

SERMON TRANSCRIPT

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SPEAKER

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SERIES

Not Ashamed

PART

2

TITLE

Not Ashamed Of His Death

SCRIPTURE

Matthew 27:1-50; Romans 1:16



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It is great to see each of your faces and to sing with you this morning. We're glad that you're here, Providence family. If you're new with us, a guest, welcome. I pray for everyone in the room that this time will be really encouraging to you. In fact, all week long, I've been praying, especially for two things very specifically. One is that for those in the room who do not know Christ, that you would trust Christ as Savior and, for those of you who do, that you'd thank Christ for being your Savior. You look at the cross on that wall right behind me. If you walk in, you don't know much about us, you may look at that and you think, "Oh, they put that up there so that we'll know that this is a church that's Christian." Actually, that's not the case. Well, it is. Let me back up.

This is a church that is a Christian, but that's not why we put that cross up there. Jesus actually told us that our love for one another should carry the weight of helping us to distinguish ourselves as believers in Jesus Christ. No, we put that cross up there to remind each other during difficult times, during good times, during hard times, when we walk in the room, and when we need a reminder of God's kindness and his goodness and his nearness and his promises to us, when we're going through struggles in our marriage or our finances or our work or our parents or our children, all these burdens that we carry. We come in here, and we look at that, and it's another testimony, it's another reminder that God, the one true God, he cares about us. He knows us. Not only does he make promises, but he makes good on those promises.

This passage is about the cross. It's about the suffering of Jesus Christ. The reality this morning is some of you walked in here today, and the suffering of Jesus is not necessarily what you want instruction on. What you really want instruction on is your marriage or your parenting or something that's more pressing to your heart this morning. What I would simply encourage you to do is to lean in and help you to see that, as we read the cross of Jesus Christ, as we read someone who wants to help you in all those other areas of your life. I pray that you'd be encouraged. Let me pray for us as we get started. Father in heaven, we thank you for your kindness to us. It's a kindness that leads us to repentance. We thank you, God, that when we're walking down the wrong path that you don't hit us over the head. No, you show immeasurable kindness to us that would lead us to see your mercy, that would lead us to see your compassion and your generosity so that grace would be the thing that drives us to obedience instead of fear.

We thank you, Father, for your mercy to us and pray now that as we open up your word, as we read from Matthew 27, as we read about the sufferings of your Son Jesus Christ, we pray that no matter what takes place in this room, and we know you're going to be doing all kinds of things in all of our hearts this morning, I pray, Father, that your Son would be exalted above all and that we would leave this room consciously aware that Jesus Christ is supreme and that we're not ashamed of him. Would you remind us, even as we look at what are shameful sufferings of a real man on the earth, that you would help us to not be ashamed to be associated publicly with your Son Jesus. God, would you help us to be interested in what we're reading, to believe it, and to apply it to our life? We pray all this in Jesus' name. Amen.

In your Bible, if you want to turn to Matthew chapter 27. If you don't have one, there's lots of Bibles in the chairs near you. If you don't have one at home, take that home as a gift. This is the second of four messages called Not Ashamed. It's important for us to know what shame is. Shame is that awful feeling of falling short in front of people whose approval we want. The fact is when we live on this earth, we care about public approval. We care about each think about us. We want to be encouraging to them, and we want them to honor us and approve. It's only natural. It's also natural that, because we're all fallen people, that sometimes what happens is that we feel shame when, for some reason, we fall short, and we don't receive the approval from the people that we really, really want their approval.

It can happen when we sin in public. It can also happen when we associate with someone that the public is ridiculing. We've seen in our culture repeatedly, we've observed the ridicule that's directed at Jesus and his word. We've all felt the social risk of publicly associating ourselves with him. We're looking at his life. We looked at last week the audacious claims and demands that he made when he was on this earth. Here, we look at the sufferings and death of Jesus Christ. Next week, we're going to look at the fact that Jesus rose from the dead. Then, two weeks from now, we're going to look at the gospel. We're doing all of this in the hopes that you will see and that I will see is that there are a million valid reasons for you and for me, for all of us to feel shame in this world, but being associated with Jesus Christ is not one of them. It's not one of them.

