

# FIVE FORKS BRETHREN IN CHRIST CHURCH

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**SERMON:** *Shame & Inadequacy*

**SERIES:** *Pursuing Wholeness*

**SCRIPTURES:**

**SPEAKER:** *Shaun Kipe*

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*\*Credit to Bible Gateway; Brene Brown (The Gifts Of Imperfection); Pastor Scott Scruggs*

Well good morning and welcome to Five Forks Church, to everyone here in the room and also to those of you tuning in to the livestream. It is so good to worship with you today.

Hey today we are in the second week of our series called **“Pursuing wholeness” (SERIES GRAPHIC)**. We said last week that true wholeness in our lives involves various facets. Our physical health, our spiritual health...but also our mental health. And this is perhaps the most neglected aspect of our lives. It’s probably not something we like to talk about it. It’s not something the church is good at talking about. But no matter who you are, everyone battles mental health on some level. From Michael Phelps to Elijah, the great prophet and hero of our faith to you and me and so many people around us.

And so the purpose of this series is just help us open up that conversation. We’re just getting raw and honest about mental health.

Interestingly enough Scripture is just as raw and honest about these kinds of human struggles. One of God’s all-star prophets has his own mental meltdown. Not a childish temper tantrum, but that overwhelming intense feeling you get when life seems to be too much. And we are privy to his story.

If you have your Bible, open up again to our key passage for this series. 1 Kings 19.

Today we want to talk about one of the most significant factors related to our mental health that impacts many people...something called...

## **I. Shame**

There's an author, her name is Brené Brown and she's studied and written extensively about shame over many years. Here's how she defines shame.

**“Shame is the intensely painful feeling or experience of believing that we are flawed and therefore unworthy of love, belonging, and connection.”**

A deep sense of not being wanted. Of not being good enough.

For some people it's past decisions or choices. For some people it's related to physical appearance. For some people it's a feeling of incompetence, the struggle to succeed vocationally or academically, socially or athletically. For some people it's the environment they grew up in. A home that was overly critical or even abusive.

Some people may lack confidence that they can succeed or even feel they don't matter. Others may feel there is something fundamentally wrong with who they are.

And in some ways this is what distinguishes shame from guilt. **You feel guilt for what you've done. You feel shame for who you are.**

Your mind starts to whisper to you, *“I'm not good enough. I don't belong here. My failures are too great. I don't want anyone to see me.”*

And, it's important to note. Some people can hide shame really well. They come across in public almost arrogant or overly-confident and it's not because they

actually are, it's because they are trying to compensate for their feeling of inadequacy or shame.

And it doesn't matter who you are, this feeling can happen to anyone.

So let's see how this happened to

### **A. The Prophet Elijah.**

Remember the chapter right before this, Elijah experiences the height of success. He wins a showdown with the false prophets of Baal on Mt Caramel. But the very next chapter he has this meltdown...

**1 Kings 19 - <sup>3</sup> Elijah was afraid<sup>[a]</sup> and ran for his life. When he came to Beersheba in Judah, he left his servant there, <sup>4</sup> while he himself went a day's journey into the wilderness. He came to a broom bush, sat down under it and prayed that he might die. "I have had enough, LORD," he said. "Take my life; I am no better than my ancestors." <sup>5</sup> Then he lay down under the bush and fell asleep.**

Ok, so let me just point out a few things related to shame. First,

#### **1. Shame often leads to separation.**

**<sup>3</sup>When he came to Beersheba in Judah, he left his servant there, <sup>4</sup> while he himself went a day's journey into the wilderness.**

This is exactly how shame works. Shame causes us to not want to be around other people. Your feeling of inadequacy makes you not want to be seen. You want to run and hide and be away from others.

Brene Brown says, **“Shame loves secrecy. The most dangerous thing to do after a shaming experience is hide or bury our story. When we bury our story, the shame metastasizes.”**

Check out this video of a little guys who helps us understand part of that shame mentality...

VIDEO - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iS17PKq8hSk>

Didn't want to look up. Didn't want acknowledge his shortcomings.

You remember the story of Adam and Eve in the garden of Eden. They disobey God and they ate from the tree they were not supposed to. Then what happens...

