

Why You Should Be Ashamed

Scripture: Mark 8:38–9:1

Code: 41-42

Let's open our Bibles to the eighth chapter of Mark's gospel. Now I have been endeavoring to take large chunks of Mark all the way along, moving as fast as we can to try to finish the gospel of Mark next summer, getting more the big picture this time through the story of our Lord Jesus Christ. However, today, essentially I have to stop and just look at one verse. I don't want you to forget how it's really supposed to be done...one verse at a time...as we always say, so...just so you don't get out of habits that are good habits to maintain.

I want you to look at the last verse of chapter 8. We made a somewhat passing reference to it last Sunday at the conclusion of the message, but I want to go back to that verse because it just sort of jumps out of the text, it stands alone although it has a context, it still stands alone as one that demands our attention. "For whoever is ashamed of Me and My words in this adulterous and sinful generation, the Son of Man will also be ashamed of him when he comes in the glory of his Father with the holy angels." That verse is very, very important. It cannot be left without careful consideration.

The operative word that I want you to notice is a form of the word "shame," ashamed...ashamed of Me, ashamed of him. Shame is a very, very useful reality. Shame is not only useful, it is critical. No one really comes to salvation who hasn't become ashamed of himself. That's essentially what lies behind repentance. It is the feeling that guilt produces, it is the evidence of remorse over one's sin.

Now everybody understands the word shame. You can't say it without having your lips curl a little bit. We understand its implications. It is essential for anybody in this world who wants to enter into the Kingdom of God, wants to spend eternity in heaven to experience a profound, devastating kind of personal shame. I know there have been many through the years who have preached the gospel as if it is nothing but an invitation to a prosperity kind of life, without regard to what a person really is. A true salvation, true evangelism focuses on the sinner's shame...the sinner's shame.

There are, let's say, two categories in which the sinner needs to recognize shame. Category number one would be the common way to understand it, and that would be...to be ashamed of one's immorality...to be ashamed of those things that are flagrant and open sins. But, you know, that's...that's something the sinner fights against and that's why we say that people conduct themselves shamelessly. I suppose it's safe to say there have been other cultures in the history of the world that have done everything they can possibly to eliminate shame, but maybe none have been any more successful than ours. Just exactly what in the world kind of behavior is left in this culture for which universally people heap shame on someone? Maybe child abuse, maybe the rape and murder of someone. But outside some horrendous kinds of crimes, this is virtually a shameless culture. Not ashamed of sexual sin, not ashamed of heterosexual fornication of every imaginable kind, not ashamed of pornographic preoccupation, not ashamed of homosexuality, not ashamed of overt pride, self-promotion, self-will, not ashamed of greed, not ashamed of covetousness, not afraid of the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes or the pride of life. We have a very shameless culture.

How do you get sinners in this culture to feel shame for anything short of child abuse, crimes against children or some kind of mass horrendous behavior that affects people's lives in a devastating way? The average person in our culture just will not feel ashamed of whatever it is that person chooses to do. This cuts people off from the hope of salvation because they have no shame.

In fact, if you look at Philippians, for a minute, I want to show you something in Philippians chapter 3 that really does define this. Philippians chapter 3, verse 18, "Many walk," that means they conduct their life, their lives, "Many conduct their lives of whom I told you and now tell you even weeping that they are enemies of the cross of Christ."

Now why would somebody be the enemy of the cross of Christ? Why would anybody be the enemy of Christ, the Savior, the Redeemer, the lover of men's souls, the one who offers eternal life, blessing, peace, joy? Why would anybody be an enemy of Christ? Why would anybody be an enemy of the cross where Christ paid the price for our sins? Why?

Because, verse 19 says, "Their God is their...what?...appetite." Their God is their desire. And here comes the key statement. "And their glory is in their shame and they set their minds on earthly things." They set their minds on earthly things. They live to satisfy their lusts. And their glory, or translated another way, their boast is in their shame. What they ought to be ashamed of is what they boast about. You know a culture is in a severe condition when it boasts about what it ought to be ashamed of.

