**SHAME OFF YOU : THE SANDSTORM OF SHAME**

**JANUARY 15, 2023 – 9:30AM**

**ED YOUNG**

I am sure you recognize that song, “Sandstorm” by Darude, right? I love that. Sandstorm. Anyone here, have you ever been in a sandstorm before? I have. I was in Arizona several years ago and got just blasted by one. A sandstorm is a strong wind that carries dust and obviously sand and it can really mess you up. Normally it doesn't, but it affects your eyes, your nose, your ears, and it can even blind you. That's why it's so dangerous. I think in a crowd this size, a lot of us would be in a sandstorm right now. We don't look like it. We can see in here and taste and smell and all that, but I think a lot of us are in the sandstorm of something that is even more perilous than sand, shame.

When I say the word shame, a lot of us, if you're like me, we have a hard time kind of categorizing it or even describing it. In fact, before I made a deep dive into this study, I sort of have felt shame before in my life, but I didn't really know what it was, or I didn't know how to pinpoint it. The enemy is all about shame. The enemy is basically shame on you. God, on the other hand is shame off you. Shame is a driver of so many things in our lives, and most of us go through these gymnastics and don't even realize that the horsepower behind it all is this sandstorm of shame.

The first time I ever sold something, I stole a bulldozer. I was five years old. It was a little toy and it felt good because my friend at his house had better toys than I did. I just straight up put this bulldozer in my pocket, walked home with my mother. This is when we used to go outside kids and I remember feeling a little case of the “guiltys”, just a little. So, I thought, okay, I'm going to hide this D9 dozer under my dresser until later and I could play with it. So, I'm kind of guilty. Then I start feeling a little bit of shame. This is my first recollection of shame.

My mother walked into my bedroom and she said in her Mississippi accent, "Ed did you take a bulldozer from Mike's house?" "Yes I did Mom." "Where is it?" "The bulldozer is under the dresser." I remember it like it was yesterday, my dresser was blue and I reached my little hand in there, took the bulldozer out, and she said, "You march right back down there and you return that." And again, this is when kids, we could actually walk from house to house back in the day. So, I walk like three or four houses away, returned it, and I really felt better.

That's a very simple story. I'm sure you've stolen things before. It's a very simple situation, but it's packed with theology. **Sin**, I stole the bulldozer from my friend. That's a sin. I felt **guilt**. Then even as a little kid, if you grill guilt for too long, if you stay in that stage too long, it will segue into **shame**. I call shame “the sewage of sin”. I hit shame a little bit in my five-year-old self, but then I went quickly to **repentance**. Is that correct? Oh my goodness. you know what? I knew there was... In fact, I knew there was no way I could go for two weeks without misspelling a word. I have ADD-ADHD processing disorders as part of my shame. So, R-E-P-E-N, How about this? N. Is that good? I'm sorry I'm not perfect.

Those of us who struggle with perfectionism, shame often drives it. I'm going to be so perfect. I'll spell every word correctly. No hair will be out of place, this and that and somehow, we think if we're perfect, if we're organized, if everything is A-okay in all situations, then we won't feel the shame. But obviously that doesn't work.

So, sin, guilt, I went to shame and boom, I bounced into repentance because what did I do? I retraced my steps. That's repentance and dropped off the D9 dozer at Mikey's house. That is the formula.

Shame is sin. Some shame is **subjective**. In other words, it's imposed upon us. We did nothing to deserve it. Some of us right now are going, “I was abused, surely I caused it.” No, you didn't. “I was raped, I was taken advantage of.

I was berated. I'm an accident. I'm an afterthought. I'm a no count.” That is shame from Satan himself. He speaks sham-eze. That's not God's language. We say, "Oh, I'm not sufficient." Jesus says, "You're sufficient." We say, "I'm unloved." Jesus says, "I love you with an everlasting love so much I died on the cross. The cross was an instrument of shame for your sin and your shame. I carried that."

