

Unashamed

Romans 10: 9 – 11

Romans 10: 9 If you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.

- So, Paul tells us that there are two elements to true saving faith. Belief, not just in your head but in your heart, and a confession of what you believe. Faith isn't silent. It speaks.
 - Why is confessing with your mouth that Jesus is Lord important? Because:

Matthew 12: 34, "Out of the overflow of the heart the mouth speaks."

- Saving faith isn't just head knowledge. It is not just nodding your head in agreement that certain things are true. If all we do is nod our heads to the great truths of the Gospel, then we are nothing more than bobbleheads.
 - It is believing those things to be true to the point where what you believe becomes the thing that motivates your life.

Luke 9: 23 "If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me.

- To deny ourselves, and take up our cross, and follow Jesus is to make confession that Jesus is the risen Lord, and as the risen Lord, he is Lord of Lords.
 - If Jesus is King of Kings and Lord of Lords, then guess who isn't? If you guessed yourself, then you are today's grand prize winner.
 - For most of us here today, that is easy for us to believe in our heads. Jesus is King of Kings, and we nod our heads, "Yes, this is true."
 - But speaking for myself, I was terrible at denying myself, and because of that I ended up denying Jesus in the way I lived my life. I loved myself more than Jesus, so, I feared denying myself more than denying Jesus.
- I am not sure why that is true. Maybe it's because we have this attitude that there is always forgiveness with Jesus, and that is true, but the Bible and Jesus are also clear that there is a day of reckoning.

Matthew 10: 34 So everyone who acknowledges me before men, I also will acknowledge before my Father who is in heaven, ³³but whoever denies me before men, I also will deny before my Father who is in heaven.

- There is forgiveness with Jesus, but we must be careful not to take that forgiveness casually.

Psalms 2:12 Kiss the Son, lest He be angry, And you perish *in* the way, when His wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed *are* all those who put their trust in Him.

- And even when we realize that a day of reckoning is out there somewhere, we think exactly that. It's out there somewhere. So, we think there is time. "I can wait to deny myself until I am old, like Pastor Jeff. Then, like a student cramming for final exams I can get serious about this idea of denying myself."
 - That's a very dangerous game for us to play. Life is very fragile. All we know for sure is that we have the moment we are in. There is no guarantee of tomorrow for any of us.

Matthew 6: 24 “No one can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other.

- You will deny everything else for the sake of what you love. If we love ourselves, we will deny Jesus. If we love Jesus, we will deny ourselves.
 - For all those years that I behaved like a bobblehead, nodding my head to the truth that Jesus was Lord and then going out of the church and denying Jesus by my lifestyle, were because I loved myself more than Jesus.
 - The thing that allows a person to deny themselves and take up their cross and follow Jesus is love for Jesus rather than love for self.
 - Truth be told, I still have that tendency to fall back in love with myself. The only difference is that now I have some inkling of what is going on, and know better how to deal with it. That is why there in Luke 9, Jesus says that this denying of self is something we must do on a daily basis.
- The answers as to how to daily rearrange the affections of your heart, and therefore the priorities of your life are right here in our text this morning. They are throughout the Gospels in the words of Jesus.
 - The words that Jesus spoke in Luke 9 are a powerful reminder of how we are to live our lives. But they become even more powerful if we look at them in a more complete context.
 - Right before Jesus said, “If anyone would follow me, he must deny himself daily and take up his cross and follow me, Jesus asked his disciples a simple question, but a question that determines how a person lives.

Luke 9: 18 – 20 “Who do the crowds say that I am?” ¹⁹ And they answered, “John the Baptist. But others say, Elijah, and others, that one of the prophets of old has risen.” ²⁰ Then he said to them, “But who do you say that I am?” And Peter answered, “The Christ of God.”

- Peter was absolutely right about who Jesus is. He is the Christ of God. But what do those words mean? They mean that Jesus is the Messiah—the king. Christ is the Greek word for the Hebrew word Messiah, which means the anointed one, or the one who will be king.
 - So, in other words, Peter just confessed that Jesus is Lord, King, Messiah.
- Now, what does that mean for how Peter and we should live our lives?
- What is really interesting is what Jesus said in response to Peter’s confession. Before Jesus told Peter and us what it means, Jesus said this.

Luke 9: 22 “The Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and on the third day be raised.”

