innocent shame" it's not because of anything you've done wrong. You feel shame because of some physical or mental condition, because of how others have treated you, or because you're associated with someone who's done something shameful. "Culpable shame," by contrast, is the result of something you've done or something in which you've participated. What we're going to see is that in both cases Jesus takes away your shame.

INNOCENT SHAME: Read Luke 5:12-14

2. How might a person with leprosy have felt shame (see Num. 5:1-4)?
3. How did Jesus move towards this person? What did Jesus do that might have helped release his shame?

Read Luke 8:40-48

4. What might have been this woman's experience with shame (see Lev. 15:25-27)?
5. According to Lev. 15:27, what was "wrong" with the woman touching Jesus?

6. How does Jesus respond to this woman? What does he say that helped release this woman from her shame?

CULPABLE SHAME: Read Luke 5:27-32; 7:36-50

7. What kinds of people with culpable shame does Jesus interact with in these passages?
8. How does Jesus interact with these people? What is revealed about Jesus' heart towards them?

Steve said:

If you are feeling guilt and shame over some sin in your life, I encourage you to do what [the] woman did. Instead of running **away from** Jesus (thinking that He probably wants nothing to do with you), run **to** Jesus in faith. Jesus has great affection for people with culpable shame - people who are actually guilty because of their sin. Like the woman in Luke 7, Jesus wants you to be overwhelmed with the greatness of His forgiveness.

9. When you feel guilt and shame over sin in your life, do you find it hard to “run to Jesus in faith”? Why or why not?
10. When you need the truth of Jesus' forgiveness to move from your head to something that overwhelms you at a heart level, what kinds of things help?
11. How do all of these examples of how Jesus treated people with either innocent or culpable shame help you understand how Jesus feels about you and your shame?