

November 1, 2015  
Sunday Evening Service  
Series: Communion  
Community Baptist Church  
643 S. Suber Road  
Greer, SC 29650  
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*To Ponder . . .*

Questions to ponder as you prepare to hear from Luke 9:23-26.

1. What does being ashamed of Jesus and His Word look like?
2. Describe times or areas in which you have been tempted to be ashamed of Jesus.
3. What did Jesus mean when He taught that the Son of Man will be ashamed of certain people?
4. Describe the glory of God.

**HIS CROSS IS MY CROSS**  
**(Part 3)**  
**Luke 9:26**

Chances are in a few weeks you are going to receive an invitation in the mail. It may not look like an invitation, but it is. It is an invitation to pay your property taxes to the Greenville County Tax Collector. It will spell out in detail when the taxes are due, what the taxes go for, and any penalty that will be assessed if you choose to be delinquent in sending your payment. In fact, you can, if you so choose, reject the invitation all together and decide you can get along just fine without paying taxes. The governing authorities disagree with that opinion. If you reject their invitation, you will lose your property and worse.

In a similar way, in about six months or so, I will receive an invitation from my dermatologist to visit him for my annual check up.

Frankly, I don't relish that visit. If you have been checked out by a dermatologist, you know how humbling or even embarrassing that can be. And worse, he or she might give you some unwelcome news. Last year I seriously thought about ignoring my dermatologist's invitation. But then at the last minute, I submitted and went to his office. I'm glad now that I did because he found a pre-cancerous spot on my face that needed removing. Ignoring that invitation might result in some very serious treatment or surgery or even death.

Jesus offers an invitation to the world. He offered, *"to all, 'If anyone would come after Me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow Me'" (Luke 9:23)*. With the offer Jesus explained some very important information. He laid down a principle of life: *"For what does it profit a man if he gains the whole world and loses or forfeits himself? For whoever is ashamed of me and of my words, of him will the Son of Man be ashamed when he comes in his glory and the glory of the Father and of the holy angels" (Luke 9:25-26)*.

The invitation is there for any and all who will accept. Some will buy up the opportunity to die to self in order to follow Jesus. Most will not. Because He is infinitely kind and gracious, Jesus explained the consequences of not accepting His invitation to follow Him. People who reject the idea of trusting Christ and His Word and dying to self because it would be shameful will discover much to their shame that in the last day—the day that really counts—Christ will be ashamed of them. There is no recovery from that. Therefore, the wise person will count the cost and quickly discover that it makes most sense to trust Jesus over self.

**There is a Warning Attached to the Proposition (v.26).**

Jesus taught, *"For whoever is ashamed of me and of my words, of him will the Son of Man be ashamed when he comes in his glory and the glory of the Father and of the holy angels" (v.26)*.

In this simple statement we find another reminder or warning that the Christ of the Cross is coming again. The day will arrive *when he comes in his glory and the glory of the Father and of the holy angels (v.26b)*. This is not the first or only time recorded in Scripture that Jesus promised to return. Jesus spoke about this appearing to the

disciples in a very significant conversation recorded by Matthew. It was while they were on the Mount of Olives during the Passion week (Matthew 24-25).

Therefore, this statement from Christ is probably a reference to His return at the end of the Tribulation to establish the Millennial kingdom. He taught in the Olivet Discourse, *“Then will appear in heaven the sign of the Son of Man, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. And he will send out his angels with a loud trumpet call, and they will gather his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other”* (Matthew 24:30-31).

It is a promise of great blessing to those who have put their trust in Jesus Christ. We long for Him to come back to earth. We long for Him to be exalted and magnified. We might even have some selfish motives in this. We know that when Christ rules the world, He will reign in righteousness and all sin will be done away with. We look forward to not fighting with temptation every moment of every day. But do we desire for Christ to return, prove who He really is, and show His great power just so we can say, “See I told you I was right!”? Will the Lord’s return not also be a reward for us who have been identified with His cross of shame throughout life?

At the same time, this is a serious warning to all who are ashamed to identify with Christ’s cross. Everyone is given a choice to identify with Christ or identify with the world. The world system is the expression of Satan’s rebellion against God. It is the norm, the default mode, for all people because we are all born in that setting, environment, nature, and character. To be part of the system that is opposed to God, we need to do nothing—just keep living the way we feel like living.