If you will acquiesce, if you will humble yourself before the Lord Jesus, if you will be vulnerable before him and tell him what he already knows. That's what the word confession means, agreeing with God and take responsibility your life, your life will do something, and you'll be something that no one else can be. Because if you aren't you, there's going to be a hole in history, a gap in God's creative plan.

Why don't we compare ourselves with others so much? Have you ever thought about that? I'll tell you why, we want to hide. Think about Adam and Eve when they tasted that fruit, they covered themselves and then they hid. They tried to pull one over on God. They looked to another place and space for the answers because the enemy said, “Hey, Adam and Eve, God's holding out on you. You can be like God.” And from that day forward, we've been struggling with playing cover up.

Some of you might be dealing with shame that is subjective. It's imposed by others. Some of us deal with **objective** shame. Shame that we basically have caused in our lives. Shame that is from sin and guilt. If guilt is left unchecked, it goes to shame. And we're swimming in a cesspool of shame.

“I don't want to **expose** who I am, or I don't want to be **intimate** with anybody. I don't want to be vulnerable because if people knew the real me, they would reject me. They're going to forgive your sin, but not my sin. You have no idea. I had an abortion. I'm divorced. I was immoral. I lied in a business deal. I guess I'm just stuck in the sewage of shame.”

Other times, this sandstorm of shame rears its ugly head in being **critical**, hyper critical. I have to struggle with that in my own life. Then I'll criticize others. Are you that way? I'll criticize others because somehow, I'm trying to cover my shame. It makes myself feel better. It gives me a quick hit of dopamine, but it doesn't last.

Then shame takes the form of **fear**, a fear of rejection, a fear of failure, a fear of loneliness. I know we have a lot of singles here, and you think, “oh, I'm just one relationship away from Nirvana.” Humanly speaking no, you're not. You can't put supernatural pressure on a natural man or woman. In other words, there are needs that only God can meet, and a human being cannot. I don't care how rich he is, I don't care how handsome he is. It could be the ultimate Hallmark guy. Have you ever noticed, have you ever watched the Hallmark Channel now and then, the guys always have a full head of hair. They wear the Rolex watches. They're astronomically wealthy and they're sensitive. So, on the Hallmark Channel, men act like women, and it works. Let me just get that off my chest. But ladies, those of you who are single, "Oh, if I marry this Hallmark guy, we'll take long walks together, we'll ride bikes together, we'll pick apples at the apple orchard. Whatever it is, that will be it." Well, that's great. I'm happy that you're married that's awesome. I love marriage. I'm for marriage, but they're not going to cover your shame.

Then we have **value**. It's like, “okay, I'll just perform for others.” That's something I struggle with obviously. Every Sunday I have an appointment before thousands and thousands of people, and it's got to be biblical. It's got to be deep, but not too deep. Funny, not too funny, poignant, not too poignant. I got to write, memorize a term paper every single week. God has a sense of humor because you should have seen my grades. I did my best artwork in my math classes. I wish I had some of those books. But isn't it true that we try to cover our tracks, cover our shame by performing, and then of course we turn to the shame machines. I'll just say our phones or our laptops or many of the other platforms, those are truly shame machines. We compare ourselves. “that's not real,” you've already said a squillion times, but it's not real. In my life, I cannot follow certain people because certain people, what they post can be triggers of shame for me. So, if you're following people and it's like, “man, look where they vacation. Man, look at the ring he gave her. Whoa, look at the opportunities that they have. Look at that car. Is that a Bentley?”

When it comes to social media, for the most part, it's like I'm here. You are there. It's a shame machine. Let's be honest. Now there's a good side to it. I'm not saying that, but young people, please, I beg you. Don't allow the shame machine to run your life because very quickly you'll fall into sin, guilt, and you'll live in this sewage of shame.