This is what we find in Matthew 27. We're not going to read all of it, but we are going to read a lot of it. Starting in verse one, it says this, "When morning came, all the chief priests and the elders of the people took counsel against Jesus to put him to death. And they bound him and led him away and they delivered him over to Pilate the governor. Then when Judas, his betrayer, saw that Jesus was condemned, he changed his mind and brought back the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and the elders, saying, 'I have sinned by betraying innocent blood.' They said, 'What is that to us? See to it yourself.' And throwing down the pieces of silver into the temple, he departed, and he went and he hanged himself."

Now, verse 11, "Now Jesus stood before the governor, and the governor asked him, 'Are you the King of the Jews?' Jesus said, 'You have said so.' But when he was accused by the chief priests and the elders, he gave no answer. Then Pilate said to him, 'Do you not hear how many things they testify against you?' But he gave him no answer, not even to a single charge, so that the governor was greatly amazed. Now at the feast the governor was accustomed to release for the crowd any one prisoner whom they wanted. And they had then a notorious prisoner called Barabbas. So when they had gathered, Pilate said to them, 'Whom do you want me to release for you: Barabbas, or Jesus who is called Christ?' For he knew that it was out of envy that they had delivered him up. Besides, while he was sitting on the judgment seat, his wife sent word to him, 'Have nothing to do with that righteous man, for I have suffered much because of him this day in a dream.'

Now the chief priests and the elders persuaded the crowd to ask for Barabbas and destroy Jesus. The governor again said to them, 'Which of the two do you want me to release for you?' And they said, 'Barabbas.' Pilate said to them, 'Then what shall I do with Jesus who is called Christ?' They all said, 'Let him be crucified!' And he said, 'Why? What evil has he done?' But they shouted all the more, 'Let him be crucified!' So when Pilate saw that he was gaining nothing, but rather that a riot was beginning, he took water and he washed his hands before the crowd, saying, 'I am innocent of this man's blood; see to it yourselves.' And all the people answered, 'His blood be on us and on our children!' Then he released for them Barabbas, and having scourged Jesus, he delivered him to be crucified. Then the soldiers of the governor took Jesus into the governor's headquarters, and they gathered the whole battalion before him.

And they stripped him and they put a scarlet robe on him, and twisting together a crown of thorns, they put it on his head and put a reed in his right hand. And kneeling before him, they mocked him, saying, 'Hail, King of the Jews!' And they spit on him and they took the reed and struck him on the head. And when they had mocked him, they stripped him of the robe and put his own clothes on him and led him away to crucify him. As they went out, they found a man of Cyrene, Simon by name. They compelled this man to carry his cross. And when they came to the place called Golgotha (which means Place of a Skull), they offered him wine to drink, mixed with gall, but when he tasted it, he would not drink it. And when they had crucified him, they divided his garments among them by casting lots. Then they sat down and kept watch over him there. And over his head they put a charge against him, which read, 'This is Jesus, the King of the Jews.'

Then two robbers were crucified with him, one on the right and one on the left. And those who passed by derided him, wagging their heads and saying, 'You who would destroy the temple and rebuild it in three days, save yourself! If you are the Son of God, come down from the cross.' So also the chief priests, with the scribes and elders, mocked him, saying, 'He saved others; he cannot save himself. He is the King of Israel; let him come down now from the cross, and we will believe in him. He trusts in God; let God deliver him now, if he desires him. For he said, 'I am the Son of God.'" And the robbers who were crucified with him also reviled him in the same way. Now from the sixth hour there was darkness over the land until the ninth hour.

And about the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying, 'Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?' that is, 'My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?' And some of the bystanders, hearing it, said, 'This man is calling Elijah.' And one of them at once ran and took a sponge, filled it with sour wine, and put it on a reed and gave it to him to drink. But the others said, 'Wait, let us see whether Elijah will come to save him.' And Jesus cried out again with a loud voice and yielded up his spirit. And behold, the curtain of the temple was torn in two, from top to bottom. And the earth shook, and the rocks were split." You know, Providence family, being a sinless man, no one has ever deserved suffering less. Being sovereign as a man, no one could have resisted this kind of suffering more.

