

The Wednesday Word, March 13, 2019: Ashamed

Some years ago, an eminent minister of the Gospel lay on his death bed and a friend asked him, "Are you afraid to die?" " No," he said, turning his dimming eyes on his questioner. "No, I am not afraid, but I am ashamed!"

These words impacted me. I identified with them entirely. I love and believe the message of grace but when I look at my past life, I cringe. I am ashamed. I am compelled to say with Bishop Beveredge, 'I cannot but look back upon my whole life but as one continued act of sin! "

I melt when I consider God's patience and forbearance towards me. How does he put up with me? I'm amazed at the hideous vitality of sin and self that yet lurks within me. I am ashamed.

I have not preached the way I should have preached. I am ashamed

I have wasted opportunities for the Gospel and am ashamed

I see my lack of love and am ashamed.

I see my ingratitude and shortcomings and am ashamed.

I realize my lack of zeal and am ashamed.

I consider my prayer life and am ashamed.

Concerning prayer, I identify with the great John Newton who wrote,

"Often at the mercy-seat,
While calling on Thy name,
Swarms of evil thoughts I meet,
Which fill my soul with shame.
Agitated is my mind,
Like a feather in the air,
Can I thus a blessing find?
My soul, can this be prayer?"

Thank you, brother John Newton! Glad to see I'm not the only one in this boat. In fact, we are a large company. We know God has forgiven us, but we find it hard to forgive ourselves. We look at our failures and feel ashamed.

All fear of death has been taken away by the certainty of eternal life through Jesus; but we are at times keenly aware that, at best, we are unprofitable servants (Luke17:10)! Think of the many times our heart has been cold towards our precious master, friend and Saviour, the Lord Jesus.

We have earned the right to be ashamed.

Ashamed of our imperfections,

Ashamed of ourselves.

Ashamed at our start, stop prayer life.

Ashamed at how little of the Word we know.

How we thank our Saviour for grace, mercy and the precious blood.

An awful price has been paid for our ransom. May we be overwhelmed and amazed at the undeserved mercy of God. He has even died for our shame. He has saved and adopted us.

Final thought. The "ashamedness," we feel can only be felt in this life. In glory we will be like the Lord, we will remember our sins no more (Hebrews 8:12). Shame cannot exist in the

presence of God. All the bitter shame and sorrow flee in the brightness and glory of His grace! Psalm 16:11 assures us that "In Thy presence is fulness of joy; at Thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore." There's not an inch of room for "shame" there.

But do some people actually arrive in glory with shame? Perhaps so! We read, "God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes," (Revelation 21:4). Included in these tears could well be tears of shame. At the end of the day, I don't know. But this I do know; all memory of unworthiness and sin shall be impossible when we wake in His likeness (Psalm 17:15).

And that's the Gospel Truth!