

Overcoming Shame and Sin

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Hey everybody I'm Beth Davis, and today I want to give a little encouragement to anyone who sins. so, I'm talking to myself too. Let's start with a prayer. We'll entrust everything our time together this conversation, our hearts to the intercession of our most beloved Mother.

Hail Mary

In the name of the Father of the Son of the Holy Spirit. Amen. Hail Mary Full of Grace. The Lord is with thee. Blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus. Holy Mary Mother of God. Pray for us sinners now, and at the hour of our death, Amen. In the Name of the Father and of the Son of the Holy spirit. Amen.

Struggling with Shame

So, for many years, I struggled with and suffered from shame. I was introduced to pornography at a very young age and I struggled against it for many years through my teenage years into my adult life. Even as a good and faithful, practicing Catholic I brought it again and again to the sacrament of confession. But it wasn't only sexual sin that caused shame to enter my life. In fact, I think that may have been a doorway where Shame got a really a firm foothold in my life. I felt shame about my body. I felt shame about my personality. I felt shame about what I said, what I didn't say. I felt shame about sins that I'd committed. And I felt shame even when I made innocent mistakes. And this continued for many years, even as I developed a beautiful and intimate relationship with Jesus, I struggled to get that monkey of shame off of my back.

An Encounter with the Holy Spirit

And I'll never forget. A couple of years ago, I was driving along this beautiful highway, in Northern Washington. It was fall. The forest was brilliant with color and yet I was having trouble enjoying it. I was feeling kind of agitated, kind of irritated. And I began to go back through my memory. What have I done? Why was I feeling so yucky? Right? Why couldn't I enter in and enjoy? I felt like I had made a mistake and the Holy Spirit broke through. He spoken to my heart, so clearly in that moment. And He said with all love, you're addicted to shame. You're addicted to shame. And I was overwhelmed with relief, flooded with joy. As the Holy spirit convicted me, I had become so accustomed to shame in my life that I actually didn't feel right if I didn't feel wrong. Does that make sense? I couldn't relax and enjoy my life because I felt, like I should be full of shame all the time. Simply for existing. I was being too hard on myself. When it came to sin or anything else, Shame had a stronghold in my life.

Open the Shutters

And I wonder if maybe you've struggled with shame too. Maybe not to that extent or maybe so, maybe for you you've been to confession. You know that the Lord has forgiven you, in the sacrament and yet you still struggle to forgive yourself or maybe you're still struggling against a habitual sin and you keep going to confession but you're losing fervor and energy. You're feeling discouraged, right? Is God going to forgive me again?

Well, today, I want to speak hope and life to you wherever you are in relationship to shame. However, you've experienced sin in your life. I want to open the shutters, right? To pull back the curtains and shine a light. I want to invite Jesus into the experience of sin, that we all have had in our lives. Whatever you're suffering, the Savior Has come. The Savior is coming. In fact, I believe that if you're watching this talk right now, it's because the Savior, wants to radically come in and save you right now today. He has some hope, some healing some freedom that He wants to give you today. And we're going to experience that in His word in the Gospel of John chapter 8 the Lord wants to reveal to you. Who He really is and who you really are in His word.

John Chapter Eight

So, grab a Bible. If you don't have it, we're going to have a little Bible study today with John chapter 8, you probably know it well, the woman caught in adultery. You see, I wonder if sometimes when we sin, we don't actually know who we're going to get with God. I wonder if when you sin you think the Lord is angry or vengeful or disappointed. Sometimes we can have a wrong image of the Father, and believe that... until we go to confession, God, isn't happy with us. He couldn't love us, right?

But the reality is that God's heart toward us. Never changes despite our sin. Now that's not a license to sin but it's important to know, to believe to stake our claim, on the fact that God is unchanging. His love toward us is unchanging. And I believe His heart toward us is revealed in John chapter 8. I want you to hear, to see even imaginatively to experience the heart of Jesus for you every time you sin. Because like this sinful woman, like me we are sinful people, but we have the promise of Jesus the promise of healing, freedom and hope. And those are the three movements, that I see through the Gospel of John chapter 8.

So, let's get started. Verse 2 ***"Early in the morning, He came again to the temple. All the people came to Him and sat down, and He began to teach them, the Scribes and the Pharisees, brought a woman who had been caught in adultery, and making her stand before all of them. They said to Him "Teacher, this woman was caught in the very act of committing adultery. Now in the law of Moses, in the law Moses commanded us to stone, such a woman. Now, what do you say?" They said this to test Him so that they might have some charge to bring against Him. Jesus bent down and wrote with His finger on the ground."***

So, I want to pause here because I hear and see the first movement in this Gospel. When we sin, Jesus is there. When we sin, Jesus is there. And I want to prove that to you in verse 2 ***"Early in the morning, He came again into the temple."*** Even before this woman was dragged out of her lover's bedroom. Even before the Pharisees set up this trap, Jesus was there. He was waiting. He

was ready to receive her. And my friend, when you sin, when I sin Jesus is always there. He's ready to receive us. He comes in advance. He knows. He understands that we're weak. That we're fragile, that we're sinners. And yet He comes, and He waits for us. He waits to be merciful to us.