The night before, Peter's lonely sword, as it was waving through the wind, Jesus stepped in front and said, "Put it aside. Do you not think that I can not at once appeal to my Father, and he will at once send me more than 12 legions of angels? But how then should the scriptures be fulfilled?" You see what he's saying? He's saying, "Look, I have the power to stop all this, but if I stop this by making an appeal, you can't be saved. The scriptures will not be fulfilled. There will be no Savior." Jesus's refusal to make that appeal to the Father brought him shame upon shame. Providence, in this, we are not ashamed. I want to show you here just a few different ways that we see within the text that Jesus went through what is, in any other way, an absolutely shameful experience. Our hope in doing so is that you will actually see that being associated with someone who suffered in the way that he did actually compels you to never be ashamed again.

The first thing we see is that we are not ashamed of Jesus' shameful condemnation. You see today a person who's bound in handcuffs and condemned as a criminal and, by nature, it's a shameful thing. You know it's embarrassing. The same thing was true back in this day when they would wrap their arms, not with handcuffs, but with either ropes or chains. They would bind a person. Then, a jury of your peers would condemn that person to say, "This person deserves to die." That was a shameful experience just as it is today, and associating with a man who was bound and condemned as a criminal is also shameful, but, Providence, we are not ashamed of Jesus Christ. It's not just because his trial was a sham, which it absolutely was.

You see, Jewish law actually says that any criminal trial had to be done in the middle of the day to ensure that it could be a public trial so that there could be accountability, that people could check on the system of justice to make sure that someone was receiving a fair trial. Yet, when Jesus was arrested, they immediately took him not to Pilate. You see, the Jews were under Rome. Within the same city, they had their Jewish courts, but then they had the Roman courts. They had a Roman governor. They started that night by going to the high priest's house, his headquarters, where the Sanhedrin, which is sort of like the Jewish supreme court, they had gathered, and they did it at midnight. In other words, while all the public eyes that would verify, that would hold it accountable as being just, while everyone else was asleep, he had his first trial. The Sanhedrin was like our Supreme Court. They were tasked with being impartial as justices.

Yet, what we find from these individuals is that not only were they the justices that levied out a verdict, but they also took the stand and became the prosecutors. Just imagine this taking place today in a courthouse. Imagine court starts, and there's a jury up in the box. Suddenly, the jury stands up, they come down, they stand on the side of the prosecutor and begin prosecuting Jesus who's on the other side. They make their last stand, they go back up into the box, and then they deliver a verdict. This is what they did. Liars are lying, and mockers are mocking, and the Son of God in the trial declares that he is the Son of God, and they declare him a criminal for blasphemy, but they can't kill him, you see. What they have to do is they have to take him to the Romans who can kill him. They drag him off to Pilate's house. Almost within the same breath, Pilate declares him innocent and condemns him to die by crucifixion.

Every single judicial conscience, every judicial voice who's ever looked at this screams, "This is unjust," and yet there's one voice who didn't say a word. It's the voice of Jesus Christ himself. You see, he was doing just as it was prophesied of him. He was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth. To Pilate the governor, he gave no answer to a single charge. Every single one of us knows that when somebody is accused, we normally look at their silence as an affirmation of their guilt. If they would say something, it would confirm their guilt. The fact that they're not defending themselves, the fact that they're not saying what they've done, there's no alibi here whatsoever, and so clearly what they're doing is affirming guilt. If you had a friend, let's just say that your friend, in a public way, was either on trial or let's just say he's about to be fired or maybe he was fired. He was fired for something you know he didn't do. He knew he didn't do it.

