



“You Ought To Be Ashamed.”



We all have things about ourselves that don't sit well. Regrets. Shame. Embarrassing physical features. Mistakes that have hampered a career. Moments of misjudgment that continue to haunt us. A family history we don't talk about.

Some of these things are sinful, while others are not. Either way, they sting and linger in our memory. They leave us feeling insecure and deficient.

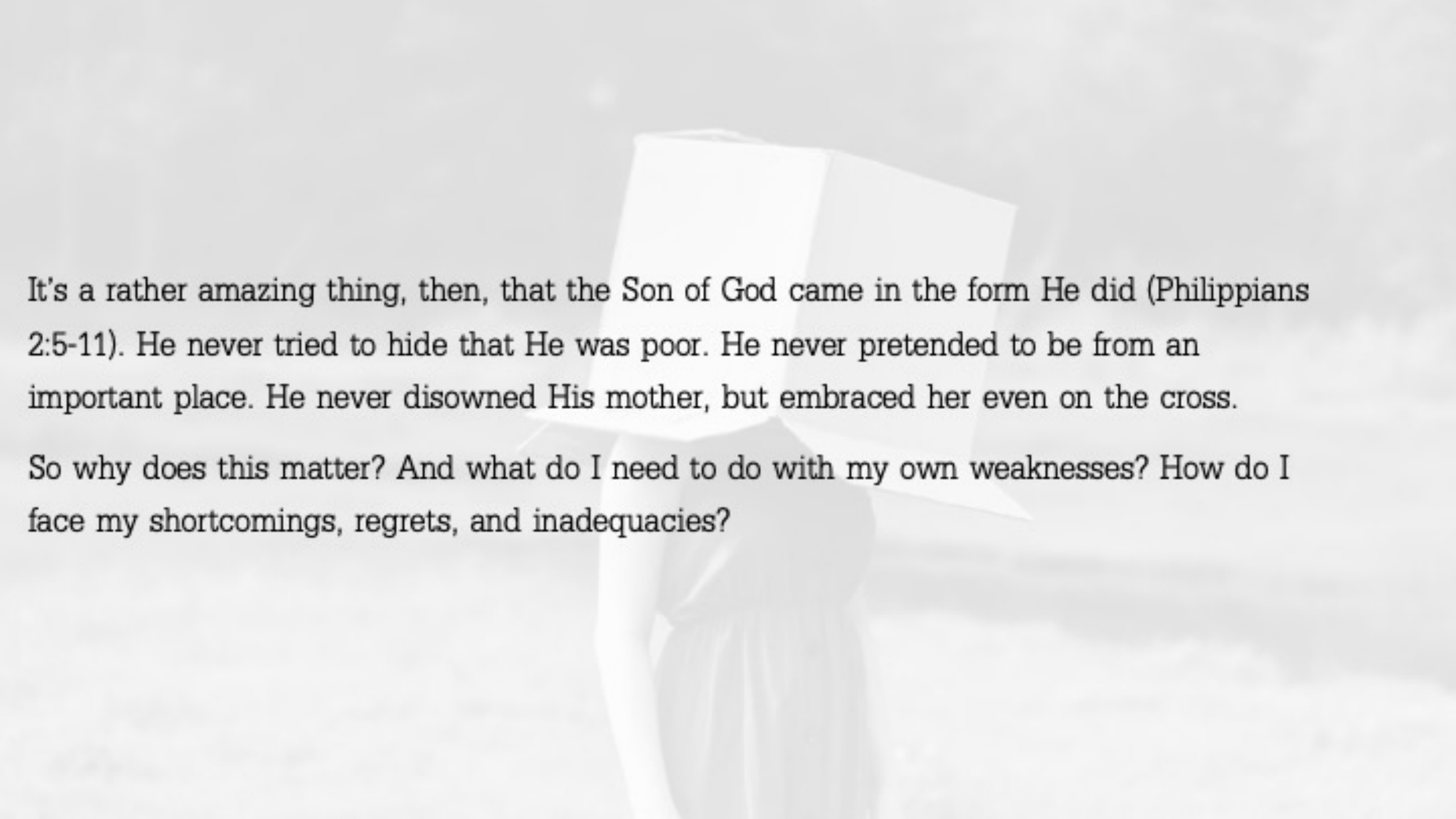
But these same embarrassing conditions can be turned around! They can become opportunities if we know how to harness them - just as Jesus did.

