

Week Two - *Silence*

Mark 5:21-34

Spend FIFTEEN - Day One

1. Start your time with God today by reading a fairly obscure law from the Old Testament, Leviticus 15:25-27.
2. How seriously did the Jews take matters of uncleanness? How does that compare to our attitude today about germs?
3. Now, read about a woman with a very particular suffering. Go to Mark 5:21-34. What was this woman's ailment?
4. How big a problem would that have been in Jewish culture? How much shame can you imagine this woman suffering for twelve years?
5. Jesus miraculously healed the woman, but He also did something else. What was it?
6. Why was it important that He publicly called out her healing?
7. It can be easy to get trapped in the silent suffering of shame. If you are in this place, close your FIFTEEN by asking God for the courage to share this with a trusted brother or sister in Christ.

Spend FIFTEEN - Day Two

8. Let's look at an example of a person breaking out of shame. Read an excerpt from Jesus' conversation with an outcast at a well in John 4:7-9.
9. What shocking thing did Jesus do? How did this affect the woman (see v.15)?
10. The woman went to the well at an off time, without any other women. Scholars speculate that it's because all the other women in the town knew her shameful secret. Read verses 16-19. What was it?
11. Based on her response, how did Jesus make her feel by knowing her shame?
12. Now read what the woman did next in verses 28-30. What changed between her earlier isolation and her newfound public engagement?

13. Jesus rescued this woman from silent shame by showing that He knew her secret and was kind and loving toward her anyway. Is there anyone in your life who could trust you that way?
14. Close your FIFTEEN by asking God to help you be a safe harbor for those around you who are burdened by their secret sins.

Spend FIFTEEN - Day Three

15. Start your FIFTEEN today by watching a short video by Brené Brown on empathy: [youtube.com/watch?v=1Evwgu369Jw](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1Evwgu369Jw). How does Brown distinguish empathy from sympathy?
16. In your relationships, do you tend to offer others sympathy or empathy? Which do you think is better?
17. Read Hebrews 4:14-16. Does Jesus empathize or sympathize with us?
18. Why is that so important to our faith?
19. When you pray to Jesus, how can you trust that He understands your situation?
20. How can you take opportunities to find Christian brothers and sisters who can be trusted with things that might be considered shameful?
21. Close your FIFTEEN in prayer, asking God to build up your relationships with other followers of Christ and to help you find or maintain friendships with people who can truly empathize in Christian love.

Spend FIFTEEN - Day Four

22. If someone wrongs you and then apologizes but does nothing differently, would you feel that this was enough? Why or why not?
23. Now take some time to reflect on Proverbs 28:13-14 and 1 John 1:9. According to these verses, what is required for forgiveness?
24. If this does not seem adequate to you, what else should be required?

25. While restitution to the one you have wronged is important (Matthew 5:23-24), God says there is mercy given merely through the power of confessing something out loud. Practice praying a prayer of confession by reading Psalm 51:1-4.
26. Close your FIFTEEN in a prayer of gratitude for the forgiveness we have in Jesus.

Spend FIFTEEN - Day Five

27. How many people in your life know the “real you”?
28. What actions and patterns in that relationship have led you to this place? What things have you shared that let you be vulnerable together?
29. Read Paul’s advice in Ephesians 4:25. What is he telling Christians to do?
30. Does this verse simply mean “don’t lie” or is there a deeper and more comprehensive meaning to what Paul is saying?
31. Think of your own Christian community in general. How transparently do you all engage with each other? In what ways can Christians be more vulnerable for the sake of casting out shame in our community?
32. Close your FIFTEEN by praying to God that He would not let the darkness of shame hide in silence among your Christian brothers and sisters, but that He would help people break patterns of shame by bravely being vulnerable with each other.