**Genesis 3 - 8 Then the man and his wife heard the sound of the LORD God as he was walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and they hid from the LORD God among the trees of the garden.**

See this is what our shame does to us. It leads to separation from the people around us, our support system, those who would love us and hug us and tell us it'll be ok. But because I feel like a failure, because I've messed up, I don't want to be around others. But I was made to be in relationship with others and so when others aren't around, the shame only gets worse. And it makes me feel alone and afraid and even ashamed that I'm alone.

And it spirals down and out of control. In fact, notice how bad it gets for Elijah. He hits rock bottom. It's so startling to read these words in your Bible isn't it, but his shame takes him so low he says, **“Take my life.”** And prays that he might die. *“It would be better if I did not exist. The world would be better off without me.”* This happens in our world today. The prevalence of suicide is becoming more and more common in our world today.

In fact, this is just really helpful information to know. There is now an emergency suicide help line that anyone can call 24 hours a day. **988**. Suicide help line. Talk to someone who can support, intervene and provide help.

Second, notice that...

## **2. Shame is often the result of comparison.**

What does Elijah say...

**“Take my life; I am no better than my ancestors.”**

He’s comparing himself to previous prophets, previous Israelites.

And it’s important to pay attention to the wording that Elijah uses. He doesn’t simply say, “My circumstances are no better than my ancestors’.” Rather he says, “I am no better.”

In other words, I feel inadequate. I feel inferior. I’m not good enough. I’m not worthy. He is wrestling with this experience of shame.

I remember when I was about 9 years old and my younger brother was about 7 years old and we used to race each other all the time. Sibling rivalry...a true comparison game! And right around that age, we discovered Nick had the gift of speed and I did not. You can’t learn speed. Either you born with it or you’re not. He was, I wasn’t. He started beating me in races. And I couldn’t let my little brother beat me at that age. So I just got all spiritual on him. You know, cause even at a young age, I was learning how to use my pastoral gifts. I may not have had the gift of speed, but I knew how to pastor. And so I told him *“Well in the Bible, Jesus says, the first will be last and the last will be first. So you just enjoy winning all these races now, but it doesn’t make Jesus happy and one day Jesus is gonna put you at the end of His line.”*

But this is what the comparison game does to us, isn't it? We compare ourselves to the people around us to see how we add up.

My job to your job.

My vacations to your vacations.

My family to your family.

My circumstances to your circumstances.

And I'm left feeling that I am not good enough. It leaves us feeling inferior, discouraged, even broken.

**“It's worse now because we have more opportunity than ever to compare ourselves to others...But here's some good advice: “Never compare your behind-the-scenes with everyone else's highlight reel.” (Ortberg)**

Many of us are doing the comparison game by what we perceive in other people's lives or their posts on social media and it makes it look like life is just all good for other people and we compare that to the daily grind and frustrations that we are experiencing in our own lives.

And this comparison game leads to shame and shame leads to a sense of hopelessness and inferiority. We need to leave the comparison game behind.

Third,

### **3. Shame is almost always based on lies.**

And it's fascinating, but it happens right here in Elijah's story. Check this out:

Teacher Scott Scroggs point this out and I think it's just brilliant. Look at some of these statements Elijah makes.

**“I have had enough, Lord...” – True**

**“I have been very zealous for you...” - True**

**“The Israelites have rejected you...” – True**

**“Now they are trying to kill me.” - True**

Everything he is saying is factually true, until we get to this one statement about his worth...he says...

**“I am no better than my ancestors.” - FALSE!**

**“The lie happens when you move from a factual description of your circumstances to a subjective assessment about your self-worth.” (Scruggs)**

And see we do this in our lives all the time and it's one of the key factors in the shame that we experience.

**I lost my job, therefore, I must be a failure.**

**He/she broke off the relationship, therefore I must be unlovable.**

**I feel lonely, therefore, I must not matter.**

We move from a description of our actual circumstances to a negative, untrue assessment of our worth and value.

Why this happens and how this happens can be impacted by numerous factors. We talked last week about the importance of physical wholeness when it comes to mental wholeness. Eating right. Sleeping right. Physical touch.

