

Small Group Discussion Guide

“Alive” (pt. 4) – 5/11/2014

Scripture: John 21:1-19

Bottom Line: Jesus' grace covers our guilt and shame.

INTRODUCTION:

How do you handle shame or guilt? Will it bother you until you fix the problem or can you simply brush it off and not give it a second thought? People handle it differently. Thankfully, we will see that no matter how you handle it, God stands ready to cover you with his grace.

UNPACKING THE GOSPEL IN THE BIBLE:

Read John 21:1-13

Do you think that Peter returning to fish was a result of him trying to deal with the shame of denying Jesus?

While we cannot read his mind and the Scriptures do not clearly tell us, it is very likely that Peter was returning to something he knew to be comforting. People often go to things that bring them comfort in the middle of shame and stress. Can you imagine the shame Peter was under for denying his dear friend and Lord? Add to that the fact that now Jesus was alive and he knew that Peter had denied him in a time of great need.

Where do you run for comfort?

I've heard of avid surfers literally running to the water after bad news to be comforted by the waves. Personally, I want to be completely alone during times of shame so I can think things over.

What do these verse reveal to you about Jesus?

Jesus revealed himself to the disciples. It is Jesus that takes the initiative to pursue a restored relationship with Peter. The same is true for us. God has always taken the initiative. Be glad that he does. Otherwise, our wandering hearts would wander off to other comforts and other gods.

Read John 21:15-19

Why does Jesus ask Peter three times if Peter loves him?

It is clear that Jesus is referring back to the time when Peter denied Jesus. Each time, Jesus reinstates Peter back into his service symbolizing his forgiveness. Peter doesn't work to earn forgiveness. He simply repents by acknowledging his love for Jesus, as opposed to denying him.

UNDERSTANDING HOW THE GOSPEL APPLIES TO MY LIFE:

Do you continuously carry around guilt and shame for past actions?

The good news is that God wants to take away all of our guilt and shame. We do not work for our forgiveness. When we repent of our sin, God freely welcomes us back into good fellowship with him.

Does a Christian lose their salvation when they sin?

When a Christian sins, they do not lose their salvation but they do step out of good fellowship with God. When they repent, they move back into good fellowship with God. It would be the same thing to say that a son does not stop being a son when he disobeys his parents. Rather, his parents are upset with him and their fellowship is not good at the moment, because of the son's disobedience. Typically, the parents will discipline the son and when he repents, they will have good fellowship again.

Why is it so important that we allow God to take away our guilt and shame?

One, we were made to know and enjoy God, but our guilt and shame for past actions will prevent us from doing that. Secondly, we have a God-given mission to be a light to others who carry their shame with them all the time and have no hope in themselves to be rid of it. We can be living proof that the gospel heals people.

LIVING OUT THE GOSPEL IN MY EVERYDAY LIFE:

How do we give our shame and guilt to Jesus? Dwell repeatedly on this:

- 1) Remember who you were without Jesus: rebel, powerless, selfish.
- 2) Think about what Christ has done to redeem you:
 - Jesus came, Jesus died, Jesus rose, Jesus ascended
- 3) Think about who you are now as a result of what God has done:
 - Adopted, loved, forgiven, cleansed, given purpose, eternal life