

Shame and Grace

Scripture Reading — Psalm 31

*Let me not be put to shame, LORD ...
Psalm 31:17 —*

Shame. What a powerful emotion! Twice in one psalm David asks not to be put to shame. The request in verse 1 says, “Let me never be put to shame.”

Is shame always bad? Shame caused by contempt or deliberate humiliation or mockery is hurtful. Followers of Christ must resist inflicting such shame on others. Shame from our human foibles or minor mishaps may embarrass us, but a good laugh at ourselves is perhaps the best remedy.

But when shame is the pain of genuine guilt, prompting us to repent and seek forgiveness, then shame is good. In fact, such shame is the grace of God. Jesus said that the Holy Spirit would convict us of sin (John 16:8). That is a promise, not a threat. Convicting shame and converting grace, received together, are gifts of God.

The good news of Christ is that God meets our disgrace with his grace. And grace is nothing to be ashamed of! We agree with Paul in Romans 1:16: “I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God that brings salvation to everyone who believes.”

David asks in Psalm 31, “For the sake of your name lead and guide me.”

There is no shame in the Name!

Prayer

God of abounding grace, we say today with David, “Be strong and take heart, all you who hope in the LORD.” In you there is no shame. “Into your hands [we] commit [our] spirit.” Through Jesus Christ, Amen.

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