

Shame on Jesus

16th October 2022 – Run and Hide

Key Scripture: Acts 24

Summary:

Our ability to feel shame begins very early in life, long before our “thinking brains” are developed. It helps us to learn when we are stepping outside the boundaries of safe and socially acceptable behaviour, and “healthy shame” (which is closely linked to guilt) helps us to do this throughout our lives. However, if adults around us don’t (or can’t) help us to deal with how we are feeling, we become overwhelmed. We therefore find other ways of coping, which we will be looking at over the next few weeks.

We see one of these at work in Acts 24 – the impulse to remove ourselves from situations where we feel shamed. There are several factors in this story which might provoke shame in Felix, but rather than confronting the situation, Felix “runs and hides”. He avoids summoning Lysias to discuss their next steps, he sends Paul away in panic, and then procrastinates making his final judgement. Behaviours like this feel protective, as they prevent our shame from being exposed. However, they come at a cost of losing connection with others and missing out on God-given opportunities for creativity and flourishing. But God is always looking for us. Even when we hide in shame, He moves towards the whole of us in love and blessing.

You can listen or watch again to this sermon [here](#).

Further resources:

At the end of the sermon, Naomi presented a brief version of “the gospel in chairs”, which is influenced by Eastern Orthodox theology. You can watch a longer version, with more explanation by Brad Jersak [here](#).

If you’d like to read more about the practical effects of shame on our lives, and how we can begin to address it in community, you might like to explore [The Soul of Shame](#), by Dr Curt Thompson.

Discussion:

(this could be something that you talk about with some friends, or in a small group).

1. How would you describe the different ways shame turns up in our thoughts, sensations, emotions and imaginations? What images might you use? What does it say? What does it feel like in your body?
2. How did your first family “do” emotions, including guilt and shame? How might this have shaped your relationship to shame as an adult?
3. Can you think of an example of a time that you have felt the need to “run and hide”? Perhaps you have removed yourself from a situation or kept putting off a decision or conversation? What comes up for you as you think it over now?

Put it into Practice:

1. Find a quiet space and take 2 chairs, placing them opposite one another. Take a seat in one, and imagine that Jesus is sitting in the other, looking at you with love. What does that feel like? What distance between the chairs do you feel comfortable with?
2. Begin to notice occasions in your daily life where you feel anxious, or where you want to “run and hide”. Are you able to name this with God, without judging or criticising yourself for this?

Previous PDFs in Series:

1. [The Origins of Shame](#)