But there's another kind of shame, not that irreligious, immoral, open, flagrant, perverted, corrupt kind of behavior, there is another kind of shame and that is religious shame. And this is even harder to elicit. The bottom line is that anybody engaged in any false religion should be ashamed, not of their immorality, but of their self-righteousness. Any sinner feels that he can earn his way into heaven ought to be ashamed of such a thought...ought to be ashamed of himself for assuming that he could please an infinitely holy God. Ought to be ashamed of himself in thinking that he is good enough to achieve a right relationship with God, a right standing with God by doing good.

I did a somewhat unique thing yesterday, I spent quite a while reading the Koran. I read sura, after sura, after sura, stating the fact that if you're good enough and you do good enough works and good enough deeds, Allah will receive you. People are deep into that religion and I'll tell you right now, they're not ashamed of that religion. That was precisely the case in Israel. They were up to their ears in a false religion. They talked about the true God, but they had reshaped Him into a false representation of the true God.

Do you remember in the book of Exodus when the children of Israel left Egypt and went out in the wilderness? They turned the living and true God, the God who is Spirit and the God who is never to be represented by any kind of earthly image into a golden calf. They had used the same name but they had created an idol.

Israel had done the same thing in the time of our Lord. They said they were worshiping Yahweh, they were worshiping the true and living God, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. The fact was they had invented a God with that name who was another God. This is nothing new. They had falsified the true God and they had worshiped false gods throughout their whole history. And while there were

people, I'm sure, in the land of Israel, who were immoral and not ashamed of it, there were a whole lot of people who were moral and not ashamed of it. There were people who were irreligious, unsynagogued...tax collectors, prostitutes, thieves, all those that Jesus could reach. It was easier to get to those who would be ashamed of their immoral behavior, than it was to get to those needed to be ashamed of their moral and religious behavior. You understand that. That's the hard area.

So our Lord here identifies the nation Israel with this phrase. Verse 38, "This adulterous and sinful generation." Is He saying that adultery was rampant in Israel? Is He saying that? Is He saying this is an overt, open, wicked culture?

No, because that's not the case. They went to the temple. They adhered to all of the ceremonies. They endeavored to follow the Law, they were fastidious about that. They had synagogues in every tiny little village in town throughout the land and they were manned by priests and rabbis who completely plied the religious Pharisaical legalistic, self-righteous form of Judaism, the apostate form, into the lives of the populace. They were a very religious and on the surface very moral and they should have been ashamed about the condition of their hearts, covered up by their superficial morality. They should have been ashamed about the fact that they were so deceived and deluded that they thought they could earn their way into acceptance with an infinitely holy God, but they weren't.

So there are two ways to be deceived about the fact that you should be ashamed...irreligious and immoral people should be ashamed of their sinful, open conduct, and religious and superficially moral people should be ashamed of their hypocrisy. And that's the issue here. In fact, Jesus got a better response, didn't He, out of the tax collectors. That's why He said, "I didn't come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance," when the Pharisees excoriated Him for having a banquet at a house full of the riff raff, the unsynagogued, the outcasts. Sinners are very good at self-deception and they loved their sin, they loved their corruption and their overt immorality. And there are shameless people in every society and they're everywhere in our society. And as I pointed out, there's very little seemingly to be ashamed of any more in terms of behavior and it's hard to convince those kinds of people that they ought to be ashamed of themselves, deeply profoundly ashamed of themselves. But it is also true that religious people ought to be ashamed of themselves if they are deluded and deceived in a false religious system by which they are tending to earn their way to God when they know the truth about their own wicked, shameful hearts.

That's exactly the issue here. Who is the adulterous and sinful generation? It is Israel at the time of our Lord. Is it because they are outwardly physically immoral? No, it is because they are spiritually immoral. They are spiritually adulterous. What do you mean by that? They have defected from their true God, right? Remember in the Old Testament God identifies Himself as a husband, Israel as His wife and accuses Israel of adultery by going after a false image of who He is and other gods. This language would be very familiar to the people who are hearing Him that day.

