

## **Weekly Lenten Devotional – Week 4: *What brings me shame?***

Hello Church Family,

I pray the peace of our Savior Jesus Christ meets you this day just as you are. I hope you are off to having a wonderful fourth week of Lent. My devotional is late because yesterday I was in Hurst, Texas for my Continuation Residency Interview. I want to thank each of you for your prayers as the board passed me!! Now, I am entering into what I hope is my final year of Residency. I am grateful to each of you, but especially my Lay Covenant Committee who continues to walk closely with me through this process.

This past Sunday, we read from Psalm 32 and Luke 15: 1-3, 11b-32. I encourage you to re-read both of these texts as they are quite powerful. Psalm 32 opens and closes with these verses, “Happy are those whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered (Psalm 32:1). For, “steadfast love surrounds those who trust in the Lord” (Psalm 32:10). Okay, Psalm 32 actually ends in verse eleven, but our theme is “Steadfast Love,” and I believe this is the heart of this text.

All of us are not perfect. Due to the original wound Adam and Eve created between us and God. Humanity hurts and out of that hurt, we tend to hurt others. In other words, “hurt people, hurt people.” Unfortunately, this “hurt” tends to shift into shame which causes us to be silent about what we have done wrong or what is wrong in our lives.

What I love about Psalm 32 is David reminds us of the pain this silence causes us. “While I kept silence, my body wasted away through my groaning all day long” (Psalm 32:3). This is what happens when we keep silent about our quiet shames and don’t bring them into the light, it deepens the hurt, our “bod[ies] waste away” (Psalm 32:3).

King David, who this Psalm is attributed to, reminds us of something important. We are not alone in our sin and shame. Or more importantly, we don’t have to be alone. “Then I acknowledged my sin to you and I did not hide my iniquity; I said, I will confess my transgressions to the Lord,” and you forgave the guilt of my sin. *Selah*” (Psalm 32:5).

God is waiting to help us carry the load. Will we welcome Jesus' grace into our lives? Will we confess our sin before God and allow Christ to redeem the areas of our lives which bring us shame? David says when we do, God becomes "a hiding place for [us], [God] preserves [us] from trouble, and surrounds [us] with glad cries of deliverance. *Selah*" (Psalm 32:7). So, will we do this?

I invite you to consider Psalm 32 or Luke 15 and what character you most identify with in regards to any shame you may be carrying today.

- Are you the father who needs to welcome home a wayward son?
- Are you the wayward Son who needs to confess their sin and return to your parent's loving arms?
- Are you the brother who needs to recognize you have always remained in God's steadfast love and need to be okay with God's grace existing for another?
- Or are you a King David, penitent and in need of deliverance from God?
- What are the areas of your life which bring you shame and how can you invite God's love into those spaces this day?

I pray you will take time to reflect on these questions and allow them to help you have an honest conversation with God. For I believe God's steadfast love will surround you this day. Remember, God loves you no matter what and is waiting for you like the loving Father in Luke 15 to embrace you. Jesus' redeeming grace has already conquered our sin and shame through his life, death, and resurrection, so don't have to carry the load alone. Amen.