He had the opportunity at that very moment to stand and say, "This is my alibi. I actually wasn't even there. I was here. Here's the evidence." Instead of laying out his innocence, he says absolutely nothing at all. You would scream to him, "You've got to say something right now. This is the time. Let him know. Let him know that you're innocent." Why would Jesus be silent if silence could be interpreted as an affirmation or a concession of guilt? I believe the reason that he was silent is because 2 Corinthians chapter five verse 21 says, "For our sake, he made him to be sin who knew no sin." You see, we don't know exactly when Jesus took our sin upon himself. It happened at some point in this day, where he actually took our sin upon himself. Providence, the reason we are not ashamed is because Jesus was silently pleading our guilt in our place.

You see, he was bearing our condemnation. It should have been our wrists bound. It should have been a jury of our peers condemning us to say, "This person is guilty." Every one of us have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God. We have all earned a wage of sin. What happened to Jesus should have happened to us. Jesus sitting in silence when he's bound and he's condemned is Jesus pleading our guilt in our place. You see, he did all this because once he died on that cross and he went into the grave, three days later, he rose from the dead, and he says, "If you'll believe me," he says, "then there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ." We, who were the condemned, became the recipients of someone who's condemned for us so that we would never be condemned again. Therefore, we're not ashamed of this.

The second reason we're not ashamed, we're not ashamed of Jesus' shameful substitution. You see, associating with a man who was chosen by the public to die instead of a hated criminal can be an incredibly shameful thing. Yet, we're not ashamed of Jesus. The feast that was taking place, the Passover, all the people had come. Pilate, the governor over Rome, for Rome over the Jews, he had a tradition. He wanted to win favor with the Jews, so every year at this festival, he would say, "I tell you what, I'll pardon any one criminal that you want me to set free." They come to him, and of course he knows. He knows that he's innocent. It even says here, it says, look, he knew that it was only out of envy that they even brought Jesus to this place. Pilate offers to release one, and they choose Barabbas. This scene has been acted. It's been in movies. It's been in drawings and paintings. There's a picture here. It's just amazing to me every time that I look at this, that you see the Romans. You see Pilate in the middle. You see Jesus on one side.

The other side, you see Barabbas. You see that great, big smile on his face. Can you imagine how amazingly happy he must have been on this day? Pilate couldn't understand. He knew that they knew that Barabbas was a domestic terrorist. He was a murderer. He was a thief. He was a criminal. He says, "What do you want me to do with Jesus?" The crowd thunders, "Crucify him." Now Pilate comes to his defense, and he says, "What has he done wrong?" Now the crowd silences Pilate and says, "Crucify him." It says that they shouted all the more. You see the smile on Barabbas' face on the other side of that picture, a man who's absolutely stunned. Just imagine yourself being in his shoes. You wake up one morning knowing that by the end of the day that you will be hanging on a cross, and that night, instead, you're having dinner with your friends, and you look out, and you see Jesus hanging on your cross.

The sinless one is put to death, and the sinner walks free. It's a substitution, and it's a substitution that is true of each and every one of us. Do you know what that name Barabbas means? It comes from two words, bar and abbas. Bar means son of. Abbas means a father. It's a generic name. It means this man has a dad. You know, a long time ago, in the garden, when Adam and Eve sinned, their nature, their pure, innocent nature was reconstituted so it was now a fallen nature. When they began having children, that DNA of sin, that inclination to rebel against God was passed from one generation to the next. Barabbas' very name is actually inserted into the story. He is inserted into the story sovereignly by God in order to place a man who was born of a man. He represents humanity. He represents all the children of Adam. He represents you.

Barabbas is your spiritual story. It's you in the story. It's me in the story. It should have been us. We're not ashamed of this otherwise shameful substitution where our good friend is, by the public, is being chosen over. All of us know the shame of being picked last. You're on the playground, "We'll take him. We'll take him." There's one little guy over on the side, "I guess I'm last." Here, they chose up teams, and there's only one person chosen. One person gets to live. One person gets to die. The person that we say we're not ashamed that we're worshiping, the public, the crowd said, "Kill him, and let him live." We're not ashamed of this. The reason is because this substitution should have been us. We were, are that sinner.