Go back to Jeremiah chapter 6, let me see if I can't give you a sense of this. Back in Jeremiah chapter 6, Jeremiah now, remember, was a prophet who is denouncing Israel for spiritual adultery for departing from the true God for worshiping idols, for having a wrong view of the true God, false religion. In chapter 6 of Jeremiah verse 9, "Thus says the Lord of hosts, 'They...meaning the coming army that will devastate Jerusalem and Judea and thus the nation Israel coming from Babylon...they will thoroughly glean as divine the remnant of Israel, pass your hand again like a grape gatherer over the branches.'" What's going to happen...and the image is very vivid...is here comes Babylon and

they're going to take their hand and just string it right down the branch of the vineyard and all the grapes are coming off. This is judgment. "To whom...verse 10...shall I speak and give warning that they may hear? Their ears are closed. They can't listen.' The word of the Lord has become a reproach to them. They have no delight in it. But I'm full of the wrath of the Lord, says the prophet, I'm weary with holding it in. So pour it out on the children in the street, on the gathering of young men together for both husband and wife shall be taken, the aged and the very old." And that's exactly what happened when the siege came, the houses were turned over to others. The fields and the wives together turned over to others. The Lord's message is, "I will stretch out My hand against the inhabitants of the land from the least of them to the greatest of them. Everyone is greedy for gain and even including the prophet and the priest." How corrupt is that religion?

"They have healed the brokenness of My people only superficially." They're supposed to be the healers. They're supposed to be the spiritual resource. What they do is very superficial. They say peace, peace, they provide no peace. That is to say they say they offer peace with God, they offer nothing of the sort.

Then verse 15, the key, "Were they ashamed because of the abomination they have done? They were not even ashamed at all. They didn't even know how to blush." Boy, you know you are in serious condition when you are engulfed in false religious behavior, false religious commitment and feel no shame.

Along with it, of course, all kinds of sins because false religion can't restrain the flesh. No shame. "Therefore they shall fall among those who fall at the time that I punish them they shall be cast down."

Bottom line, if you don't feel the proper shame that you ought to feel over your condition, whether it's a condition of irreligious immoral sin, or religious outwardly moral hypocritical sin, you had better feel the shame or judgment is coming and it is inevitable.

Turn to Isaiah 57 because here I want you to see that phrase, this adulterous and corrupt, or adulterous and wicked, or adulterous and sinful nation described. In the fifty-seventh chapter of Isaiah, judgment is again pronounced and particularly the leaders because the people follow their leaders. Pick it up in verse 3, "You sons of a sorcerous, offspring of an adulterer and a prostitute." This is God's indictment to the prophet Isaiah on the nation Israel and its leaders for spiritual adultery. That is they should have been faithful to their true husband, God, they prostituted themselves to false gods, to idols. And he goes on to talk about that. He describes them as openly mocking God, sticking out their tongues in verse 4, children of rebellion, offspring of deceit. He then talks about the fact that they are engaged in offerings, grain offerings, drink offerings, verse 6. They even make sacrifices, verse 7, but these are to false gods. Verse 8 say they are far removed from Me. And here's very, very graphic description of their adultery. "You have uncovered yourself. You've made yourself naked. You've gone up, made your bed wide. You've made an agreement for yourself with them. You've loved their bed. You've looked on their manhood." This is a picture of spiritual adultery. You've literally engaged in this with false gods and you made it pleasurable. You increased your perfume. You sent your envoys a great distance...on and on it goes. This is the spiritual adultery of Israel.

So in verse 13, he says, "When you cry out, 'Let your collection...your collection of idols deliver you but the wind will carry all of them up and a breath will take them away but he who takes refuge in Me

will inherit the land and possess My holy mountain.”

So here's an indictment of Israel for spiritual adultery that is very vivid, very graphic. Turn to Ezekiel chapter 16, familiar language, Ezekiel chapter 16, to any Jews because they knew these passages very well. Verse 30, “How languishing is your heart, declares the Lord God, while you do all these things, the actions of a bold faced harlot.” That's pretty straight forward. Bold faced harlot. “When you built your shrine at the beginning of every street and made your high place in every square and sustaining money, you were not like a harlot.” In other words, you didn't even have to pay...be paid to do this, you set up false gods everywhere, ahead of every street. “You...verse 32...adulterous wife who takes strangers instead of her husband.”