Removal from the default position of rebellion against God requires not only a tough choice, but a painful response. In that process, the sinner must admit that he or she is a sinner. The sinner must confess sin against God and ask for forgiveness. The sinner must trust the finished work of Jesus Christ as the payment to buy him out of sin. In so doing, the sinner identifies with Christ’s cross of shame. That identification removes the sinner from normal life, converts the sinner so that he or she turns around and walks contrary to the norm, and sets the new saint in opposition to the normal world.

It can be an embarrassing and painful situation when our friends, family, or normal people of the world act like they are ashamed of us.

But when Jesus returns, we will be glad to be identified with Him. Here in this text again, Jesus has promised that He will return in full glory and splendor. Daniel caught a glimpse of this glorious event nearly 600 years before God the Son came to earth the first time. He wrote, *As I looked, thrones were placed, and the Ancient of days took his seat; his clothing was white as snow, and the hair of his head like pure wool; his throne was fiery flames; its wheels were burning fire”* (Daniel 7:9). Many hundreds of years later, Paul promised the same return of Christ in splendor saying that God considers it just, *to grant relief to you who are afflicted as well as to us, when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with his mighty angels in flaming fire, inflicting vengeance on those who do not know God and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. They will suffer the punishment of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his might* (2 Thessalonians 1:7-9).

Throughout Scripture, God has given only small glimpses of His glory. God revealed a bit of this glory to the Israelites at Mt. Sinai which caused the people to fear greatly (Exodus 19). He showed some to Isaiah in the temple which caused him to conclude that he was as good as dead because of his natural sinful condition (Isaiah 6). In a hard-to-understand display, God revealed glory to Ezekiel in that amazing vision of the wheels. In response the prophet fell on his face (Ezekiel 1). When Daniel saw this glory, his thoughts were greatly alarmed by what he saw (Daniel 7). When Peter, James, and John caught a glimpse of Christ’s glory, they fell down and were terrified (Matthew 17). While John was exiled on the Isle of Patmos, he caught a glimpse of Christ’s glory and fell down like he was dead (Revelation 1).

No wonder when people in the Old Testament understood that they met with the Angel of the Lord they believed they would die! Reading all these descriptions of the glory of the Lord, we must conclude that human words are limited in any attempt to describe that glory. It is stupendous beyond description. In light of the limited experiences of those ancient writers, we cannot help but wonder if it is accurate for us to equate the glory and majesty of our Lord with a

nuclear explosion. On one hand, it is a display of magnificent power—power beyond normal human comprehending. On the other hand, it is a reminder that this power is destructive beyond imagination. No weapon devised by man, no power in nature whether it is earthquake, typhoon, tsunami or volcano begins to match the glory of God. Fear Him—Love Him!

Hopefully you are looking forward to our Lord's return in such magnificent glory. However, when He comes again, the glorified Christ will be ashamed of some people. He warned, *For whoever is ashamed of me and of my words, of him will the Son of Man be ashamed (v.26a)*. Considering this statement within the context, we realize that people who resisted identity with the cross are ashamed.

The people who lived in Old Testament Israel illustrated the failure. Of course the person of Christ was not the one of whom they were ashamed. But they were ashamed of God and of God's law—His Word. All of that pointed to, promised, and paved the way to Christ. But the people who knew God's law and claimed to be His people actually pushed God and His Word aside to worship the same make-believe gods their pagan peers worshiped. They sensed no shame as they were ashamed of God. Therefore, God punished them by allowing Assyria and Babylon to overrun the nation and take the people captive. The prophet Jeremiah told those stubborn people what God concluded. *"Were they ashamed when they committed abomination? No, they were not at all ashamed; they did not know how to blush. Therefore they shall fall among those who fall; at the time that I punish them, they shall be overthrown," says the LORD (Jeremiah 6:15)*. That is a vivid picture of consequences of preferring to follow what is acceptable to the world over following God and His Word.

That is precisely what was taking place in Israel at the time Jesus spoke these words. The religious leadership wanted no part of Jesus. They had their own religion, their own way of worship. They claimed that they loved God and were protecting His law while they kept it nearly perfectly. All of that was patently false. They were ashamed of God the Father because they were ashamed of God the Son. Even the masses who at first embraced Christ came to the same conclusion. They were ashamed of Jesus because the religious leaders

condemned Him. They were ashamed of His teaching because it cut across the grain of good Roman citizenship.

