

Word One Bible Study

God Does Not Play Favorites

by David Reimann

Text: Genesis 3:8-15 for the Second Sunday after Pentecost, Lectionary Series B

OBJECTIVES

Focusing on verses 34-38, participants will:

1. Know and understand what guilt and shame are and their affect on daily life.
2. Appreciate and rejoice in God's plan to have us admit and confess our sin (Law) and to offer us forgiveness (Gospel).
3. Learn how to overcome temptation.

MATERIALS NEEDED

Bibles

Flashpaper*

Large Metal Bowl

Newsprint/Markers

Hymnal

Dictionary

*Flashpaper is chemically treated paper that leaves no ash residue behind when burned. It is available at most costume shops and magic trick stores.

GROUP GUIDELINES

Divide into small groups of 6-8 people. The person whose birthday is closest to April 6 will serve as the leader of the group. The leader should encourage participation from all the members of the group, and move the discussion process along.

COMMUNITY BUILDING

The purpose of community building is to strengthen relationships with each other, so that there is a level of trust and intimacy present which will allow support and encouragement.

1. Choose one of the following:
 - a. When you were a young child, where was your favorite place to hide from your parents?
 - b. Share a story of a time that you were hiding from someone.
2. Why did you want to or need to hide?

LOOKING AT GOD'S WORD

1. Distribute one piece of flashpaper per person. Define the words "guilt" and "shame." Look them up in the dictionary. Think of something you did (or still do) that makes you feel guilty or ashamed. Keeping that to yourself, write it down on the paper. Fold up the paper and put it into the large metal bowl. Discuss in your small group: "Why does it seem that guilt and shame stick with us and keep bothering us?"
2. Read Genesis 3:8-15. What did Adam and Eve do that showed their guilt and shame? What did they do when they were confronted by God? Why was it a blessing that God confronted them?
3. No one ever wants to admit that they were wrong. It's always easier to blame someone or something else for our sin and mistakes. Adam and Eve were quick to pass the blame on, and in a sense were really blaming God for their sin. (The woman You game me tempted me...the serpent [which You created] tempted me.) Read 2 Samuel 12:1-13. When David was confronted with his sin, what was his response? Read Psalm 51 to know how David felt at this time. How did David put guilt and shame behind him?
4. Even though we would hide behind the wall of our good works or kindness to others, or pious church-like attitudes and actions, God still seeks us out to give us what we need the most: His loving presence which brings pardon and peace into our lives. Read the opening lines of Divine Service II in *Lutheran Worship* (page 158) or *Lutheran Service Book* (page 167). These words from 1 John 1:9 tell us that we do not need to hide from God. He seeks us out and offers us His unconditional love and forgiveness. The promise to Adam and Eve in Genesis 3:15 to send One who will crush Satan's head tells us that God is not willing to wait for us to come around. He comes to find us and give us His words of love and forgiveness. [Take a

match and light the flashpaper in the metal bowl. USE EXTREME CAUTION! The paper ignites and burns instantly!] When God forgives us for Jesus' sake, it's as though our sins didn't even exist.

5. When we sin, the Law shows us what we've done wrong, and the Gospel assures us of God's forgiveness. We don't need to hide from God. He is always ready and willing to forgive. Unfortunately, sometimes there are consequences that we may have to deal with that may lead to guilt, shame or temptation. In the small groups, look up the following passages:
 - a. Matthew 4:1-11 What was Jesus' response to each temptation?
 - b. Ephesians 6:10-18 What kind of protection does God provide to us?
 - c. 1 Peter 5:8,9 How can our Christian friends help us?

REINFORCING WHAT HAS BEEN LEARNED

1. I feel guilt and shame when...
2. Confessing my sin to someone else...
3. The next time I'm tempted...
4. I'm glad God confronts me with the Law and then give me His love and forgiveness because...

CLOSING

If available, listen to the Lost and Found song "Be Not Afraid" (on their CD "THIS"). Print out Isaiah 42:1 on a card, leaving a blank for a person's name after the words, "Don't be afraid _____." In the small groups, have each person read the card, inserting the name of the person to their right at the appropriate place.

Close with prayer that thanks God for His love and forgiveness.

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