

I'm Shy

Prayer

In our ongoing series on holistic health of the Christian, I would like to talk today about being shy, something to watch for and what God says in his word on this issue of shyness.

The bible tells us first the natural and then the spiritual so I am going to start with a couple of natural concepts and then we will delve into the Word of God.

First off shyness and social anxiety disorder share many common characteristics. If you are shy or one or more of your kids are shy how do you know its not something more serious?

There is a condition called SAD, which stands for social anxiety disorder, which is often dismissed as extreme shyness. More than 75% of those who suffer don't ever seek treatment.

So why would we talk about this in a sermon. Well there are several reasons, but SAD can have a huge impact on a person's career, financial independence, education, personal relationships and so on.

Still why do we care?

Shyness and SAD sufferers often lead an isolated life. This causes them to seldom have meaningful relationships outside the family, which often results in depression and substance abuse.

So are you starting to see the big picture, we need to recognize this in either ourselves or in the people we are helping in the community. More about that later...

So... if someone suspects it is more than shyness how do they tell?

Usually it relates to the intensity of the fear, the level of avoidance and what fear is preventing the person from doing. People with SAD don't just feel nervous before giving a testimony or speaking in public. They may worry about it for weeks or months before hand. They may be filled with a tremendous sense of rejection or dread. They may experience sleep loss, a racing heart, shortness of breath, sweating of the shakes. So you see the difference is really in the intensity of the reaction.

If you are experiencing these symptoms you should see your doctor about SAD.

But once again Pastor, What is the relevance?

Well... we are called by Christ to spread his good news...

Mark 16:15 ESV

And he said to them, "Go into all the world and proclaim the gospel to the whole creation.

1 Peter 3:15 ESV

But in your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect,

Jeremiah 1:7-8 ESV

But the Lord said to me, "Do not say, 'I am only a youth'; for to all to whom I send you, you shall go, and whatever I command you, you shall speak. Do not be afraid of them, for I am with you to deliver you, declares the Lord."

Acts 1:8 ESV

But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."

Matthew 5:16 ESV

In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.

Romans 10:17 ESV

So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ.

How can we be witnesses for Christ if we are afraid to speak to or in front of other people?

Did you notice that the Holy Spirit brings inspired speech and the ability for witness? This is why I have been saying that if you have not been filled with the Holy Spirit, you are not fully equipped. We need his presence and his gifts to fulfill our mission.

Now, I will not guilt anyone into speaking, nor will I make it an expectation of you today, yet we need to examine ourselves, we need to look deep into our hearts.

To be effective for witness, we need to be able to speak the good news of Jesus Christ to others without fear of ridicule or rejection. We need to be bold and Strong.

So, we have talked about SAD, we have briefly looked at an aspect of our role as Christians, let's now press into what the Bible says about shyness.

First of all... What is "Shy"? It is a minor form of social anxiety. Webster's dictionary says that Shyness is "the state of being timid, easily frightened, reserved, bashful, and shrinking from contact with others."

Here is a huge tool for you, if you are shy. People your shyness can be conquered by relying on the Holy Spirit.

2 Timothy 1:7 NLT

For God has not given us a spirit of fear and timidity, but of power, love, and self-discipline.

To overcome this fear, we choose faith... How?

We need to be filled with and under the direction of the Holy Spirit. If you have determined that you are shy or that someone around you is shy and they need help to overcome their fear. Try leading them into meditating on the Word of God. It teaches us what we need to know. We need to see how the scriptures apply to our lives. They are more than a historical document.

Colossians 3:16 NLT

"Let the message about Christ, in all its richness, fill your lives. Teach and counsel each other with all the wisdom he gives. Sing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs to God with thankful hearts."

Matthew 28:19-20 ESV

"Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age."

Today I pick on the shy... likely that if they don't listen to the message today, they will never call me on it anyway....

Seriously though, did you know that shyness can actually be a form of pride? Are we being too concerned about the opinions of others? Are we afraid of whether or not we will be accepted?

Proverbs 29:25 NLT

Fearing people is a dangerous trap, but trusting the Lord means safety.

As a Christian, the reality is that you may not be liked, but you are still called to witness. The Apostle Paul tells us:

2 Timothy 3:11-12 NLT

You know how much persecution and suffering I have endured. You know all about how I was persecuted in Antioch, Iconium, and Lystra—but the Lord rescued me from all of it. Yes, and everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution.

So... you are already called to experience this, but probably not in Gods house, with his people... The church is a great training ground.

Since I came here, I have always brought the message from the Lord to choose faith over fear. Both ask us to believe in something unseen. Will you have faith?

It comes down to this... Being bashful, timid and shy are all ways of saying fear. Fear is the opposite of faith. We are to overcome our fears through faith in God. Do you want to please your God?

Hebrews 11:6 NLT

And it is impossible to please God without faith. Anyone who wants to come to him must believe that God exists and that he rewards those who sincerely seek him.

Don't blame me. I'm just the messenger...

2 Timothy 3:16-17 NLT

All Scripture is inspired by God and is useful to teach us what is true and to make us realize what is wrong in our lives. It corrects us when we are wrong and teaches us to do what is right. God uses it to prepare and equip his people to do every good work.

We are getting equipped for the good work. Whether fear or pride or a combination of both, we are called. We must be able to start conversations and build relationships with others if we are to win them to Christ. When we show others we are interested in them, it is a Godly expression of Love that is undeniable. We need to shift the focus in our lives from fear or pride to the needs of the other person, whether they know they need Jesus or not.

Fear is a real thing to those who suffer with it... Overcoming shyness is not as easy as just saying, "I am not shy anymore". In our church we must cultivate a culture of honor to respect what a person says, to respect their opinions and to allow them to come out of themselves without fear of ridicule or rejection.

Now not everything someone says is correct, but with the help of the Holy Spirit and some guidance and correction from the word of God and leadership, applied in a Godly way, people will build and grow and overcome a crippling fear which keeps them from contributing, witness and growth in Jesus.

Fear is not an option. Fear is the opposite of Faith and we are a people of faith. Let us spur each other on to good works and even more so as the day of the Lords return approaches.

When you see a person who is shy, bring in a culture of honor, encourage them to come out into the world and let the world discover and enjoy whom they are. Everyone matters. We have promised to Love all People. So...

One final point, if you think you are shy; do not let the enemy rob you and the rest of us of who you are. Come out into the light and be welcome.

I think of myself as once being a caterpillar, but now through faith I have been transformed into a social butterfly, bringing the beauty and peace of God to all...

If you are shy, this can be you too. Reach out to the Holy Spirit today for the strength to make a difference in your life and in the lives of others.

Let's pray...