- The way that Jesus would come into His Kingdom, the way that Jesus would ascend to glory, would be through a death and a resurrection. Think about this, in order to die for us, Jesus first had to die to himself.
 - That’s what his prayer in the Garden of Gethsemane was all about,

Luke 22: 42 – 44 “Father, if you are willing, remove this cup from me. Nevertheless, not my will, but yours, be done.” ⁴³ And there appeared to him an angel from heaven,

Strengthening him. ⁴⁴ And being in agony he prayed more earnestly; and his sweat became like great drops of blood falling down to the ground.

- This denying of yourself is hard. Even Jesus struggled with it, sweating drops of blood over it. It completely cuts against the grain of the way we think, and the way of the world.
- The way of the world isn't to die in order to become king. To paraphrase General Patton, the way to become king is to make some other poor guy die.
- In the world, the way to glory and power isn't to deny yourself and die to yourself, it is to exalt yourself. But that is not the Gospel way. The Gospel way is to deny yourself, take up your cross, and follow Jesus. Follow Jesus where? To the cross and then to lasting eternal glory.
 - Consider Jesus and what it looks like to follow Jesus from Paul's words in:

Philippians 2: 5 – 11 Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, ⁶ who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, ⁷ but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. ⁸ And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. ⁹ Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, ¹⁰ so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, ¹¹ and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

- Look what Jesus did. He laid down glory, he emptied himself and took the form of a servant.
 - Think of the wonder of the incarnation. God the Son, the second person in the trinity became flesh. He stepped down from the glory of heaven to begin life like any of us—a single celled organism in the womb of a peasant girl, in a backwater part of the Roman Empire. He was born and laid in a feeding trough. He worked as a carpenter. He was tried and executed as a common criminal.
 - In spite of being God himself, Jesus wasn't ashamed to come and associate with prostitutes, tax collectors and sinful people like you and me.

Hebrews 2: 11 For he who sanctifies and those who are sanctified all have one *Father*. That is why he is not ashamed to call them brothers

- Because Christ has sanctified us, that is, made us holy, we are no longer orphans but sons of God alongside of Jesus our elder brother.
- To make it possible for that to happen the writer of Hebrews goes on to tell us that Jesus:

Hebrews 2: 14 – 15 partook of the same things, that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil, ¹⁵ and deliver all those who through fear of death were subject to lifelong slavery.

- To free us from the dominion of Satan, and the power of death, Jesus became like us to die for us.

- What does that sound like? Jesus' call to us in Luke 9: 23, "If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross."
- When we deny ourselves, we are living exactly like Jesus lived. And what happened to Jesus as a result of him laying down his life to free us from Satan's tyranny? Paul told us in Philippians 2: God highly exalted him and gave him a name above every name that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, and every tongue confess that Jesus is Lord.
- Now as you think about what happened with Jesus, when he denied himself and took up his cross, think what happens to us, when we follow Jesus' lead.

Romans 8: 16 - 18 The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, ¹⁷and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, provided we suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified with him. ¹⁸For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us.

- When we lay down our life and take up our cross and willingly join Christ in his suffering, the glory of Christ becomes our glory.
- The Kingdom of Heaven involves upside down living. The ascent to glory begins by denying yourself, and laying your life in the dust.

Luke 9: 23 – 26 "If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me. ²⁴ For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will save it. ²⁵ For what does it profit a man if he gains the whole world and loses or forfeits himself? ²⁶ For whoever is ashamed of me and of my words, of him will the Son of Man be ashamed when he comes in his glory and the glory of the Father and of the holy angels.

- Now you know why I behaved like a bobblehead for all those years. I loved Jesus, really I was quite fond of him, but I really loved my life, the things of this world more, so when it came time to choose whether to deny myself or deny Jesus, I denied Jesus. I didn't want what I perceived to be shame in this life, I wanted glory.
 - Now since we are only talking about me and not you, think how stupid that is. I was willing to risk eternal glory for what I perceived to be shame in this life. Or let's put it the opposite way. I was willing to risk eternal glory for the sake of momentary fading glory in this life.
 - Because of that mindset and the desire of my heart, it was easy to go out and deny Jesus with the way I lived my life. It came very naturally to me because that is what was in my heart. Out of the overflow of my heart, my mouth was speaking every day, and what it was saying was all about me.
 - Now, don't you judge me. I'm in good company. Right there with Peter. Remember he denied Jesus too. Why? Fear and shame—a love of his life. The same things that motivated my choices and maybe, just maybe, are motivating yours too.