## “Despised And Rejected”

- Like many of the Old Testament characters who prefigure Him, the Christ comes from a humble background. He has no form or appearance that obviously indicates He is something special. He ends up “despised and rejected” (Isaiah 53).
- Jesus of Nazareth was not what the Jewish scholars or leaders were expecting from their Messiah. Even the commoners found themselves surprised (though much more receptive) by the tone, manner, and background of Jesus.
- So what were some of the things about Jesus that most would have been embarrassed by? What would have made a typical person say in disgust, “You ought to be ashamed”?

# “You’re from where?!”

- First, there is the matter of His genealogy (Matthew 1:1-17), which is littered with embarrassing moments that Matthew leans into. Judah’s indiscretion (v. 3, Gen. 38), Ruth the Moabite (v. 5), “Her who had been the wife of Uriah” (v. 6), the “messy end” of the line of kings before deportation (v. 11).
- The entire story of the conception and birth of Jesus would have been a hushed up scandal in most families. In fact, Joseph nearly called off his engagement before coming to grips with the divine design behind the situation.
- Being raised in near-poverty (Luke 2:24), without a formal education (John 7:15), in Nazareth (which literally means “despised” and was held in low regard [John 1:46]), and beginning His work in Galilee (John 7:52). Even Jesus’ own kinsmen didn’t believe Him (John 7:5) and couldn’t look past what He appeared to be on the outside, assuming He’d gone mad (Mark 3:21).

A person in a white robe is walking on a beach, carrying a large white cross on their back. The background is a soft-focus view of the ocean and sky. The text is overlaid on the image.

It's a rather amazing thing, then, that the Son of God came in the form He did (Philippians 2:5-11). He never tried to hide that He was poor. He never pretended to be from an important place. He never disowned His mother, but embraced her even on the cross.

So why does this matter? And what do I need to do with my own weaknesses? How do I face my shortcomings, regrets, and inadequacies?

