

Embrace Disgrace

- On the surface, we all want to appear strong, capable, and reliable. But deep down, we all have areas of our lives where we're weaker than we'd care to admit, vulnerable, and unsure.
- Maybe it's helpful to define "**disgrace**" — A loss of reputation or respect as the result of a dishonorable action. A person or thing regarded as shameful and unacceptable.
- How can we overcome shame and disgrace? How can we learn to live as our authentic selves and not be afraid for others to see our weaknesses?

Have You Felt Disgraced?

- Shame makes us want to run and hide (Gen. 3:7). Whether it's a sin we've committed or just the circumstances of our lives, we're tempted to bury the truth then let others know what's happened.
- We've all felt it. An unfaithful spouse, infertility, a miscarriage, hidden physical abuse, an abortion nobody knows about, being brow-beaten by a boss, an incarcerated family member, sexual abuse, a hidden addiction that's lasted years, unemployment and failure to find another job, adult children who've turned on you, being told as a child you're good for nothing, and you'll never amount to anything. These aren't theoretical issues but real stories of real people with real problems. They're our stories — ones we try so desperately to hide from in our disgrace.

Jesus Was Also Disgraced

- His lineage and birth story were marked by disgrace.
 - Rahab and Ruth (Josh. 6:25; Heb. 11:25).
 - Mary's scandalous pregnancy (Matt. 1:9; John 8:41).
 - Laid in a manger (Luke 2:12-16).
 - His parent's poverty (Luke 2:22-24; Lev. 12:7-8).
- His rejection and horrible death were all about disgrace.
 - Rejected in his hometown (Mark 6:1-6).
 - Plotted and schemed against (John 11:45-53).
 - Betrayed by his closest friends (John 13:21-30).
 - Insulted, beaten, and killed without cause (Mark 15:16-39).
- Why did Jesus spend so much time with the broken and disgraced? Because he was one himself!

Jesus Loves the Broken

- Who rushed to Jesus?
 - Sexually immoral women (John 4:1-45; Luke 7:36-50).
 - The demon-possessed (Matt. 8:28-34; Mark 5:1-20).
 - Lepers and the dying (Mark 1:40-45; 2:1-12).
 - Those looking to be blessed (Matt. 5:3-12).
- So, if you've ever felt disgraced, ashamed, outside of the "middle", Jesus welcomes you to your new family of diverse and disgraced people (1 Peter 2:9-10; 1 Cor. 12:27-31). You don't have to

hide here. You don't have to pretend to be someone you're not. You can drop your masks and be vulnerable with people that faced shame and disgrace too.

Conclusion

- What a gracious gift that Jesus loved us enough to die for us — a disgraced and sinful people who were enemies of God in our sins.
- Let us all say together, as the tax collector said, "God, be merciful to me, a sinner!" (Luke 18:13).