We also talked about the importance of medicine. Speaking to professionals and doctors. Sometimes taking appropriate medicine as prescribed by those doctors.

But I also want to acknowledge the spiritual dimension related to mental health and our shame.

Go back to Genesis 3 for just a moment and this scenario when Satan tempts Adam and Eve in the garden. They fail. And they run and hide in shame. And when God shows up they say, we were naked and we ran and hid. And notice what God says, it's down in verse 11: **“Who told you, you were naked.”** Almost like, whose voice are you listening to? My voice, your own voice, the voice of someone else in your life, the voice of the accuser...Whenever you are battling shame you can almost always be certain the voice of lies is whispering in your ear, trying to get you to believe something about your worth that is not true.

Who told you don't matter? Who told you you're not good enough? Who told you you're unloveable? Who told you you're not worthy? Who told you you're a failure or not beautiful? Maybe someone else told you...maybe you told yourself... you started to believe the lie.

But the real truth is that being guilty of sin or failure does not make you unworthy of love.

You're mistakes in life...do not make you unworthy of love.

A broken relationship...does not make you unworthy of love.

Letting your co-workers down/failing on the job...

Being stuck in addiction...

Being anxious or depressed or lonely...

Your level of physical attractiveness...

Your level of income...

(See Brown pg. 24)

None of these things make you unworthy of love...when you feel that, when you experience, that is simply the lie that shame is telling you.



Elijah must decide...who voice is he going to listen to? Just as all of us must decide whose voice are we going to listen to. And this bring us back to the Good News in Elijah's story...

## **B. God Speaks!**

### **1 Kings 19:9 - And the word of the LORD came to him:**

Part of dealing with shame involves learning to believe what God says about us. And, look at what God says...

#### **1. You can't do it alone.**

**“What are you doing here, Elijah?”...**

Why are you here alone? Why did you run away? Why did you leave your servant behind? You gotta go back to your community, back to your friends, back to the people who care about you. And so do we when it comes to our battle with shame and self-worth, you need people, connection, deep meaningful relationships.

**“I define connection as the energy that exists between people when they feel seen, heard and valued; when they can give and receive without judgement; and when they derive sustenance and strength from the relationship.”** (Brown 19)

Don't stay alone. Separation from others is keeping the shame alive. Obviously when it comes to sharing about your shame, you need to find someone who is trustworthy and compassionate. Someone who is not judgmental and won't gasp when you share the reality about your life with them. But who will encourage and support you. You need to have those kinds of people and friends in your life.

So Elijah's healing has a relational component. But not just relational. His healing also has a physical posture component as well. God also tells Elijah to...

## **2. Stand**

**<sup>11</sup> The LORD said, "Go out and stand on the mountain in the presence of the LORD..."**

*I love how it says, stand in the presence of God. (SCRUGGS) Don't cower and whimper in God's presence...rather it says stand. It's a posture of confidence...we might even say self-confidence in knowing that you are a child of God and that you can live life in His presence. Yes, it's important to have confidence about yourself. It's ok to love yourself. It's not cockiness or arrogance but it is confidence. The writer of Hebrews says it like this...*

**Hebrews 4:16 - <sup>16</sup> Let us then approach God's throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.**

Sin and failure and shame don't have a place in God's presence. Understanding, accepting and living...standing...in the reality of God's presence is part of the healing from personal shame that we all need. God's truth about who you really are corrects and overcomes the lie about your worthlessness.

Often when we pray, we bow as a symbol of reverence for God and that's good and right and helpful to do. But at other times, maybe this week, as you go to God in prayer...stand up. Stand up as a symbolic posture and reminder of the confidence that God gives you about who you are.

## **3. Listen for God's whisper**

Listen for God's gentle whisper in your own life. Maybe your familiar with this section of our key passage but look carefully at what the text says...

**a great and powerful wind tore the mountains apart...but the LORD was not in the wind. After the wind there was an earthquake, but the LORD was not in the earthquake. <sup>12</sup> After the earthquake came a fire, but the LORD was not in the fire. And after the fire came a gentle whisper. <sup>13</sup> When Elijah heard it, he...went out and stood at the mouth of the cave.**

Notice this...the text doesn't actually tell us what exactly God whispered to Elijah. Only that after Elijah heard God's whisper, then he went out and stood at the mouth of the cave.