Verse 35, “Therefore, O harlot, hear the Word of the Lord, thus says the Lord God, your lewdness was poured out and your nakedness uncovered through your harlotries with your lovers and all your detestable idols and because of the blood of your sons which you gave to idols, they literally put their children on the altar to Molech and slaughtered them there. I will gather all your lovers with whom you took pleasure, even all those whom you loved and all those whom you hated and I'll gather them against you from every direction, expose your nakedness to them that they may all see your nakedness and I'll judge you like women who commit adultery or shed blood or judged and I'll bring on you the blood of wrath and jealousy.” And He did in the judgment that was soon to come.

Turn to Hosea, Hosea chapter 2. Hosea married a woman named Gomer, she turned out to be a prostitute. I've always thought that anybody who would marry a woman named Gomer was asking for trouble. Nonetheless, maybe that name had different connotation in ancient times. Anyway, he married her, she became a prostitute and that relationship becomes an illustration of God's marrying Israel and having Israel prostitute herself.

So in verse 2, the prophet...of chapter 2...the prophet Hosea says, “Contend with your mother, contend for she's not my wife, I'm not her husband. Let her put away her harlotry from her face and her adultery from between her breasts. I'll strip her naked. I'll expose her as on the day when she was born. I'll also make her like a wilderness, make her like a desert land and slay her with thirst and I'll have no compassion on her children because they're the children of harlotry for the mother who has played the harlot, conceived them that acted shamefully for she said, ‘I'll go after my lovers who give me bread and water, my wool, my flax, my oil, my drink. Therefore I'll hedge up her way with thorns, build a wall against her so she can't find her paths.’”

Judgment comes on Israel because of spiritual harlotry. Now go back to Mark chapter 8. When our Lord designates this adulterous and sinful generation, he is talking about Israel. Israel acting in his day the same way they had acted in the past. Were there lots of idols in the land? No, they really had been cleansed from multiple idols by the captivity. However, they had created one great idol, the false representation of the true God. That is equally blasphemous. God identifies as blasphemy worship of any other God or worship of His name but in a perverted form. And that's exactly what Israel was guilty of. This was an idolatrous generation. They were very religious and they refused to be ashamed of themselves. They refused to be ashamed of their twisting of the Old Testament. They refused to be ashamed of their misrepresentation of the true and living God. They refused to be ashamed of their secret sin. They refused to uncover the wretchedness on the inside. They refused to be ashamed of their hypocrisy.

They were not ashamed of themselves. So, since they refused to be ashamed of themselves, they

turned and were ashamed of Jesus. That's what it says. "Whoever is ashamed of Me and My words in this adulterous and sinful generation."

The only people who will ever be saved are the people who are ashamed of themselves. That's what it says, you know, in the Sermon on the Mount, the first sermon you read in the New Testament, "Blessed are the poor in spirit," the spiritually bankrupt who are meek and broken and mourn and hunger and thirst for righteousness. They're ashamed of themselves. They know they're spiritually bankrupt. They know they have nothing to commend themselves. They weep over their conditions, they hunger for a righteousness they know they don't possess.

All human beings have plenty to be ashamed of, the religious and the irreligious. The irreligious are just openly sinful. The religious are just covertly sinful. Outside they're painted like whitewash tombs, inside they're full of dead men's bones.

Now it comes down to this. The only people who will ever be saved are people who are ashamed of themselves and not ashamed of Christ. If you will not be ashamed of yourself, then you will be ashamed of Christ because you will reject His message. Salvation comes to those who are ashamed. Those who pound their chests and say, "God, be merciful to me, a sinner," like the Publican in Luke 18, receive grace, forgiveness and eternal life. He's talking about those kinds of people in this context.

Go back to verse 34, these are the people of whom He speaks when He says, "If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself." That's hating yourself, feeling shame. That's the person who feels guilty, who faces the inevitability of just judgment, eternal death and is willing to lose his life to save it and won't make the bad bargain of gaining the whole world and losing his own soul.