He is Always There

So, the next time you sin I want you to remember Verse 2 *"Early in the morning He came again into the temple again,"* right? You, you can't run out of opportunities to be met by Jesus to encounter Him in your sin and in your shame every single time He's waiting there for you. And what happens when the accusations come when we've given into temptation, when we fallen again, we've disappointed ourselves or disappointed someone we love when those voices of accusation fly, when the fingers are pointing. And sometimes they're our own fingers, our own voices.

What does Jesus do in this first movement? He's there, He's waiting. He squats down on the ground and He makes himself very small. He makes himself very small so that we don't have to be afraid to come to Him. He humbles Himself. So that even as we've fallen, even as we've come down right in our dignity, we we've never lost our dignity, but we've somehow shirked it right? We don't believe it when we sin and yet Jesus, He gets down low He comes to us and He waits for us. He waits for us in our sin and in our shame.

Talk to Jesus

So, in this first movement Jesus is already there, but what's our role. What do we do? Right? Whether we've been dragged before Him or whether it's our own conscience, right? Bringing us to the presence of Jesus and looking for forgiveness, looking for comfort. The very first movement I want you to make is simply to talk to Jesus. Just tell Him, tell Him that you sinned, tell Him that you're sorry. Right? No great theatrics necessary Father Jacques Philippe in his book "Searching for and Maintaining Peace." He tells us that we shouldn't be surprised when we sin. In fact, if we're deeply discouraged, every time we sin it's because we actually are full of pride. And we're surprised that we who are so Holy, so perfect. Have fallen into temptation and sin. No, the posture to adopt is that humble low posture of Jesus.

So, as He's there down on the ground, I even want you to imagine yourself coming down on the ground and telling Him Jesus, I sinned again, I'm sorry. Just talk to Jesus. That's all Prayer is. Just talk to Jesus. Relate your heart to Jesus. Let's keep going. Starting at Verse 7, *"When they kept on questioning Him He straightened up and said to them let anyone who is among you without sin be the first to throw a stone at her. And once again, He bent down and wrote on the ground. When they heard it, they went away. One by one, beginning with the elders and Jesus was left alone with the woman standing before Him."*

Get Accountability

So, this is that second movement. The first is that we've talked to Jesus. That's where the healing begins. But in this second movement of the Gospel in the second movement of our Souls, seeking forgiveness and reconciliation, I want you to talk to someone, right? Jesus stood up and He talked to the Pharisees. I want you to do the same thing. I want you to go. And I want you to talk to someone. Of course, I want to encourage you right now to run to the sacrament of confession. I don't care how many times you've confessed. The same thing I've been there but Jesus is waiting every single time.

Remember He's waiting. And when we bring our sin to the light when we speak it out loud, suddenly the shadows flee, right? We open ourselves up to that healing light of Jesus and freedom. Freedom is available to us when we're silent we're still in shackles. When we're silent, the voice of the enemy is ringing in our ears. The voice of our accusers even our own voice can be accusing us so loudly. And yet when we speak it out, when we say to Jesus and to a priest in the sacrament of confession, I've sinned. I'm sorry. If we name it if we name it number and kind, remember freedom will come. Freedom will come.

So, I want you to talk first to Jesus. I want you to talk to a priest and I want to encourage you to talk to someone you love. I want you to get some accountability in your life. Some help. If it's just a, that you lost your temper this isn't maybe a normal thing that you fall into. It's important to just say out loud, to ask for forgiveness to tell someone I really messed up to call your best friend and say, Gosh! I really messed up with my kid or with my spouse or I lost it at work. Or to apologize to the person themselves, but to bring it to the light we want to make this movement out of the shadows into the light. Talking to Jesus, brings healing talking to a priest, talking to good. Holy friends bring freedom, brings light.

Hear Jesus and Listen to Him

And finally, this third movement, verse 10 *"Jesus straightened up and said to her woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you. She said, no one, sir. And Jesus said, neither do I condemn you. Go your way. And from now on, do not sin again."* Neither do I condemn you so important that we hear those words from Jesus in the sacrament of confession. But it's important that we hear them in prayer too. I want to invite you to enter into this Gospel as the sinful woman as a sinful man, and to encounter Jesus who's waiting for you early in the morning, waiting for you in the temple who makes Himself low and humble right? Who, who makes Himself available to you I want you to hear His voice saying to you today? Neither do I condemn you. Neither do I condemn you.

And I want you to hear Him invite you by His grace with His help only through His strength only because you've encountered His love and His mercy. Can we possibly follow this command? Go and sin no more. So, this third movement, right? We talked to Jesus. We talked to someone else. And finally, I want you to hear Jesus talk to you. I want you to hear Jesus. Talk to you in this gospel. I want you to hear His words. *"Neither do I condemn you."* And to believe

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them, to stake a claim here, to believe that He's speaking to you about you to agree with His word to receive His forgiveness, "go and sin no more."

The grace of the sacrament will help you to avoid sin. Again, forgiving yourself will help you to avoid sin because when we don't forgive ourselves, we stay in that shame. We stay despondent and shackled in shame in shadows.

An Invitation

So, my friends, I want to invite you today encounter the Lord, encounter His healing. And in the word, I want to invite you today to encounter His freedom in the sacrament of confession. I want to invite you today to encounter His hope. As you hear His voice saying neither do I condemn you, go and sin no more. It is possible. It is possible to overcome our sin. Keep talking to Him, keep going to confession keep encountering Him in prayer, every single day. And just as the Lord healed and freed me from the sins of my childhood. I believe that He will heal and free you. Let that be your hope today.

God bless you my friends