Christ suffered once for sin as the righteous for the unrighteous. The unrighteous, that's us. He died in our place. You know, the fact is we don't know if Barabbas ever felt grateful. We don't know if he ever worshiped Jesus. The fact is it may not matter whatsoever. The reason is because his life was supposed to be a reflection to us. We're supposed to look at Barabbas and ask the question, "Am I grateful? Am I trusting Jesus? Am I absolutely overwhelmed? Do I have the smile on my face that I have just been set free because someone else died in my place? Do I see that God is infinitely committed to my good, that he would kill his own Son on my behalf in order to rescue me?" Providence, we are not ashamed of Jesus' shameful substitution.

Third is we are not ashamed of Jesus' shameful suffering. Associating with a man who suffered in these kinds of ways can be extremely shameful, but we are not ashamed of Jesus Christ. You see, the night before this suffering, it may not have began there, but it was definitely brought to a summit there. When he enters a garden with his disciples, and he tells some of them stay behind, and he brings a few more a little bit further, and he tells them to stay behind, "I want all of you to pray." Then he goes by himself. There he is. He's alone, and he begins praying. He begins praying and praying and praying. We're told that it's a cold night, so cold that Peter later that night would need to warm himself over a charcoal fire. Suddenly, Jesus, just the weight of the moment, he begins to feel this agony. Luke says, it says, "And he agonized in prayer." There, he prayed, "O Father, let this cup pass from me, but nevertheless, not as I will, but as you will." The cup was a metaphor.

It was a symbol of the wrath of God. It was something that he held that he could look down within, and he could see a foreshadowing of everything that he was going to have to go through. Here on this exceptionally cold night, where other people needed fire to stay warm, it says that Jesus not only began to sweat because of so much stress, but that stress and agony and having that preview of what he was about to go through actually caused explosions in the capillaries of his sweat glands so that his sweat became like great drops of blood falling to the ground. Soon, he looks up, and he sees what looks like a slither of torches coming his way. At the very front is Judas. Suddenly, he is bound. He's brought before the Jewish court, and there we're told in Matthew 26 that they spit in his face, and they struck him. Hours later, after being condemned by Pilate, handed over to be crucified, the Romans began their death sequence. It was a sequence that began with scourging.

Initially developed by the Persians, the Romans had perfected it. They actually considered it an art form, an art form where they would seek to inflict as much pain as possible on a human being without killing him or making him go unconscious because there's no reason to inflict pain if someone can't feel it. What would happen to Jesus at this moment is that he would have been tied to a post or a pole, and his arms would have been held above his head so that his back skin would have grown tight around him, ensuring that it would tear easily. Then, he would repeatedly be opened by a whip that would be fitted with shards of iron and bone. The Jews, they limited their punishment to 39 lashes, but the Romans extended no such mercy. At the point where they thought, "No more, because if he gets any more, he's going to die or he's going to go unconscious," they pull him back. They let him go.

Then, all of a sudden, it says that they take all of his clothes off to shame him before all. Then, they give him these mock robes of royalty. They give him this robe, and they give him this reed that would act like a scepter. You want to be a king, here. Here's your king scepter. It says that they put a crown over his head of thorns. To ensure that that crown would remain affixed, they grabbed the staff from him, and they took it, and they hit him over the head with it to make sure that the thorns would bury deep enough that it wouldn't fall off. Then, they took his robes off after spitting and mocking upon him, and they put his old clothes back on. Then, they made him carry a cross up a mountain to a place called Golgotha. Hebrew, it's the place of the skull. In Latin, it's Calvary.

That cross, whether the weight or the weight upon his scourged body was simply too much, he couldn't get it up there. They look over, they see a man. His name is Simon from Cyrene. It's interesting that the Bible includes his name. It's interesting to me that Mark's gospel actually includes Simon's son's name, Rufus. A lot of scholars actually believe that this is the Rufus that Paul addresses and says hello to to the church in Rome. It says, "Greet Rufus." Why is Rufus and Simon inserted? Why is their name inserted? He just found a guy, and he said, "You get it there." We wouldn't think too much about it otherwise, but he names him. Why would he name him? This is why he named him. Because when these were written, they needed eyewitnesses, and Simon and Rufus were still alive. They're like, "You want an eyewitness testimony, this is not some legend? Yeah, I carried that cross. My name is Simon." People could have gone in the first century and asked him, "What was it like? How heavy was it?"