To a point, even the disciples were ashamed of Jesus and His teaching. Judas was so ashamed that he completely rejected Jesus and betrayed Him to His enemies. Judas reaped destruction from his embarrassment. Ten of the remaining eleven disciples could not endure the shame of being associated with Jesus and His teaching so they ran away to hide. The good news is that they realized their failure, repented, and returned to Jesus. From that point on, they were so confident in their association with the cross that they gave their lives rather than be ashamed of it.

Therefore, we are not surprised to see the same kind of responses in every age, especially in our age. It is acceptable to the world if a person wants to be religious. However, if the religious person is actually a Christian who is wholly given over to following Jesus to the point that he or she is opposed to common worldly living, that is not acceptable. But God's Word warns against pushing Christ aside and doing what seems natural and acceptable. Through Paul God said of such people, *Their end is destruction, their god is their belly, and they glory in their shame, with minds set on earthly things (Philippians 3:19)*.

On occasion it is good for us to ask if we are ashamed of our past sins or ashamed of Jesus and His Word. Do we prefer the sinful system called our world over Jesus and His words? As we answer that question, we do well to consider Jesus' warning in Mark's Gospel. *"For whoever is ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him will the Son of Man also be ashamed when he comes in the glory of his Father with the holy angels" (Mark 8:38)*. Or are we ashamed of past sin as Paul reminded the Roman Christians? *But what fruit were you getting at that time from the things of which you are now ashamed? The end of those things is death (Romans 6:21)*. What fruit, indeed? Our past sin is an embarrassing thing—a thing to be ashamed of.

Are we ashamed of affliction that comes with the testimony of the Bible? *Therefore do not be ashamed of the testimony about our Lord, nor of me his prisoner, but share in suffering for the gospel by the power of God (2 Timothy 1:8)*. Are we ashamed to be associated with those who suffer for Christ? *May the Lord grant mercy to the*

*household of Onesiphorus, for he often refreshed me and was not ashamed of my chains (2 Timothy 1:16).* When the last day comes, no one will be glad if they were ashamed of Jesus, His Word, His testimony, His people. But all sinners will be ashamed of their sins and their association with the sinful world.

In the final analysis, all sinners will be ashamed because Christ will not acknowledge people who were ashamed of Him. In the day of judgment, we will want to be closely associated with Jesus and His Word. This is the case for every person who God sets aside for His glory and purposes through Christ's work of redemption. The writer to the Hebrew Christians reminded us, *For he who sanctifies and those who are sanctified all have one origin. That is why he is not ashamed to call them brothers (Hebrews 2:11).* On judgment day, the Eternal Judge will acknowledge people who truly follow Jesus, people who are keeping their eyes on the heavenly city. *But as it is, they desire a better country, that is, a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he has prepared for them a city (Hebrews 11:16).*

Great will be the contrast for those people who were ashamed of God the Father, God the Son, and the Bible in their lifetime. Peter illustrated well what it means to be ashamed of Jesus. We remember this sad story that surrounded Jesus' crucifixion. In that setting, a servant girl accused Peter of being associated with Jesus but Peter denied it (Mat. 26:69). A while later, another servant girl (or the same one) again accused Peter of being associated with Jesus and he again claimed, "I do not know the man" (Mat 26:72). An hour later, bystanders concluded that Peter's Galilean accent revealed that he was Jesus' friend. In that same setting around the fire in the courtyard, one of the high priest's servants charged that he had seen Peter with Jesus in the garden. Peter vigorously denied association with Jesus.

We would never do that, would we? It happens so easily. Are we afraid to look like a Christian, act like a Christian, talk like a Christian? Are we ashamed to defend our faith in Christ? Are we ashamed to acknowledge that Christ's teaching causes us to be different from the normal people of the world? Are we ashamed to take up the offense of Christ's cross?

Now let's turn the tables. The great day of judgment is coming when people from all the ages who have been ashamed of Christ will stand before Him to be judged. Jesus described it like this. *"On that day many will say to me, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and cast out demons in your name, and do many mighty works in your name?' And then will I declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from me, you workers of lawlessness'" (Matthew 7:22-23).* For Christ to deny us, to be ashamed of us, to confess, "I never knew him or her" is truth. Based on that truth of having no association, no relationship, the guilty people will be cast into hell forever.

God the Son came to earth to become one with us in order to win salvation for all who trust Him. He invites all sinners to confess sin and follow after Him. Most will not. To reject the invitation is to invite eternal destruction. How we should rejoice to be a follower of Christ because of His mercy on us.