

I. Introduction

A. We sang this awesome song about the name of Jesus.

1. One of my favorite names for Jesus is Redeemer.
2. Someone who, in love and mercy, buys me back, pays my debt, restores me
3. God has been proclaiming this invitation of redemption for every person since the first person was lost.

B. Even so, when I think about the people I know, Christian and non-Christian alike, it feels like most of us are just carrying around this weight of shame. We don't normally see the shame itself, we see the "coping"

C. Dad - loved me but wasn't around. Failed as a husband, alcohol, employment

1. As a kid, it never added up. "I know he loves me, so why is he avoiding me?"
2. What my young heart couldn't understand was that I was seeing the sad reality of shame doing its work. My dad didn't know what to do with his regret and shame.
3. And so he medicated and avoided and justified to cope somehow.

D. That's what shame does to us. It sends us into hiding rather than looking for the cure.

E. The typical human response to shame is typically one of two paths (or both!)

1. Excuse it.
2. Escape it.
3. In other words, we justify our sin or we numb ourselves to it.

F. But God has a radically different approach to our shame: Forgiveness.

1. Forgiveness neither justifies what we've done nor runs from the deep pain it causes.
2. God's forgiveness, rather than justifying sin as *right*, shows mercy for what is *wrong*. Rather than *numbing* the pain and guilt, God's forgiveness *heals*.

G. And God has given us a gift: the posture of *repentance*.

1. This is where we stop fighting God's mercy and receive His unmerited, unearned forgiveness.
2. Repentance is about accepting that I'm wrong AND ALSO accepting that I can be forgiven.

II. Tim Keller: "The Gospel is this: We are more sinful and flawed in ourselves than we ever dared believe, yet at the very same time we are more loved and accepted in Jesus Christ than we ever dared hope."

A. This is precisely what we see in Daniel Chapter 9.

Daniel 9:1-3

In the first year of Darius the son of Ahasuerus, by descent a Mede, who was made king over the realm of the Chaldeans— in the first year of his reign, I, Daniel, perceived in the books the number of years that, according to the word of the Lord to Jeremiah the prophet, must pass before the end of the desolations of Jerusalem, namely, seventy years. Then I turned my face to the Lord God, seeking Him by prayer and *pleas for mercy* with fasting and sackcloth and ashes.

1. At this point in time, Daniel is an old man and the people of Israel have been in slavery to the Babylonian/Medo-Persian Empire for 66 or 67 years. Daniel, book of Jeremiah: 70 years captivity (Jeremiah 25:11, 29:10).
2. Daniel's response: prays specifically for MERCY. WHY?
 - a. Timeline
 - 1) Long before, around 1406 BC, God gave Israel the law at Mt. Sinai.
 - a) Blessings for faithful obedience
 - b) Warnings/consequences for disobedience and worshipping other gods. Worst case scenario consequence: conquered, exiled
 - 2) Israel immediately broke the covenant and continued to do so. Not for 10 years, not for 20 years, not for 100 years, but for 800 YEARS.
 - 3) Until finally, after repeated patience and warning and discipline, in 605 BC, God sent Nebuchadnezzar to humble His wayward son, Israel.
 - 4) Daniel saw that God had endured Israel's rebellion for 800 years and then sent them into captivity with an end-date already in mind.
 - 5) 70 years of discipline for 800 years of rebellion is wildly merciful.
 - b. And this is precisely why Daniel responds to the prophecy of 70 years coming to an end in a plea for mercy: because He had objective proof that God is indescribably merciful and believed He would be again.

B. OUR REPENTANCE STANDS ON GOD'S MERCY

1. It is the very nature of God; His love, His patience, His tender compassion that invites repentance and gives it its power. Romans 2:4 says that it is God's kindness that leads us to repentance.
2. Let's let this passage lead us. Let it speak for itself and show us what true, God-wrought repentance really looks like.

III. TRUE REPENTANCE:

Daniel 9:4-11

4 I prayed to the Lord my God and made confession, saying, "O Lord, the great and awesome God, Who keeps covenant and steadfast love with those who love Him and keep His commandments, 5 we have sinned and done wrong and acted wickedly and rebelled, turning aside from your commandments and rules. 6 We have not listened to Your servants the prophets, who spoke in Your name to our kings, our princes, and our fathers, and to all the people of the land. 7 To You, O Lord, belongs righteousness, but to us open shame, as at this day, to the men of Judah, to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and to all Israel, those who are near and those who are far away, in all the lands to which You have driven them, because of the treachery that they have committed against You. 8 To us, O Lord, belongs open shame, to our kings, to our princes, and to our fathers, because we have sinned against You. 9 To the Lord our God belong mercy and forgiveness, for we have rebelled against Him 10 and have not obeyed the voice of the Lord our God by walking in His laws, which He set before us by His servants the prophets. 11 All Israel has transgressed Your law and turned aside, refusing to obey Your voice. And the curse and oath that are written in the Law of Moses the servant of God have been poured out upon us, because we have sinned against Him.

