



## **KILLING WHAT'S KILLING YOU**

Guilt and Shame  
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## **DISCUSSION NOTES**

The Crossing Church  
Las Vegas, Nevada

### **OPENING**

This week we are continuing our series called **Killing What's Killing You**. In this series we are getting really honest about our emotions because when we ignore, avoid, deny or excuse them, they have power over us - the power to kill God's work in us. They can kill our joy and relationships yet we avoid dealing with them at all costs. This week the subjects are guilt and shame. The good news is we were never meant to carry them alone. The power of Christ will release us from their grasp if we will let it.

### **SCRIPTURE<sup>1</sup>**

**John 10:10** The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.

**Acts 16:26-34** Suddenly there was such a violent earthquake that the foundations of the prison were shaken. At once all the prison doors flew open, and everyone's chains came loose. The jailer woke up, and when he saw the prison doors open, he drew his sword and was about to kill himself because he thought the prisoners had escaped. But Paul shouted, "Don't harm yourself! We are all here!" The jailer called for lights, rushed in and fell trembling before Paul and Silas. He then brought them out and asked, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" They replied, "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved – you and your household." Then they spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all the others in his house. At that hour of the night the jailer took them and washed their wounds; then immediately he and his household were baptized. The jailer brought them into his house and set a meal before them; he was filled with joy because he had come to believe in God – he and his whole household.

**Acts 22:16** And now what are you waiting for? Get up, be baptized and wash your sins away, calling on his name.

### **OBSERVATION**

The story of the jailer in this week's scripture takes him from persecutor of Christians to the baptism of his whole family. The story of Paul is the same. He not only persecuted Christians, but he was there when Steven was stoned to death. After Jesus confronted him on the road to Damascus, he was blinded, accepted Christ as Savior and was baptized – all within a matter of days. He tells of his transformation and says humbly that because of his persecutions of Christians, he was the least of all the apostles.<sup>2</sup> Even so, Jesus called him to be the Apostle to the gentiles, taking three missionary journeys outside of Israel into the Mediterranean regions planting churches and leading people to Christ. Jesus came to change us just as dramatically from sinner to salvation to baptism.

### **APPLICATION**

Last week we were reminded that Satan has an agenda for us - a plan for our spiritual deaths. We also know that Jesus has a greater agenda: to bring us life that is full of joy, purpose, and fulfillment. In order to fully embrace these gifts, we have to get honest about the emotions that undermine our

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<sup>1</sup> All scripture is NIV unless otherwise indicated

<sup>2</sup> 1 Corinthians 15:8-9; Ephesians 3:8

futures with Jesus and seem to never leave. This week's emotion, guilt and its accompanying shame are a terrible burden. It haunts us whether it is false guilt – the guilt we feel that has nothing to do with something we did, but we feel bad because we can't change a circumstance – or guilt associated with something we did in our past – or the guilt we should feel, but we don't. With the latter kind, we did something we are so ashamed of we have created a narrative around it. "It wasn't just me;" or "It was only one night;" or "I was young and didn't know any better." This allows us to distance ourselves from the guilt. But the problem is that guilt is something we can't undo. It comes roaring out of our past and now affects our present.

**Question:** What guilt are you carrying from your past? How is it impacting your present?

For our jailer, his dramatic change began with an earthquake. Sometimes it takes an event like that to shake us to our core. For him it caused sudden fear for his very life because, if the prisoners escaped when the gates were broken open, then he would be executed. But the jailer was spared and the men who voluntarily stayed in the prison and their testimony about Jesus caused him to rethink his life and accept salvation. Then he was immediately baptized.

**Question:** What traumatic event has caused you to want to deal with your past guilt?

**Question:** What do you think it would take for you to finally admit your need for forgiveness and Jesus? Are you going to wait until you wound the people you love most?

So, where do we begin to deal with our guilt? **1) The first step in letting go of our past is to admit our need.** Because we want to manage our guilt, we try to hide what we've done, making sure that no one ever finds out – but something always happens – an earthquake of sorts. It might be a tragedy, or a marriage ends, or illness strikes. **The sin we want to conceal the most, is the sin we need to reveal the most, because there is no healing in hiding.**

**Question:** How long have you been hiding your sin? How much has the guilt diminished during this time?

**2) Place our trust in Jesus.** Don't struggle with whether He exists or not; our struggle is with Christians, and churches, and pastors. The call is not to place our trust in a church or a human, but in a Savior. God never said to believe He exists – the call is to believe in Jesus. This is where it gets personal and belief goes from our heads into our hearts. **3) Change the direction of our lives.** True repentance requires a change. It isn't just feeling bad for what we've done, it is changing with the help of our new Champion in this battle – Jesus.

**Question:** What changes do you expect to take place in your life if you repent and accept Jesus?

**4) Immediately express your faith through baptism.** The jailer changed the direction of his entire family because he humbled himself and repented and was baptized. That same impact is ours for the accepting and our entire family may be saved when we humbly say yes to Jesus. This change is demonstrated to the entire world when we are baptized. After His resurrection, the first thing Jesus told us to do was to be baptized. It represents being buried with Him in death to our pasts, and rising up to new life in Him. The difference between guilt and shame is that guilt is caused by something we have done – shame is because of something we are – it becomes our identity. We have a new identity – forgiven sinner, washed clean by the blood of Christ.

**Question:** What is your identity? How do you see yourself? Are you happy with who you are?

This weekend, for all services, baptism was available. We provided everything needed and many responded with anticipation that the direction of their lives would change.

**Question:** How did you respond to this invitation? Why have you made a decision to/not to be baptized?

## PRAYER

Heavenly Father, we can't live with our guilt and shame any longer. Help us to stop hiding them away and instead confront them by laying them at the feet of Your Son. In Jesus' name. Amen