Now you have a choice. You're either ashamed of you or ashamed of Christ. That ought to be a simple choice, right? You and I have everything to be ashamed of, but there's nothing in Christ to be ashamed of. What are you ashamed of? Perfect holiness, perfect righteousness, perfect virtue, perfect goodness, perfect knowledge, wisdom, compassion, love, mercy, tenderness, power, justice, generosity. What are you ashamed of? What is there about Christ to be ashamed of? Is it any wonder that the Apostle Paul said, "I boast only in Jesus Christ, my Lord. I boast only in Jesus Christ, my Lord." What is there to be ashamed of?

If you're ashamed of Christ, you've got it exactly backwards. He deserves all honor, all glory, all worship, all praise and you deserve shame. There is nothing about Jesus to be ashamed of. Remarkably, in Hebrews 2:11 it says, "He's not ashamed to call us brothers." And in Hebrews 11 it says, "God is not ashamed to be our God." God is not ashamed to love and redeem us. Why would we be ashamed of the one who seeks to love and redeem us? That's the folly of sin, isn't it? That's the stupidity of it.

Unwilling to be ashamed of yourself when then indicted by Christ and His gospel, your shame turns on Him and you reject Him. But for the believer, we can say with the Apostle Paul, Romans 1:16, "I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ," right? Because it's the power of God unto salvation to everyone who believes, the Jew first and also the Gentile. I'm not ashamed of the gospel.

In Philippians 1, the Apostle Paul makes the same point, verse 20, "According to my earnest

expectation and hope, I will not be put to shame in anything. But now as always, Christ will be exalted in my body whether by life or by death." I'm ashamed of myself, I will never be ashamed of Him. He's not ashamed to call me brother. God's not ashamed to be my God and I never want to bring shame on His name.

Most sinners, all sinners who reject the gospel, are ashamed of Christ; they're ashamed of Him; they're embarrassed to accept Him. Not because He lacks noble character, not because He lacked divine power, but because in order to be unashamed of Him, you have to be absolutely ashamed of yourself. Self-humiliation is the hardest thing the sinner does. Castigating oneself, self-hate, denying yourself...that's all bound up in that, taking up the cross...in other words, willingness to suffer even death because you know you deserve it and because the price of eternal salvation is worth anything in this life...self-shame, hating oneself, that's the only path to salvation.

The forgiven sinner, the believer, is one who has a strong overwhelming shame and it doesn't go away, you have it all your life. And you call on Christ to save you in spite of what you are. The unforgiven sinner, the one who goes into eternal hell and eternal punishment is the one who has an overpowering resistance to self-shame and therefore turns his shame on Christ and mocks and discredits and rejects Him and His gospel. So it basically comes down to either being ashamed of myself, or being ashamed of Christ.

Let's look at the verse a little more closely, for a minute. First, sinners ashamed of the Son of Man, "Whoever is ashamed of Me and My words in this adulterous and sinful generation." As I said, He deserved honor, He deserved glory, He deserved worship, He deserved self-denying, sacrificial obedience, He deserved faith, all of those things that were part and parcel of appropriate responses to the gospel, but He didn't get it. When He went to His own synagogue in Luke 4, people heard Him preach. He announced that He had brought the gospel they had all waited for and they were filled, it says, with rage. In the third chapter of Mark, you remember back, the Pharisees and Herodians came together to try to plot to destroy Him. That's because they were in an evil and adulterous generation. They were ashamed of Him and His words, the gospel.

Why? Love of self, love of sin, love of acceptance. They would not humiliate themselves and so they turned their animosity on Christ. How shameful was their behavior toward Christ? They cried, "Crucify Him, Crucify Him," as we shall see in a few months and had the Romans nail Him to a cross. It's the issue again, folks, you're either ashamed of yourself or of Christ. Fear of man, love of self, love of sin dominates the fallen heart and the sinner loves his sin, loves himself in such a way as not to be ashamed. It's not natural, it's not normal. And so he turns on Christ.

The second point that is made in the verse is the Son of Man will be ashamed of such a sinner. If you're ashamed of Christ, He'll be ashamed of you. Back to verse 38, "The Son of Man will also be ashamed of him." Those have to be some of the most tragic words, frightening words, threatening words written on the pages of Scripture. The Son of Man will be ashamed of him.

