



# A LETTER FROM YOUR PASTOR: NOVEMBER 2019

*by Lee Shipp*

## SHAME'S SCAPEGOAT

We are all guilty. The Bible says there is no one righteous. We have all sinned. Guilt is bearable because we all have it. Shame is different, though we all have reasons to have it. We all have experienced shameful things. Some people have been devastated by shame. Guilt is the verdict of society based on the fact that you broke its standards. Shame is the stain of what you are or what you have become as a result of what you did or what has been done to you. Perhaps you were violated and treated less than human; this mistreatment will stain you and defile you for the rest of your life. The shameful scars have altered the life you dreamed of living. Perhaps the wretchedness of your lusts finally dominated your actions, and you behaved less than human; you are defiled and a danger to people everywhere. No one wants to be associated with you.

You do not hear a judge say to a defendant, "You are shamed!" Instead, he pronounces, "You are guilty!" Shame is the stain that no jail, detention, or time served can remove. It stays with you far beyond the sentence imposed. It follows you everywhere and catches up to you in the most unlikely places. You cannot escape it for you wear it. It screams through your eyes, "I am shameful." It shows on your countenance. It is there. Even when others are not aware that you are shameful – the shame in you will find a way to expose itself, it always does.

Shame is associated with dishonor, exposure, nakedness, disgrace, and defilement. The Bible refers more to shame than guilt. Guilt is a legal standing. You are wrong. You have sinned. A person proven guilty expects punishment and needs forgiveness. Shame, however, is so much more brutal than guilt. Shame is the stain on you and the voice in you that screams, "You are despised. You are unwanted." Shame convinces you that you don't belong.

The shamed person expects rejection. They feel worthless and unredeemable. They live in fear that someone is going to expose their stain and devastate their life, so they try hard to hide. Though they try to hide, there is no safe place. Shame is a very real monster that haunts you inside. It is constantly wounding and sealing you off from every hope that you could ever be normal. You hear that monster – every time you walk in a room and faces turn away from you or faces turn toward you and people begin to laugh. You are stared at, and you know what they see – people are staring at the stain! You are a monster! You are worthless, and it is no secret.

Shame piles on, and other monsters join in. Critical words from the right person add to shame. All it takes is nothing from the right person to pile on shame: no action, no response, no words. Nobody defends you, not even those who are supposed to. It is as if you do not exist. The problem is that you do exist, and you wished you didn't. And shame builds. You take on more. You are the reason your parents divorced. It's your fault you that were molested. You begin to take the guilt of things that are not even your fault: the hatred of an unfaithful spouse, the physical abuse of someone who is supposed to love you. It is your fault! What is your fault? That you were born, that you are alive.

## CONTAMINATED

Even in the Bible, people were sent outside the camp because they were unclean. They were contaminated and not fit to live in society; they were dangerous to others. Whenever they encountered "normal" people, they had to cry a warning, "Unclean!" less someone would touch them and become defiled. That's what shame does to people; it announces to all, "I am contaminated!"

So, people stained with shame need to remove their shame. But how? When Jesus was covered with shame, He opened not His mouth. However, all others try to remove their shame by blaming others. To be free from shame, they seek to transfer it to someone else. Adam and Eve's response to shame was to blame one another for what they did.

When you feel relentless condemnation and don't know where to go for forgiveness and cleansing, you look for a way to prove your innocence. People in sin will do one of three things: they will repent, or they will seek to justify their actions, or they will point out the sin in others, so their sin is not seen. The tragedy is that no one is cured of shame, but multitudes are left destroyed.

Sadly, I regret how I lived this way for so long. Blaming others, justifying myself, refusing to expose myself to God's truth, but Jesus delivered me! I now refuse to serve the monsters of shame. I refuse to destroy other people. Instead, I will do truth and come to the light that my sins will be exposed! I will be brutal on my sin and the hideous monster it is (John 3).

Jesus came to save the shamed. He is not afraid to touch you. He is not afraid of being contaminated. He is not afraid of where you live. He is not afraid of your monsters. He is your only hope, and there is not one shamed soul He will deny! But, dear shamed one, you cannot hide from Him. Please, He is your only hope. You must come to Him. Jesus is your way out of shame! Going to church will not cure you. There are so many young men and women in churches that don't feel like they belong there. Going to Jesus is the cure!

# "JESUS CAME TO SAVE THE SHAMED. HE IS NOT AFRAID TO TOUCH YOU. HE IS NOT AFRAID OF BEING CONTAMINATED."

## WE NEED A WAY TO REMOVE SHAME

Listen to this promise, *"As far as the east is from the west, so far hath He removed our transgressions from us"* (Psalms 103:12). How did God do this? God gave us Jesus! Jesus did not forsake us! What does this mean? It means He opened not His mouth! He did not declare His innocence so He would be accepted. Instead, He remained silent, bore all of our shame, was completely rejected that we all might be made clean! Listen, if being touched by something or someone shameful can defile us, then touching something Holy can cleanse us. Really think about that. Someone violated you and you became shame. Well, if some shameful person can touch you and defile you, then the Holy Jesus can touch you and cure you! *"For He hath made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him"* (2 Corinthians 5:21).

Are you afraid that God will not draw near to you? Oh, banish the fear. It was for you He came. Jesus said He came for the sick, broken, wounded, defiled, and outcasts (Mark 2:17)! His beloved disciple John declared, *"And ye know that He was manifested to take away our sins, and in Him is no sin. The Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all"* (1 John 3:5).

Iniquity is the moral evil that is in us. This is the fountainhead of all shame; it is our nature of sin. And God announces that He has removed this iniquity and will not remember it again.