They finally arrive up to the top of Golgotha where they crucify. There, they offered him wine mixed with gall, which is a mild narcotic, but Jesus was appointed by God to feel all the pain. You know what he did? He refused to drink it. There, they crucified him by nailing him to the cross. They hoisted him into the air. Underneath, they took all his clothes off. There he is, ashamed in front of everybody coming in and out of the city, totally exposed, totally shamed before everyone, bloodied and naked. There they are, and they're casting dice on the ground of who gets to keep his clothes. This happened. This isn't legend. There, for hours, Jesus struggled between breathing and muscle cramp in the face of mockery. Even the criminals next to him, it says that they railed at him.

Friends, this is what Jesus was pointing to the night before when he took bread, and he broke it, and he said, "Guys, this is a symbol of my body that's about to be broken for you, and this cup is a symbol of the blood that is about to be spilled so that you can be forgiven of all of your sins." You see, it was all fulfilled. All the prophecies were fulfilled. He was pierced for our transgressions. He was crushed for our iniquities. You see, Providence, this is why we're not ashamed because he did this for me and you. We're not ashamed of his shameful condemnation, the shameful substitution, the shameful suffering. Last is we're not ashamed of Jesus' shameful abandonment.

Some of you are lonely today. Some of you were lonely on Friday night. You didn't have anything to do, and there's nobody to do it with. You say, "I'm lonely," but you have a friend today, so you're really not all that lonely. Some people, their entire life, like this picture, is just a portrait of loneliness. It feels like their entire life is just walking somewhere they can not see, and there's nobody by their side. It can be a suffocating experience, loneliness. When you think of all that, I want you to think about the loneliness that must have existed and permeated throughout Jesus for him to be abandoned, not only by his friends but also by his Father. You see, near the very end, Jesus cries out, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" You see, you have to understand that the Bible doesn't say that Jesus simply carried our sin on his shoulder or he put it in his hand. No, it said he put it in his heart.

Paul says that he became a curse for us, not that he was cursed for us. He became a curse for us. God the Father, he simply couldn't stand looking at it anymore. At some point in time, it says that he looks down upon Jesus and turns, as if to say, "I see in you right now the totality of all of human sin, all pride and self-righteousness, and greed and gossip, hatred, deceit, envy, adultery, oppression, hypocrisy, blasphemy, and idolatry, and I can't stand what I'm looking at. I won't look anymore." How does someone endure that kind of loneliness? I don't know. Somehow, Jesus was able to make one more lunge. You see, the body on a cross, you went back and forth between breathing or muscle cramps. He needed to say one more thing, one more word, John's gospel says. He had to say one more thing. He picks himself up on those nails. He takes one breath, and he says one word. It's tetelestai.

John translates it, "It is finished." It is the word that would have been written at the very bottom of a tax bill that was paid in full. This is what Jesus said at the very end. "It's paid in full. Your sins are paid in full, every one of them. I just died for all of him." Suddenly, he yielded up his spirit, and he died. Suddenly, the curtain separated, the people from God, within the temple, it was torn from top to bottom in two. The relationship that God had promised to be restored was now made restored. We could now know God. We could enjoy a relationship with God. You know, all of this happened on a day that we call Good Friday. It is so good, and we are not ashamed because he endured all of it in our place.

What do we do with this? A couple things. The first and most obvious thing is that we must trust Jesus Christ and be saved. You know, when I was a kid, I accidentally set a field on fire playing with matches. That was a plan that went awry. What you find in Matthew 27 was not a plan that went awry because Isaiah prophesied of all of this in Isaiah 53 verse 10. Do you know what it says? It says, "Yet it was the will of the Lord to crush him, and he has put him to grief." The Bible says that Jesus Christ suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous. Then he tells us why he did it. He says, "That he might bring us to God." This is my question, friend. Are you near God? Have you been brought into a relationship with God by trusting him?