Can you think of anything worse than to be rejected by Him? That is the inevitable result if you reject Him. The Son of Man will be ashamed of him, and then this, "When He comes in the glory of His Father with the holy angels." This verse is so Old Testament it's really amazing.

The adulterous and sinful generation, I showed you how much that connects to the Old Testament.

But look at this phrase, “When He comes in the glory of His Father with the holy angels.” Where does that come from?

Go back to Daniel chapter 7. This too is drawn right out of the prophets. We’ve been to Jeremiah, Isaiah, Ezekiel, Hosea, now the one left out in that little list in sequence would be Daniel. Our Lord summed up, pulled together all these elements of the Old Testament prophets in this one verse.

Now all the Jews knew this passage in Daniel 7 because it was one of the great hopeful passages, one of the great Messianic passages, one of the great triumphant passages, obviously. They had the same fascination with Daniel that people today have with Daniel, right? The great book of Daniel taken into captivity will not defile himself with the king’s meat, he becomes eventually the Prime Minister of the pagan kingdom in the process, you know, God shuts the lion’s mouths and they survive the fiery furnace. It’s a great story. Everybody knew the story and everybody knew the prophecy that is here. This great prophecy starts in verse 9. “I kept looking,” this is a vision that comes to Daniel, “until thrones were set up and the Ancient of Days,” that’s the Father, “the Ancient of Days, God the Father, took His seat. His vesture was like white snow, His hair, the hair of His head like pure wool, His throne was ablaze with flames, its wheels were a burning fire,” very much like Ezekiel 1 vision. This is the throne of God, white means purity, the head being white, wisdom, the flame refers to majesty, the fire, authority and power, this is God in a judgment setting. This is the divine judgment of God beginning to move and a river of fire, verse 10, devastating, consuming judgment, flowing out from before Him and He’s attended by thousands upon thousands. Who are those? Angels and myriads upon myriads, tens of thousands of multiples of angels standing before Him, the court sat and the books were opened. This is the judgment scene. And the books have the record of all the deeds and thoughts and actions of all the human beings who have ever lived. This is the coming judgment and judgment is set.

The remainder of the vision comes in verses 13 and 14. “I kept looking in the night visions and behold, with the clouds of heaven one like a Son of Man was coming.” This is the Son, the Messiah, and He came up to the Ancient of Days. And here’s an indication that He would be incarnate, Son of Man. “He came up to the Father, the Ancient of Days, and was presented before Him and to Him was given dominion, glory and a Kingdom that all the peoples, nations and men of every language might serve Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion which will not pass away and His Kingdom is one which will not be destroyed.” This is incredibly powerful vision of the coming judgment and establishment of the Kingdom of the Son of Man who is the Messiah, the second person of the Trinity, when He takes right to rule from the hand of the Ancient of Days, who is the Father.

Now you go back to the eighth chapter of Mark and you hear these words from the lips of our Lord. “The Son of Man will also be ashamed of him when He comes in the glory of His Father with the holy angels.” You saw the holy angels there, didn’t you, in Daniel 7? The thousands and thousands and myriads times myriads, and there was the Father in all His blazing glory is depicted in the scene there. He is the Father, the Ancient of Days. And the Son of Man was there taking His Kingdom. So when He comes to take His Kingdom, establish His reign forever on the earth, He also will come and be ashamed of those who were ashamed of Him. And when He heaps shame on them, it will catapult them into an eternal hell and they will spend the rest of eternity being ashamed. That’s what hell is, feeling the full shame. That’s why it is by weeping, wailing and gnashing of teeth, as the remorse is unbearable.

There are going to be protests at that judgment. “Lord, we did this in Your name, we did that in Your

name.” And He’ll say, “Depart from Me, I never knew you, you workers of iniquity. I have the record in the books.”

