

Series UNASHAMED

**GENESIS 3:1-13, 21**  
**UNASHAMED – ORIGINS**

Let's have a bit of a think about our Bible reading from **Genesis**.  
The Fall of Humanity.  
The sin of Adam and Eve.  
The temptation by Satan.

**Can you picture the scene??**

When we think about it.  
When we picture what that scene in the garden must have been like.  
When we play it out in our minds.

We often assume that God enters on stage.  
Comes into the Garden.  
Lights flashing.  
Siren wailing.  
Ready to catch Adam and Eve.

Then.  
Because they're guilty.  
We believe that what follows is a description of their punishment.

Read through that lens.

The entire drama of the Bible.  
Is set such.  
That where it's going.

What God's role is.  
What Jesus' role is.  
What our role as the church is now.

## **Is coloured by guilt and punishment.**

I don't think.  
That's an accurate description.  
Of what the author of **Genesis 3** has given us.

Instead.  
What I see.  
Are two people.  
Feeling.  
A feeling.  
That we all know too well.  
**SHAME.**

**SHAME.**  
It's the kind of feeling.  
That makes you hide.  
Because you think **you are** something worth hiding.

**SHAME.**  
It's the kind of feeling.  
That chokes your voice.  
Before it can ask for help.  
And keeps you silent.

**SHAME.**  
It's the kind of feeling.  
That fools you into believing.  
That the people.  
That loved you into being.  
Are now also.

The people who could never love you again.

For the next month.

We're going to practice being **UNASHAMED**.

I say practice.

Because as people raised in a shame filled society.

We're experts in self-imprisonment.

We're experts at hiding away.

We're experts at burying ourselves in our holes

And so need to build the skills.

Build the practices.

We need to live life as Jesus promised us...

**FULL and OVERFLOWING.**

My work today is unpleasant.

But necessary.

In that.

I want to help you identify the problem we are dealing with.

**SHAME.**

In my experience.

And as we can see in our Scripture passage from **Genesis**.

There are three main symptoms we experience as a result of **SHAME**.

**Isolation.**

**Silence.**

And **recasting**.

One of the essential takeaways.

We get from the Creation stories is.

That **we are made for community**.

Our God creates in community.

Father.

Son.

And Holy Spirit.

We are made in God's image.

God then says that this is **ALL "VERY GOOD"**.

Recognizing.

That it is when we are in community with other people.

With God.

And with nature.

That we are at our best.

When shame enters into the picture.

**The first thing Adam and Eve do is what?**

They hide from themselves.

And they hide from their Creator.

And then when God comes looking for them in the garden.

They decide to stay hidden.

They isolate themselves.

Throughout history.

We have hidden ourselves.

We have isolated ourselves.

In a lot of ways.

We have pretended to be people we are not.

We have pulled away from people who know us best.

And who would know that there's something wrong.

But.

There's an even more dangerous new phenomenon.

That empowers shame.

And causes us to isolate...

**Social media.**

Far from being social.

Research suggests.

That people who spend time on **Facebook**

**Snapchat.**

**Twitter.**

**Instagram.**

Etc, etc...

Are more likely to be lonely.

A significant contributing factor to why people feel lonely.

Is because the version of themselves they portray.

And utilize.

And promote.

In their interactions with others.

Isn't them.

It's what they want people to see.

So.

The true you.

Stays comfortably hidden.

Stays isolated.

**That's what shame does.**

**SHAME.**

Draws us away from friendship.

**SHAME.**

Draws us away from family.

**SHAME.**

Draws us away from anyone.

That could potentially carry in their hearts.  
The narrative we've come to believe about ourselves.

We believe.

That.

Rather than have them confirm what we believe to be true.

We should hide.

And we should avoid even the potential.

That it could get out in the open.

**Isolation.**

**It is safer there.**

Something that I have always noticed about the outdoors.

Getting out into nature.

Is that.

When you go to them from a place that's loud.

You expect the outdoors to be quiet.

**That isn't true.**

**Is it??**

The outdoors are full of sound.

**Yet I imagine the Garden in this story to be silent.**

**Silent.**

Because when things inside of us.

Become too painful to bring to mind.

To acknowledge.

To speak to...

**We silence them.**

We almost stop breathing.

Lest we slip this broken piece of our story from our lips.

I can see Adam and Eve.  
Huddled together.

**Silent.**

I can see God.  
As a father searching for his children.  
Listening for the faintest whisper of **“help”**.

People who have been victimized or abused.  
People who are in recovery.  
People who have failed in business.  
Or in relationships.  
All have edited a conversation so that those topics don't reach the surface.

It's too dangerous.  
It's too painful.  
To admit that those elements are a part of your story.

So.  
We stuff them down.  
We suppress them.  
We hide them.  
And we exert enormous effort to do so.

The story of our faith.  
Is that.  
Our gracious God has stepped into our lives to help.  
To see what's wrong.  
To love what's there.

If our Creation story is the story of breath causing life.  
Then shame is the absence of oxygen.

It is anaerobic.

**What's your image of God look like??**

In many of our God images.

There stands a complicated picture of God.

On one hand we have Jesus.

Jesus all meek and mild.

Jesus carrying the little lamb over his shoulders.

Jesus with opened arms welcoming the little children.

Jesus who comes to show us the love of God.

But.

At the same time.

We also have an image of God.

As righteous judge.

As the holy punisher.

Who meets out retribution on sinners.

Adam and Eve.

Saw God through the lens of shame.

And recast their loving creator with an almighty punisher.

That they needed to hide from.

If you continue to read the Bible.

You can see just how tragic that is.

The narrative arc.

The plotline of Scripture

God's Divine Drama.

Is not *“for humanity feared God, that they worshipped his one and only son.”*

**BUT**



It is *“for God so LOVED the world, that he gave his only begotten son.”*

The story of the Bible.

Is the story of God emptying God’s self to be near us.

To embrace us.

To renew us.

**So that we could finally live fully.**

When shame is present.

You’ll feel a deep and sinister pull to look at God.

And all of the people that have loved you.

And see only juries.

You’ll walk into a room of people.

That have no reason to hate you.

And believe that they do.

You’ll be ready to plead your case.

**Yet you don’t need to.**

The Creation stories in **Genesis**.

Aren’t the only Creation stories in the Bible.

Our Gospel was another one.

In the beginning of **John**.

We encounter the story of God’s new work.

To create life in the world through Jesus.

Along the way.

In the Gospels.

We see that work unfold in all areas.

That shame tries to be king over us.

I believe.

That at the heart of that new creation.  
Is the work that Jesus does.  
To fashion bridges from isolation to communion with the people of  
God.

I believe that this work of Creation.  
Is to give us words to pray.  
When shame has stolen all the kind words we could ever offer  
ourselves.

I believe that this work of Creation.  
Has been to remove the scales from our eyes.  
So that we could see just how much God loves us.  
Loves you.  
Loves me.

As with all new creation.  
Any renovation of the heart.  
It will be complicated.  
It will take courage.  
It will take bravery.  
It will take work.  
**BUT.**  
In the end.  
The good news.  
Is that you'll know just how much you are loved.  
And believe it.

Amen.