A. My sin is mine

1. Daniel uses no less than ten unique phrases to say one thing: *this is our fault.*
2. A repentant person owns sin: no blame casting, no disclaimers, no justification
 - a. Simply: I sinned. I was wrong. It was me.
 - b. We'll do anything to avoid admitting guilt.
 - 1) Pride hates the phrase "I was wrong. It was my fault."
 - 2) But I also think we avoid admitting guilt because if we do, we feel we have to pay back the debt we created.
 - a) In the culture of man, if I say "I was wrong," then the next thing that better come out of my mouth is "and here's how I'm going to fix it."
 - b) But we know, deep down, that when we sin—against God or against others—we feel this helplessness to erase the debt.
 - c) And so, instead of admitting guilt, we pretend and make ourselves believe that what we did was justified.
 - 3) But the beauty of Jesus' Gospel is that WE say, "I was wrong. I sinned. It was my fault." And the HEAVENLY FATHER says, "*and here's how I'M going to fix it.*"
 - 4) If you've been living in any other way—earning, striving, scratching, and clawing to be good enough or worthy of love—Oh, would you

drop those beliefs like the shackles they are and run to Jesus Who forgives FREELY!

- c. The way of the cross is not justification of my sin OR repayment for my own sin. The way of the cross is that the Heavenly Father FORGIVES my sin.

Daniel 9:12-15

12 He has confirmed His words, which He spoke against us and against our rulers who ruled us, by bringing upon us a great calamity. For under the whole Heaven there has not been done anything like what has been done against Jerusalem. 13 As it is written in the Law of Moses, all this calamity has come upon us; yet we have not entreated the favor of the Lord our God, turning from our iniquities and gaining insight by Your truth. 14 Therefore the Lord has kept ready the calamity and has brought it upon us, for the Lord our God is righteous in all the works that He has done, and we have not obeyed His voice. 15 And now, O Lord our God, Who brought Your people out of the land of Egypt with a mighty hand, and have made a name for Yourself, as at this day, we have sinned, we have done wickedly.

B. My sin is great

1. Another way of excusing and escaping sin is by downplaying. It really wasn't that bad and in time, it will go away.
2. But God didn't deal with sin by saying "It's no big deal." Sin was such a grievous offense that His Son, Jesus, died to forgive sin.
3. Repenting: God, you are right. Your discipline is righteous, necessary and done out of love. I not only accept your hand of discipline but thank you for it.
 - a. I don't ask You to adapt your character of holiness to my actions.
 - b. I choose to surrender my actions to Your character of holiness.
4. So Daniel has owned the sin he and all of Israel are responsible for.
5. And he feels the weight and depth and seriousness of the problem.
 - a. But his response isn't, "Here's how we'll fix what we've broken."
 - b. His response is "Father show mercy and forgive."
6. Because as great as their sin is, He believes with all his heart that...

C. God's mercy is greater

Daniel 9:16-19

16 "O Lord, according to all Your righteous acts, let Your anger and Your wrath turn away from Your city Jerusalem, Your holy hill, because for our sins, and for the

iniquities of our fathers, Jerusalem and Your people have become a byword among all who are around us. 17 Now therefore, O our God, listen to the prayer of Your servant and to his pleas for mercy, and for Your own sake, O Lord, make Your face to shine upon Your sanctuary, which is desolate. 18 O my God, incline Your ear and hear. Open Your eyes and see our desolations, and the city that is called by Your name. For we do not present our pleas before You because of our righteousness, but because of Your great mercy. 19 O Lord, hear; O Lord, forgive. O Lord, pay attention and act. Delay not, for Your own sake, O my God, because Your city and Your people are called by Your name."

1. True repentance *SURRENDERS* to God's forgiveness.
 - a. A truly repentant person would never attempt to pay for his own sin.
 - b. Humbled enough to know that a sinful heart cannot pay down a debt of sin.
 - c. It's like paying a credit card bill with the same credit card.
2. The Father in Heaven doesn't want to refinance your sin debt. He wants to eradicate it—by forgiving it.
3. This is why Jesus was crucified. As the perfect, more than sufficient payment of your sin debt.
4. And the result of such great mercy and love is that your actions begin to change.
5. Truly repentant people, grateful recipients of mercy, are transformed people.

"Fallen man is not simply an imperfect creature who needs improvement: he is a rebel who must lay down his arms." C.S. Lewis

IV. Invitation

- A. Jesus invites you to lay down your arms, these weapons of excusing or escaping your sin.
- B. Take the posture of repentance and surrender to the Father's mercy.
- C. Some time to pray
 1. Know Jesus? Ask Him to just speak to you and show you the places you aren't surrendering to Him. Accept what He says as true, repent and accept forgiveness.
 2. Haven't yet trusted Jesus or you don't know? Today you are at a crossroads:
 - a. If you die without surrendering to Jesus, you die unforgiven.
 - b. The Father tells us through the Bible that you will exist eternally separated from Him in Hell.

- c. Talk to Him: Own your rebellion and ask Jesus to be your Savior. He will forgive you and eternally remove your sin and shame.
- d. If you surrender your life to Jesus today, grab the card in front of you that says "I've Surrendered to Jesus" and come up to the front when we dismiss the service. We'd love to meet you, encourage you, and pray with you.