This scene is further depicted in the twentieth chapter of the book of Revelation as the Great White Throne Judgment. Verse 11, “I saw a Great White Throne and Him who sat upon it from whose presence earth and heaven fled away.” This is the end of the creation as we know it and now the dead, great, small, important, unimportant, standing before the throne, the books were opened. Same books that we heard Daniel refer to in his vision. The books were opened. They are the record of every deed, thought, word of every person. Another book was opened which is the Book of Life. “And the dead were judged from the things that were written in the books, according to their deeds, and the sea gave up the dead and death and Hades gave up the dead in them, and they were judged, every one of them, according to their deeds. Then death and Hades were thrown into the Lake of Fire. This is the second death, the Lake of Fire, and if anyone’s name was not found written in the Book of Life, that book has the record of those who belong to God and are forgiven. Anybody not written there to be thrown into the Lake of Fire because they’ll be judged by the things that are written in the other books which is the record of their sins for which there is no forgiveness for they have rejected the only Savior.”

Shame will come on them, not just then, but forever. That’s why Isaiah 3:11 says, “Woe to the world, woe to the wicked. It will go badly with him for what he deserves will be done to him.” No blame shifting.

The record is there and the holy Lord will be ashamed to associate with such forever...forever. This is a stunning scene. This is a powerful invitation. Deny yourself, come after Me. And if you won’t because you’re ashamed of Me, it means you’re not ashamed of yourself. If you will not be ashamed of yourself but you will be ashamed of Me, just know this, that some day long after you’re dead, you will be raised and brought to a great tribunal at which point the judgment you’ve already been experiencing away from My presence will be sealed forever in hell. The day of reckoning will come for those ashamed of Christ.

The last vision that the world has of Christ will not be the one of Him hanging on the cross. He will come again in glory to establish His Kingdom and then the whole world of unbelievers will be brought to a tribunal and a throne where they will see Him in blazing glory. They will either see Him with joy and love, and the glories of heaven, or they will see Him in horror and terror and fear, cast forever out of His presence. So the call remains the same, back to verse 34. You want to come after Him, deny yourself, heap appropriate shame on yourself as an unworthy sinner, take up your cross, follow Him, lose your life to save it. That’s the invitation. Be willing to admit your sin. Live a life of rejection by the world. Give up your sinful independence to obey Christ. Lose your life here to find it forever.

In Romans 9:33 Paul wrote, “Behold I lay in Zion, a stone of stumbling and a rock of offense and whoever believes in Him will not be put to shame.” If you believe in Christ, you will never be put to shame. He will not be ashamed of you. Quite the contrary. He will declare that you belong to Him. He will give you a name, a special name, and He will welcome you into His eternal glory.

This is a staggering promise. This is the first time in the gospel of Mark that the Second Coming is mentioned. This is a powerful thing. Now understand the scene here, just quickly. The disciples have just made this great declaration back in verse 29 that Jesus is the Messiah. They’ve come to that point, it’s been revealed to them by God. They’ve gotten it. They understand who He is, He is Christ

the Son of the living God. He is deity and He is the Messiah. This is the great euphoric moment of their great confession. They expect that now that they have affirmed this and He has acknowledged that it is true, the Kingdom is going to come immediately. However, Jesus follows that confession with these words, verse 31, "The Son of Man must suffer many things, be rejected by the elders, the chief priests, the scribes, be killed and after three days arise again." They've gone from the highest high to the lowest low. Killed? Peter blurts out, "Whoa, whoa, whoa, whoa, stop that right there, that's not going to happen."

And Jesus says, "Get behind Me, Satan. You're all caught up in the things of men and not the things of God. I'm going to die." They have gone from the heights of declaring His messianic identity and His deity thinking this will lead to the inauguration of the Kingdom. And now immediately says, "I'm going to die. And to make it worse, He says, and if you're going to come after Me, you could die also. So take up your cross." And most all the Apostles did and many other believers, some of them under the heated hatred of Saul.

This just takes the wind out of their sails...just sucks the air out of their lungs. They're just depleted from the highest of the high. So He wants to give them hope. Verse 1 of chapter 9, "And Jesus was saying to them," this really should be the last verse of 8 because the transition comes in verse 2, six days later. "But Jesus was saying to the, 'Truly I say to you, this is not speculation, truly I say to you, there are some of those who standing here who will not taste death until they see the Kingdom of God after it has come with power.'"