That gives us a little creative license to wonder...Maybe God whispered to Elijah, how much he loves him. Maybe he reminded Elijah that he would always be with him. Maybe he told Elijah how worthy he was. That he was knit together in his mother's womb. He was made unique. He was special. Unlike anyone else.

Apostle Paul writes these amazing words to the church in Rome 8 -

**<sup>38</sup> For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons,<sup>[a]</sup> neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, <sup>39</sup> neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.**

Maybe that's what God whispered to Elijah.

But whatever God whispered to Elijah that was the motivation that gave him the confidence to get up and walk out of the cave.

This week for someone in your life...just whisper something powerful about your love for them, about how much you appreciate them. Do that for someone in your life.

And remember God likely has a word for you...about his great love for you. If you'll stop, pay attention and listen for his whisper. Something to help bring you out of the cave. Lift you up. Send you back into the world with confidence.

Then finally, in the midst of your shame...

#### **4. Remember God's love.**

Church we got to do better at this. So many people's experiences with the church has not been helpful when it comes to dealing with the shame in their lives. We churches seem to emphasize a lot about not sinning and living up to certain standards/rules and we make people feel like they'll never measure up and that brings shame into other people's lives. When we shame others, I'll just tell you it's not an attractive look. People don't like being around that.

Some people are afraid that they are not good enough for God. And the message of the church seems to so often be: You are a shameful sinner, it's wonder God even loves you, but He holds his nose and begrudgingly saves your life.

But that was not Jesus message, at least not the most prominent message. In fact, if there is one Scripture most of us would point to that we would say sums up the message of Jesus, it's John 3:16 isn't it? We quote it, we know it, we love it, because it's the central statement of our relationship with God. For God so loved the world, he sent his only son....

Even when we turn from God, when we rebel, run away, fail...he doesn't say "you're worthless, you're unworthy"...no, in fact just the opposite. He comes running, searching, looking for us to return. He forsakes all just to be with us.

The reason God went and found Elijah in that cave, is the same reason Jesus came into this world to find you and me...LOVE. His great love for Elijah couldn't keep him

away, no matter how far Elijah tried to run. No matter what cave Elijah tried to hide himself in. God's love was chasing him.

The remedy for shame, personal-inadequacy isn't just self-love or self-confidence...it's God's love. The writer of Hebrews says it like this...

**Hebrews 12 - let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us, <sup>2</sup> fixing our eyes on Jesus...For the joy set before him he endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. <sup>3</sup> Consider him who endured such opposition from sinners, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart.**

Jesus knows "you can't handle your shame on your own." It will ruin your life, it will ruin your soul, it will take your life. **(IMAGE OF CROSS)** So he whispers to all of us, "*Bring it to me. Bring it to the cross and I will deal with it for you. I will take your shame and nail it to this cross.*"

### **Communion 8am service (Old Ritual):**

As we close our service today we want to share in a time of communion. We are reminded through communion that because of his great love for us, Jesus does for us what we could not do for ourselves. He lays down his life as a sacrifice on our behalf. He endures the cross scorning it's shame...so that we can experience healing and hope.

And so, if you would please stand and join me and servers if you would please come and take your places down front.

**Communion 9:45am Service (new ritual):**

As we close our service today we want to share in a time of communion. We are reminded through communion that because of his great love for us, Jesus does for us what we could not do for ourselves. He lays down his life as a sacrifice on our behalf. He endures the cross scorning it's shame...so that we can experience healing and hope.

And so, if you would please stand and join me. We're going to read the prayer on the screen behind me together. When we are done reading you can begin entering the two side-center aisle's walk down front...take bread and eat, juice and drink then make your way back to your seat.

***"Most merciful God, we confess that we have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done, and by what we have left undone. We have not loved you with our whole heart; we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. We are truly sorry and we humbly repent, for the sake of your Son Jesus Christ, have mercy on us and forgive us; that we may delight in your will, and walk in your ways, to the glory of your Name. Amen"***