You know, the word trust is an interesting one. Within the scriptures, it actually is defined in a real way of throwing your weight upon. Just imagine a table that you can't see the legs. You just see this piece of wood, and it just seems like it's levitating there. You think, "How in the world?" Then, you hear God Almighty says, "This is my Son. This is Jesus Christ. What I want you to do is I want you to drop all of your weight all at once upon him. Don't put one hand on and see and push down. Don't put a knee on and leave one foot on the ground just to make sure that if this thing falls that I still have something else to lean upon." No, he says, "This is trust. This is what it means to trust Jesus Christ as Savior, is to put all your weight upon him."

You know how you do it? You admit that you are a sinner, that you have sinned, and that you can not save yourself. You look at this table called Jesus, and you say, "I believe in his accomplishments. I believe in its integrity. I believe in the gospel. I believe in his accomplishments. I believe that he rose from the dead." Then we confess him as Lord. When he says, "I want you to put your weight on there," we say, "Yes, Lord." The Bible says that if we do this, that he forgives us of all our sin. What I want to do right now, there's some of you right now, I know that you've never trusted Christ as your Savior. You may have heard the gospel many times in your life, but you've never placed all of your weight on him. I want to give you the opportunity to do that. You simply pray to him.

Would you bow your head, all of us? If you've trusted Christ, I know most of you, maybe all of you, have. If so, then you just pray for the people who are around you, that God will be working in their hearts so that they could be brought near to the Lord. For those of you who have never trusted Christ, but you've believed in what you heard, and you want to trust in Jesus Christ, you can say a prayer. It's something like this, "Father in heaven, I confess to you that I am a sinner, and I can not save myself. I may not have done the things that Barabbas has done, but I know that that's me in the story. I deserve to die because of my sin. I believe in Jesus Christ and his accomplishments. I believe in his righteous life. I believe that he suffered for me. I believe that he was buried in a grave that should have been mine. I believe he rose from the dead. I confess you as Lord of my life. Would you forgive me, and would you save me?" We pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.

I want you to know that if you trusted Jesus, then Jesus' own word says this, that you are forgiven of all of your sin. You have a relationship with him, and you can enjoy a relationship with him. That leads us to the last two very brief applications. First is this. Let's confess our shame to Christ. Many of us, as believers, we go, just like Peter did, and we go through life, and we believe this, and yet when put into that crucible, when someone asks us or when there may be a threat to our career or to our social circle, "Are you actually associating with Jesus?" sometimes our mouth goes silent. As I said last week, I want you to know that our shame is not a victimless crime. Jesus knows when we stand far off in order to preserve our honor in the eyes of people, but the good thing is Jesus also forgives. You can confess your sin of shame, and he will forgive you.

That gets us to the last thing. That's this. Let's confess our faith in Christ. Christianity, our faith is surely personal, but it is definitely not private. Romans chapter one says that we are or, "I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes." Do you know what we're going to be doing forever? Some people think when we get there, we're not going to be thinking about these things any longer. That's simply not the case. The song that the redeemed will sing forever and ever and ever is this, "Worthy is the Lamb who was slain." We're going to get to heaven, and we're going to see where we should have been, and we're going to see where we are, and we're going to see the one person that made it possible, and it's Jesus Christ. We're going to give him glory for the rest of our life. We're going to say, "You deserve power and wealth and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing."

It's all for him, but, you know, it doesn't have to start when we get to heaven. I urge you, Providence, let's sing to him. Let's tell of him. Even this morning, we have the privilege, there's two people that are going to be baptized this morning right now as a testimony of their faith to say, "I am not ashamed. I'm not embarrassed to be associated with Jesus." Before we see that, let's pray for them. Father in heaven, we love you. We thank you for the mercy that you give to us, and we confess to you our faith, and we pray now for Benjamin and Anna Kay, God, that you would give them courage as they come and as they profess their faith, God. I pray that you would fill their heart with joy and fill our hearts with joy as we see two people that say, "I am clearly not ashamed to confess or be associated with Jesus Christ." We pray all of this in the perfect name of Jesus. Amen.



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