

Zechariah 9:9b; Psalm 25:1–3

Advent Midweek 1

December 2, 2020—Shepherd of the Mountains, Pinetop, AZ

Jesus: King of Shame

INI

Dear sisters and brothers in Christ, our meditation this evening is based upon the introit appointed for this past Sunday, the first Sunday in Advent, with verses from Zechariah 9 and Psalm 25.

“Behold, your king is coming to you; righteous and having salvation is he.” *Zech 9:9b*

“To you, O Lord, I lift up my soul. O my God, in you I trust; let me not be put to shame; let not my enemies exult over me. Indeed, none who wait for you shall be put to shame; they shall be ashamed who are wantonly treacherous.” *Ps 25:1–3*

What is it like to be embarrassed? You know—that awful moment when you realize people can see what you’ve done. They can see what you don’t want anyone to see. You thought you had it covered. You thought you had a handle on it. But it’s out. In the open. For people to point at, spotlight, whisper about. It’s out. You feel like a fool. They know. Or you feel like a disgrace, ashamed. Guilt all exposed with nowhere to hide, and it makes you want to scream. Yes, it makes you want to die. Crawl into a hole and die.

The Lord is going to do something to you tonight. He is going to come to you. Are you ready? Behold, your King is coming to you. Are you ready? No, you don’t get to go check yourself in the mirror. You don’t get a minute to get your life in order. The King of the universe is coming to you.

Shame is powerful. Have you noticed the power of shame increases with the importance of the person who sees it? You aren’t as concerned if a homeless person sees you fall as if your boss or co-workers see it. The teenager can bear some shame from mom and dad but be totally ashamed in front of friends. The more honor you give a person, the more shame you’d feel before them. Picture that One person you respect the most, the person you think is the most honorable, the One you want to make proud, to be like, look up to—what if that One sees? Sees your darkest, most painful shame?

“Behold, your king is coming to you; righteous and having salvation is he.”

Embarrassment is a messy thing! It creates distance—because people try not to be associated with the dis-graceful. You get left alone in your shame. Even people you love find it difficult to be near you, because they fear they’ll be “painted with the same brush.” Shame is easy to share. It’s contagious. People clear the shame zone quicker than a bomb threat, even as they stare and blend in with the gawkers. They get further away than 6 feet, further than a 10-foot pole, or even a 39.5-foot pole, so nobody makes a mistake about just who is dirtied by the shame. Words spoken to others to make sure our distance from the shame is maintained. *“Can you believe that lady?!” “I would never be caught doing what he did!”*

The sad thing is we know this. But when we are caught in *our* shame, we’ll also try to keep others away from us. We know they’ll ruin themselves by coming near, so we push them away, won’t let them in. We’ll try to save them from us. Why should *they* go down *with* us? It’s our own fault!

“Behold, your king is coming to you; righteous and having salvation is he.”

No, Lord, don’t come near me! I’m too ashamed. Stay away. I’m not worthy. I’ll embarrass you. You’ll look like a fool. You’ll become a disgrace. You should keep away.

“Behold, your king is coming to you; righteous and having salvation is he.”

But you don’t understand—I’m contaminated, defiled, dirty, filthy, unclean. I’ll ruin you; my shame is so thick it’ll rub off on you. My sin is my enemy. It exults over me. It keeps showing me that I’m a disgrace. O lords

itself over me. Stirring up regret and remorse, sometimes as powerful as shame's first sting. Stay away, Lord. Stay away.

And the response from our king: "Beloved, I am not afraid of your shame. I am here for you. I don't come to expose you, but to cover you. I don't come to reveal you, but to hide you in me. I don't go running. I am coming to you. Into your shame. Specifically for your shame. I am going to take your shame...unite myself to it...make it my own...become it; I am your King.

"When first I came, they called me a fool. When first I came, they declared me guilty. When first I came, I was a disgrace. Spit on, naked, mocked, beaten, crucified. And not in private, but in the sight of all. Not in hiding, but in order to reveal. Not screaming, but in silence. I am your King.

"Beloved, I am not afraid of your shame. I am the King of your shame. Your shame is mine and My honor is yours. For this is why I come, righteous and having salvation. This is what I bring you. My honor. My name. Spoken over you. Placed upon you. Watering you and cleansing you and renewing you. I am your King. Open wide the door to your heart. Don't hide anything any longer—for I rule you with honor and mercy and grace."

You come to honor me, Lord. I trust you with my heart. You cover my shame. Lord, I trust you with my shame. Protect my soul, Lord. Keep it. I cannot. In you alone I trust.

Fellow baptized saints, this introit comforts us at our roots. It offers us the gentlest, most loving, and forgiving master. And it promises us a place of honor in His presence. He comes as our champion. To ride and fight and die. But not in the way we'd expect. He doesn't come down in His glory and fight the evidence against us—a full assault against those things that shame us. He doesn't deny them or prove they're wrong. No, He takes them, all of the true and shameful accusations. And He removes them. Covers them. Suffers them. Kills them. In His own body. And says, *I am your King.*

Back in the garden, when God covered Adam and Eve's shame and nakedness, He shed blood. He killed another living being in order to cover their shame with skins. That is Christ. He is the blood-shed One. Your cover. Your clothing. The One you wear to cover all your shame. And He comes to you with full restoration, calling on you to trust Him with your soul. That you might proclaim with the psalmist: **"Indeed, none who wait for You shall be put to shame" (25:3).**

The Lord will come again, but He has come to you tonight in His Word. He comes to you, whether you are ready or not, ashamed or not. But He comes for you anyway because He is your King, the King of your shame. And He comes righteous, having your salvation, and salvation for all who believe. In His holy name. Amen.

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