- If we love ourselves and our life, we will deny Jesus. If we love Jesus, we will deny ourselves. It really is that simple.

Romans 10: 9 – 11 if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. ¹⁰For with the heart one believes and is justified, and with the mouth one confesses and is saved. ¹¹For the Scripture says, “Everyone who believes in him will not be put to shame.”

- Verse 11 is part of a quote from:

Isaiah 28: 16 “Behold, I am the one who has laid as a foundation in Zion, a stone, a tested stone, a precious cornerstone, of a sure foundation: Everyone who believes in him (that is Jesus) will not be put to shame.”

- For all those years I thought the cure for shame was simply to not embarrass myself in a public way. No, what Paul is telling us is that the cure for shame is trust in Jesus.

1. The cause of shame

- What is it that causes shame? It is being exposed as being less than perfect. Shame comes when people see a flaw in us. That wasn't a problem until sin entered the world.

Genesis 2: 25 And the man and his wife were both naked and were not ashamed.

- Adam and Eve were completely exposed, completely transparent with no shame because they were living in sinless perfection.
 - For the first 56 verses of the Bible there was no shame, because there was nothing to be ashamed of.
 - But then we come to Genesis 3 and shame, not only enters the world, but it also fills the world, and begins to control how we live.

Genesis 3: 8 – 10 And they heard the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God among the trees of the garden. ⁹But the Lord God called to the man and said to him, “Where are you?” ¹⁰And he said, “I heard the sound of you in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked, and I hid myself.”

- What was it that caused Eve to take the fruit from the tree of knowledge of good and evil, in the first place? It was pride. Satan told her,

Genesis 3: 5 “For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.”

- Eve took the fruit because she wanted to be like God.
- Now, what was it that caused her and Adam to hide from God? Again, it was pride—a desire to cover the shame of their sin.
- What keeps us from owning our sin and failure?
 - Pride is at the root of both our sin and our shame.

1 John 2:16 For all that is in the world—the desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and pride of life—is not from the Father but is from the world.



- Pride of life is what drives all of our sin, and all of our desire to cover up our sin. To get rid of shame, we have to get rid of pride.

2. The cure for shame

- In our pride, rather than owning our shame, we try to cover it up. Just like Adam and Eve did in the Garden after they sinned and felt naked and ashamed.

Genesis 3: 7 they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loincloths.

- Just stop and think for a second at how ineffective fig leaves are as a covering for shame. It is not long before they begin to wither and dry out, and then disintegrate leaving you once again naked and ashamed.
 - There is a very real metaphor for our lives. Think how we often try to cover our shame and failures. We sew together our own fig leaves of self-righteousness.
 - As we talked about a few weeks ago, we are constantly trying to cover our shame, trying to prove we are not a failure, not a bum. Remember that line from the movie Rocky, as he got ready to fight the heavy weight champ, Apollo Creed? “If I can go the distance, then everyone will know that I’m not just another bum from the neighborhood.”
 - But that is just fig leaves that soon wither. Think about it. I’ve lost count, but there is a reason why there have been at least six Rocky movies. The effort to prove he is not a bum is continual because the fig leaves keep withering.
 - We need a better cure for shame than fig leaves of self righteousness. And that is what God in His mercy has done for us in sending His son.
 - And once again, in the Garden, in the way that God dealt with Adam and Eve, we see a metaphor, of what God will do for us.

Genesis 3: 21 And the Lord God made for Adam and for his wife garments of skins and clothed them.

- God provided a covering for Adam and Eve’s shame. He replaced the fig leaves that would soon wither with skins of animals that provided a far more durable covering for their shame. But to provide those skins took a death—the shedding of innocent blood.
- What a picture that is for us of what God sent His Son to do for us. Listen to how Isaiah describes what God will do for us in Jesus.

Isaiah 61: 10 I will greatly rejoice in the Lord; my soul shall exult in my God, for he has clothed me with the garments of salvation; he has covered me with the robe of righteousness,

- To cover Adam and Eve’s nakedness and shame God took the skin of an animal. To cover our sin and shame, God clothed us in the robes of righteousness of his son. How did God do that?

