

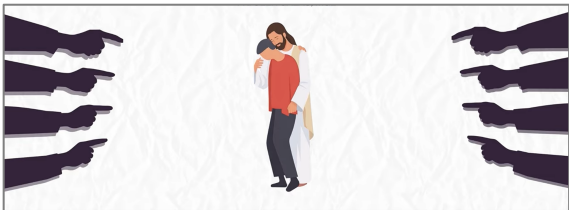
WHY WE BLAME AND WHY JESUS DOESN'T

A Lord's Flock Worship Service Topic

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Hate stories abound of people being summarily blamed and accused of wrongdoings despite lack of due process. Oftentimes in the past, unscrupulous people have initiated the accusations for political and/or economic gains. The same is true nowadays. The so-called "cancel culture" is prevalent on social media, where we tend to push people to the wall with harsh criticisms. Jesus invites us to step out of the cycle of rivalry and blame. Instead of competing, He calls us to love; instead of scapegoating, he calls us to reconciliation.



1. Why does the world so often operate on hate and finger-pointing?

In order to understand this, we need to go back to the original fall, the story of Adam and Eve. "But the snake said to the woman, 'You certainly will not die! God knows well that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened and you will be like gods, who know good and evil'" (Gen. 3:4-5). We can be likened to Adam and Eve in terms of the following:

- 1.1 We want to obtain power that is not ours. We yearn for something so much so that we can't wait for it to be handed over to us, forcibly grabbing it for ourselves, and, in effect, disobeying God.
- 1.2 We imitate what others desire because we do not know what we want. French philosopher René Girard calls it "mimetic desire."

2. What will happen if we desire the same things?

When two men desire the same thing, the result is conflict, rivalry, and violence, as in the story of Cain and Abel (Gen. 4:1-16).

- 2.1 We constantly want to eliminate our rivals to get what we want.

- 2.2 When conflicts grow, we look for someone to blame and expel, thinking that peace will be restored.
- 2.3 We look for a scapegoat. In scriptures, the scapegoat is a central figure of the Day of Atonement (Yom Kippur), in which the high priest transfers the guilt of sin of all of Israel by confessing them to a live goat which is then released into the wilderness to Azazel (Lev. 16). The peace that scapegoating produces is temporary. But the cycle of rivalry, conflict, and violence goes on.

3. What did Jesus Christ do to stop this cycle of conflict, rivalry, and violence in this world?

- 3.1 In the story of the woman caught in adultery, Jesus opposed the system by saying that the one who has no sin be the first to cast the stone. Then He told the woman to sin no more (Jn 7:53-8:11).
- 3.2 He offered himself as the scapegoat (Phil. 2:5-7). He became the offering for our sins, the innocent victim (2 Cor 5:21, Isa. 53:4-5).
- 3.2 He did not come back for revenge; He advocated the love for enemies (Mt. 5:44-47). He came back saying, "Peace be with you."

Conclusion:

Let this Lent be not only about giving things up or sacrifice, but about mercy. Let Jesus shape our desires; let the Cross purify them, and let the resurrection fulfill them.

Reflection:

1. Have you ever found relief by blaming others for your problems?
2. Who are the "outsiders" in your families, workplaces, or communities that you avoid or judge?
3. How can you be more "Pro – Jesus?"

SCRIBES Ministry:

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