Let me talk real quick about somebody that carried some serious shame. The Bible is littered with people, characters, that carried shame. The woman at the well, Zacchaeus, Samson, Saul, David. The guy I'm going to talk about today probably takes up as far as the pages of scripture, he comes in number three. I'm talking about number one as Jesus. I'm talking about the ink in the Bible. Number two would be David and number three, Moses.

Let's talk about Moses. Moses. “Do you mean Moses carried shame?” Yes, he did. Think about his **birth**, **he carried shame for** **who he was**. He was born in Egyptian slavery. You are talking about a slave machine. Over 400 years, people were in slavery. Through a strange turn of events, he was miraculously adopted by Pharaoh's family. He had one foot in Egyptian culture, the other foot in Hebrew culture. He was educated like none other. He had advantages. He had cash, money like none other, a lot of people were saying in fact, this was trending, that he would be the next Pharaoh of Egypt, a Jew. But that wasn't going to happen. But people were talking about that. If you read a lot of his comments on some of his posts, people were saying, "Yeah, you'll probably be the next Pharaoh."

So just for who he was, and maybe you can identify with that, your background, your heritage, your family or lack thereof. You feel shame because of just who you are.

**He also felt shame for what he did**. You won't believe this and I'm giving you a quick Bible lesson. He grew up one foot in Egyptian culture, the other foot in Hebrew culture here there. I'm sure he’s like, “man, I have all of this, all of this stuff, all of these opportunities in Egypt, yet I'm still a Hebrew. And how about my people?” I'm sure he had some serious haters.

Well, meet me in Egypt right now if you would. Take your Bibles and let's go to Egypt. **Exodus 2:11-12**. And let's see what happens. This is Moses. Now “10 commandments” Moses, right? Charlton Heston, Moses, if you're older, the guy. **11 “One day, after Moses had grown up,”** He was 40 years old, and his life can be broken down into three sections. The first 40 years he was a **somebody** say that with me, “somebody”. The next 40 years, he was a **nobody**, say “nobody”. And the last 40 years he discovered that God can use **anybody**. Say “anybody”. That's his life.

**11 “One day, after Moses had grown up, he went out to where his own people were and watched them at their hard labor. He saw an Egyptian beating a Hebrew, one of his own people. 12 Looking this way and that and seeing no one, he killed the Egyptian and hid him in the sand.”** So, he sinned, right? And he quickly tried to cover his tracks, kind of like we talked about last week, Adam and Eve. So, he played God for a second. "Hey, I'm God, I'm going to take this situation into my own hands." He didn't talk to God first. He acted and shame, remember our definition of shame? **Shame Is The All-Consuming Emotional Condition** **That We've Let Down Ourselves, Others, And God.** It separates us from God, ourselves and others. That's how diabolical it is.

Moses basically said, "I'm God." He played God kill the guy. Then he tried to cover him. He dug a hole in the sand and we're going to see, he's going to get whacked by the sandstorm of shame. He tried to cover his tracks. You know how the winds will blow, the sandstorm and after a while the toes begin to stick out of the sand.

Little did Moe realize, but he was found out. Somebody saw him. Then it went all over social media. It became viral. Pharaoh would now turn from being like his guy to I'm going to take him out. Now can you imagine all of the special forces and things that Pharaoh had at his disposal? Amazing. Well, Moses, after he tried to hide, then we're going to see, he began to blame others. He was in this cycle, this whirlwind, and a sandstorm goes this way. Did you know that? Is circular. He was in that. **Fame, Lame, Blame, Fame, Lame, Blame**. He takes off. He becomes a fugitive. Moses does turns and he is running. He probably ran like this. That's the way he rolled. The Bible tells us that he ran and ran and ran to the backside of the desert. And finally, **he stopped running.** Some of you, maybe me, we need to stop running. Then the Bible says he sat down by a well and **drank some water.** The Bible gives us the opportunity to be washed by the power of the Word of God. The blood of Jesus cleanses us from all. From all of our sin, and all of our shame, God, not only forgives, but he chooses to forget. If it's under the blood, “what abortion?” If it's under the blood, “what immorality?” If it's under the blood, “what perfectionism?” Just fill in the blank. If it's under the blood, “what Family of origin issues?” Isn't that awesome?