That's so important. They're just devastated. "Oh, You're going to come in glory with Your holy angels, we can't get pass the death part. How do we know that's going to happen? How do we know that? That just seems so far off. You just said following You could cost us our lives...a cross." And that's the first mention of the cross and it's not a cross for Christ, it's a cross for them. How is He going to encourage them? How is He going to pick them up off the ground?

He does it by giving them a prophecy. "Some of those who are standing here," not the whole crowd, not all the disciples, not all the Apostles, some...very specific language. Some of you won't die...that's a Jewish expression...will not taste death. You're not going to die until you see the Kingdom of God after it has come with power.

What in the world does that mean? The Kingdom's coming in the next few hours, the next few days, the next few weeks, the next few months, in our life time? That's what they wanted, but that's not what He's saying. What you're going to see, you're going to see Kingdom glory and Kingdom power. Not all of you but some of you and this is the absolute truth. "You're going to see, in the language of Matthew 16:28, the Son of Man in His Kingdom glory." That's a staggering promise. Really, and we're not going to die before it happens.

What was He talking about? Some people think He was talking about His resurrection. Some people think He was talking about the Day of Pentecost. Some people think He was talking about the establishment of the church and the coming of the Holy Spirit. He wasn't talking about any of those things.

What He was talking about is exactly what happened in verse 2. Immediately, six days later, Jesus took with Him Peter, James and John, those are the some who would experience this. Not all, just

some, here they are, Peter, James and John. Brought them up on a high mountain by themselves and He was transfigured before them.

Whoa, what is that? Pulled back His human flesh and the glory of His eternal nature transmitted itself in light that literally knocked them into a coma as He unveiled His glory. He gave them a preview of Kingdom glory, a preview of Kingdom power and the story of that transfiguration is one of the most compelling stories in the whole Bible and that's for next time we meet, a couple of weeks away. But the point is this. How are they going to believe for the Kingdom in the future. How are they going to believe for the judgment in the future? We're still two thousand years from there and it hasn't happened. How do you know it's going to take place?

Answer: I'll give you a prophecy that will be fulfilled in six days, and just as I can fulfill a prophecy in six days, I can fulfill a prophecy in thousands of years. This is typical of the Old Testament prophets who when they gave prophecies of future events, would often incorporate into those prophecies a near fulfillment and the near fulfillment acted as a preview of the final event. So our Lord is saying you can trust Me for the future glory because I'll give you a preliminary vision of it. He made a prophecy. In six days He fulfilled the prophecy. You can trust Him to keep His Word, He will unveil Himself in full glory in the future as He did in partial glory six days later. This is the proof they needed to hang on. This is a glimpse of the coming glory. And this, I say, is an experience that is an incredible experience and we're going to have it in a couple of weeks as we go through that stunning and amazing event. The bottom line here is are you ashamed of yourself or Christ?

Father, thank You for our time together, this morning...so rich and convicting and powerfully confronting it is. Thank You that You are not ashamed of us, that You are not ashamed to call us brothers, You are not ashamed to be our God and we are not ashamed of You, nor would we want to do anything to bring shame on your name. Want to live, like Paul said, is to never do anything that would cause You to be shamed by anyone. Lord, I pray that You'll work in the hearts of sinners, some immoral, some moral, some irreligious, some religious. May they be appropriately ashamed either of their overt sin, or their covert sin. And in their shame, cry out for forgiveness and mercy from the hands of one who will not be ashamed of such penitent sinners, but embrace them as friends and sons and brothers and joint heirs in the eternal Kingdom.

Rescue sinners now, Lord, so that they don't die and have to face the inevitable shame that comes from Christ on those who reject Him. Open our hearts to the truth and make us passionate about its proclamation, we pray in His name. Amen.

Available online at: <http://www.gty.org>

COPYRIGHT (C) 2018 Grace to You

You may reproduce this Grace to You content for non-commercial purposes in accordance with Grace to You's Copyright Policy (<https://www.gty.org/about#copyright>).