In the Old Testament, God provided a temporary provision for Israel's sin and shame. His provision was called a scapegoat, also known as the goat of departure. This goat was to be a picture of Jesus and what He would accomplish with our shame. The goat was chosen because it represents strong masculinity, it is stout, heavily built, bold, and brave. The goat is impudent, brazenly immodest, and unafraid of shame; it is possessed with barefaced audacity and will absurdly intrude in an unmannerly way. Wow! What a picture of Jesus. I just love this. Jesus is the bold and brave one. Of all humanity, it is Jesus who is built with solid strength, unafraid of shame and what others would think of Him. With the boldest audacity, Jesus would intrude into Satan's kingdom of shame and seem absolutely absurd and unmannerly, as He begins to rescue the wretched souls who have been held against their will.

The scapegoat was offered once a year on the day of atonement. The offering consisted of two goats for a sin offering. They were presented to the Lord at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation. One would live and one would die.

The one that died was for the Lord for a sin offering. Its blood was brought within the veil of God's holy place. The blood was sprinkled on the mercy seat. This was done for the transgression of the congregation.

The one that lived was the scapegoat, the goat of departure – this is so good! This goat was presented alive before the Lord to make atonement, which means to cancel our sin, to cleanse and pardon the sinner. This sacrifice provided mercy and reconciliation with God. The High Priest put both hands on the goat's head and confesses over it all the iniquities of the congregation (no one is left out). The sins were placed upon that goat, and the goat was sent far away, bearing all the iniquities of the congregation.

That is a beautiful picture of what God has done for us in Jesus. God can now assure all of us,

*I will be merciful toward their iniquities, and I will remember their sins no more ... I am He who blots out your transgressions for my own sake, and I will not remember your sins ... as far as the east is from the west, so far [have I] removed [your] transgressions from [you] ... I will remember their sins and their lawless deeds no more.* (Hebrews 8:12; Isaiah 43:25; Psalms 103:12)

So let the people rejoice, *"He will again have compassion on us; He will tread our iniquities underfoot. You will cast all our sins into the depths of the sea"* (Micah 7:19).

All you have to do is touch Jesus! You have to intentionally touch Him. You must touch Him in your shame, and it is then Jesus will touch you back! The gatherings are not enough. The camp meetings are not enough. You must take your needs to Jesus and touch Him.

## HOW DO I TOUCH JESUS?

How do you touch Him? He is touched with the feelings of your infirmities (Hebrews 4:15). With your touch, Jesus becomes your scapegoat. With His touch you become righteous. Touching Jesus is declaring, "I have nothing to offer you ... nothing to contribute. I am worthless and irreparable, rejected ... naked ... contaminated!" That is how you touch Him – every time.

It is so sad watching people trying to touch Jesus with their religious self, trying to identify with Him on the basis of holiness. You have no holiness. You cannot identify with Him on that basis. You touch Him with your infirmity – that is what touches Him, that is what He responds to. And trust me, when Jesus touches you back, your stain will be gone! Your shame will be gone. Your monsters will be dead!

There is a woman in the Bible who was diseased with a bleeding disorder. For years she had to walk among her people crying, "Unclean!" But one day, she touched Jesus – not with her health, but with her sickness – Jesus touched her back! She never had to walk unclean again! Now, something else would be said about her. People would say, "That is the woman who touched Jesus! That is the woman Jesus healed."

Oh, beloved, will you let Jesus touch you? Are you not tired of all the unsuccessful attempts of trying to remove your stain? Are you not tired of hurting people? Are you not tired of the monsters who haunt you? Shame has been the center of your world for long enough. Shame has identified you for too long. Shame told you how to relate to society and people. Shame was your dreadful companion telling you what was about to happen to you and how people were going to treat you.

Shame is even now trying to tell you that you are too unworthy to be forgiven! But shame is a liar! You are not forgiven because you deserve to be, you are forgiven because Jesus deserves to pardon you. If you want to be forgiven for your sake, for your reputation and worthiness, then you will never be forgiven, but if you want to let Jesus have His glory in rescuing your life from such misery, then you shall be!

## TIME FOR A NEW COMPANION

Beloved, it is time for a new companion! It is time for Jesus! He has borne your reproach and shame (Psalms 69). Today you can stand forgiven and holy before God and man because Jesus took the penalty for your sins on Himself. If you live as though God's forgiveness needs to be helped by your grief and good works, then you do not understand what He did for you. Grace and faith are the way into God's kingdom. Get used to the kindness of God because you will never understand His mercy! Just get used to being amazed at the gracious King. You will spend all your eternity just saying, "Thank you!"

So, if you want Jesus, you must be willing to accept the honor that goes with the relationship, a royal status ascribed to you, not achieved but given! Oh, shamed one, when you enter the kingdom, all eyes are on Jesus – not you or your rights and works.

They are fixed on His love, his sacrifice, his perfection, his suffering, and His holiness. Look at the scene around the throne of God (Revelation 4-5); no man is singled out or admired. Everyone is singing the same song to the Scapegoat!

Beloved, you can be healed. Let Him who touched us touch you. We want you to join our family. We are not ashamed of you! Stop feeling the need for self-protection. Stop with the unbelief. Stop hiding. Stop thinking you will contaminate everything you touch. Come with us to touch the King. Come with us. You will not contaminate us. You do not have to hide. Join us! Join the people of faith and not the self-imposed judges of religion who sneer at us. Don't be one who happens to bump into Jesus in a crowded marketplace. Instead, join those of us who are touching Him intentionally. Come with us - we are going to touch the Scapegoat!

Lee Shipp

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