2 Corinthians 5: 21 For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

- At the cross, God took all your sin and all your shame and placed it on Jesus, and He took all of Christ's righteousness and placed it on you.
- There is the ultimate cure for shame. But think what Paul said needs to happen for God's cure to be your cure.

Romans 10: 11 "Everyone who believes in him will not be put to shame."

- To have Christ's robes of righteousness, as your robes of righteousness, you must believe in him. What does it look like to believe in Him?

Romans 10: 9 – 10 if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. ¹⁰For with the heart one believes and is justified, and with the mouth one confesses and is saved.

- To truly believe in Jesus is to have a heart that is transformed by what you believe. A heart that is transformed to no longer live according to the pride of life. To no longer live trusting yourself, as lord of your life or lord of your own righteousness.
 - What is it that transforms your heart? Love for Christ. Seeing what he has done for you at the cross. How he became sin for you, so that, in him, you would become the righteousness of God.
 - A transformed heart lays down the fig leaves of self righteousness, without the fear of shame and exposure because they know the robes of Christ's righteousness will cover them completely. A transformed heart no longer seeks to justify itself, but allows Christ to be their sole means of justification.
 - A transformed heart lays their life in the dust and dies to self to live for Jesus as their true Lord.
 - It is only as we see Jesus as our justifier, our true righteousness, that we become willing to do that.
- At his incarnation, his birth, Jesus made himself nothing. For us to be reborn in Christ, we simply must acknowledge the truth that we are nothing, and that all our efforts to try to justify ourselves and cover our own shame are as nothing.

3. Employing the cure for shame

- What happens as we employ this cure for shame that God has given us in Christ?
 - Simply put, we become fearless because there is nothing left for us to fear. We have already lost it all to take up Christ who is our righteousness. We can stop hiding, covering up and defending. Why?

Romans 10: 4 Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes.

- Christ is the end of the struggle for righteousness. He is the end of fear and shame.
 - Apart from Christ, we spend our lives consumed with the struggle for righteousness, with a struggle to keep our reputation up.
 - But belief in Christ, belief that his death has paid the debt for our sins, frees us from the struggle. Because we see that Christ not only perfectly fulfilled the law for us, but was cursed for our sin as well.



- He has not only attained our perfection but atoned for our imperfection. There is nothing more to struggle over, for he has done it all for us, and God asks nothing now but for us to believe in the gift of Christ sacrifice and righteousness for us.
- The only way to get rid of sin is to admit it, repent and be forgiven. If we deny our sin and try to cover it up with fig leaves of self-righteousness, we have to continue to carry it ourselves.
 - The way to freedom is to confess our sin. Confession of sin starts with taking ownership of the sin. Admitting to the truth. But, in confession, we don't keep hanging on to it. We give it to Jesus. Once we give it to Jesus, it is gone from us, as far as the east is from the west.

"Well may the accuser roar of sins that I have done. I know them all and thousands more and Jehovah knoweth none."

- So rather than struggling to maintain a righteousness of our own we can say, "Of course I have done these things. God knows it. I know it, so what difference does it make if you know it too?"
 - Because my life is hidden in Christ, when God looks at me, it is not me and my sin that He sees, but Christ and his righteousness. By faith my life is hidden in Christ and so now all that God sees is the beauty of Christ."
- So, if that is what God sees, then what difference does it make what anyone else sees? If that is God's judgement, then who cares about the judgment of others. That is why Paul could live his life with this attitude:

1 Corinthians 4: 2 – 4 But with me it is a very small thing that I should be judged by you or by any human court. In fact, I do not even judge myself. ⁴For I am not aware of anything against myself, but I am not thereby acquitted. It is the Lord who judges me.

- Jesus is our perfect righteousness. When we come to him, we need no other. The struggle is over. In Christ we can literally live our lives with no shame. The more we truly believe in our hearts that God has raised Christ from the dead for our justification, the more shamelessly we will live.
 - Our sin has been crucified and buried with Christ, and if there is no sin, there is no shame, both now and forevermore.
- To think of being faultless or shameless is hard to wrap our minds around. If we are honest with ourselves, we are aware of our imperfections.
 - But, by faith, by believing in our hearts, as a Christian comes to the cross, they realize that all of their imperfections are swallowed up in Christ's perfections. Because of that they stand blameless, and therefore, shameless. Instead of living life being focused on trying to hide our shame, we live instead for the glory of Christ our Lord.

Galatians 2: 20 I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.