The cure is not to press the pause button. The cure is to hit play. And that's what we're going to find out about Moses. He, through this process, not perfectly, humbled himself before God. He was vulnerable before him. He took responsibility, and he became one of the great difference makers ever.

So he drank some water, then **he enrolled in the University of Desert.** I went to school at Florida State. I think college in many ways is overrated, but that's a Hole Notha Message. Don't get me going about that. But anyway, I went to Florida State. I was with the Florida State criminals, I mean Seminoles for a long time, and I'll talk about that next week too some, because that really marked my life. Moses had an encounter on the backside of the desert as he was enrolled in the University of Desert. God spoke to him through a **Burning Bush**. Now this is Moses, **Exodus 3:11**. God is calling Moses to be the deliverer of his people out of slavery. That's what God's doing. It’s a pretty big task. Are you imagining leading like several million Jews out of Egyptian slavery, out of the shame of slavery? **"God, who am I?"** He's telling God this. God says, "Moses, you the man." Who am I? Identity issues. **Exodus 4:1, “What if they don't believe me or listen to me?”** Those are just basic believability issues, right? **Exodus 4:10,** **“I'm slow of speech, he probably stuttered, slow of tongue.**” That would be performance, that would be capacity issues. **Exodus 4:13, "Please send someone else."** That's just false humility. He didn't want the responsibility, really. He was afraid. But here's what I love about God. God. And yes, God used Aaron.

God though used Moses with his speech impediment. Think about it. Before Moses was born, he knew that he would have an impediment. That the impediment caused him to totally rely on God, to totally humble himself before God and to be vulnerable and to take responsibility because he really relied on God because of that impediment. And many times, we go, “oh man, that's an impediment in my life. I wish God would remove it. I wish God would take it away. If it weren't for that, I couldn't do whatever.” No, no, no. Maybe just maybe, that is what God wants to use.

The children of Israel are delivered from Egyptian slavery. Then God gives Moses the 10 Commandments. First one to write them down was Moses, after God put them in stone. What's the sixth commandment? **Exodus 20:13,** **“Thou shall not murder.”** You've got to be kidding me. You mean God picks a murderer to be the first one to write down “Thou shall not murder.” Look at your neighbor. I doubt your neighbor has committed murder this week. Well, maybe, we are in Texas, but isn't that powerful? That's the grace and the love.

That's the mercy of God. You know how to remember the difference between guilt and shame? **Guilt is a comma**. The story is not done. **Shame is a period.** The devil says the story is over in your life. But you know what? I want to carry around commas, don't you? A backpack full of commas. Fellowship Church is a church of the comma, not the period. No matter where you are, no matter what you've done, God's grace is bigger and broader than your sin and mine, than your shame and mine.

**Psalm 103:11-12, 11“For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is His love for those who fear Him; 12as far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed our transgressions from us.”** Let's say this is a globe and you go east. If you go east, you'll never hit west. Let me say that again. You start walking east, you'll never hit west. How about at Fellowship Church? Let's thank God for the comma. Let's thank him for our grace and our mercy. Let's thank him for the instrument of shame, the cross where he has freed us and liberated us from sandstorms.

Let's pray together. Father, in the name of Jesus, I thank you for every person here. I know that strongholds are being broken right now with this whole situation, with this whole storm of shame. Holy Spirit, pinpoint this in our lives. Reveal it to us as we confess and allow God to cleanse and wash us. And if you're here and you've never, ever, asked Christ to come into your life, you can simply say, “God, I admit to you that I thought I was a somebody, but before you, I'm a sinner. I'm a nobody. And I believe you can save in anybody. Save me and forgive me for Christ's sake.” Amen.