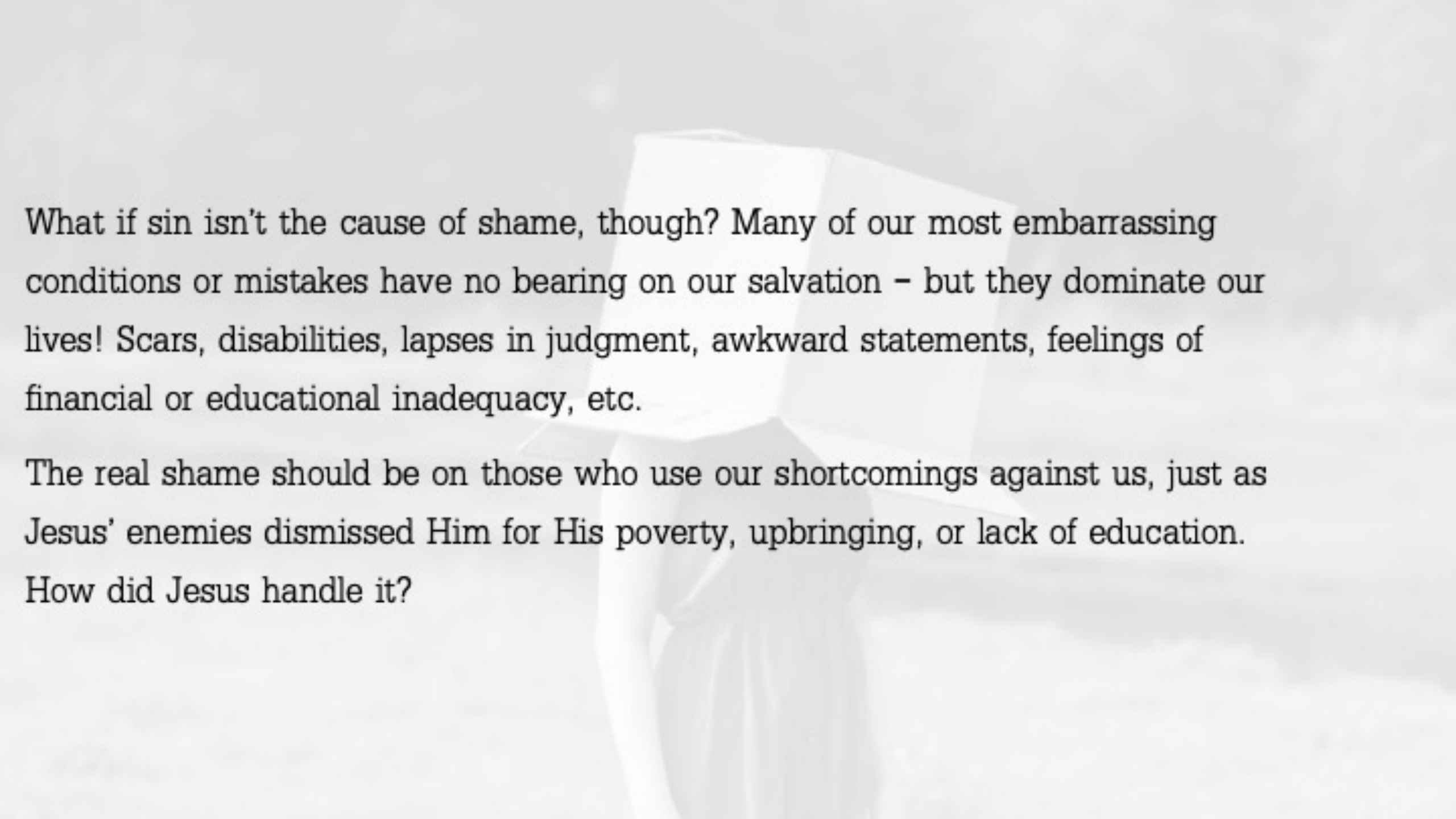


## **Application #1**

### *Shame Has A Purpose*

- Why are you ashamed of something in your life? It's natural for us to blame or deflect. But maybe the shame comes from the fact that what you are doing is sinful! Conscience matters (Rom. 2:14-15, Ja. 4:17). Your conscience can also evolve (Rom. 6:21) or become mis-calibrated (Jer. 8:12).
- Guilt is unpleasant, but can be a powerful motivator as long as we're motivated to do the right thing in response (contrast Peter and Judas). See 2 Corinthians 7:8-10 and Acts 2:37-41. Don't be too dismissive of shame.



A person wearing a white robe is shown from the waist up, holding a large, white, rectangular shield. The person's face is obscured by the shield. The background is a bright, cloudy sky. The text is overlaid on the image.

What if sin isn't the cause of shame, though? Many of our most embarrassing conditions or mistakes have no bearing on our salvation - but they dominate our lives! Scars, disabilities, lapses in judgment, awkward statements, feelings of financial or educational inadequacy, etc.

The real shame should be on those who use our shortcomings against us, just as Jesus' enemies dismissed Him for His poverty, upbringing, or lack of education.

How did Jesus handle it?



## **Application #2**

### *Defined By God, Not Shortcomings*

- Jesus always knew who He was (John 5:17-19, 8:23-24, 10:30, 14:6). Jesus remained mission-focused, not condition-focused (John 6:38, 9:4, Matthew 4:1-11, 26:39).
- People tend to judge based on deficits (“it’s not good enough”, “we can’t afford that”, “I’m not as rich as him”, “I wish I had more...”, “I’m no good at...”).
- God defines us by the grace and gifts He gives (Rom. 12:3-8). God sees not as man sees (1 Sam. 16:7). We might fall short of human expectations, but we are judged by God!





## **Application #3**

### *Weakness Is A Path To Strength*

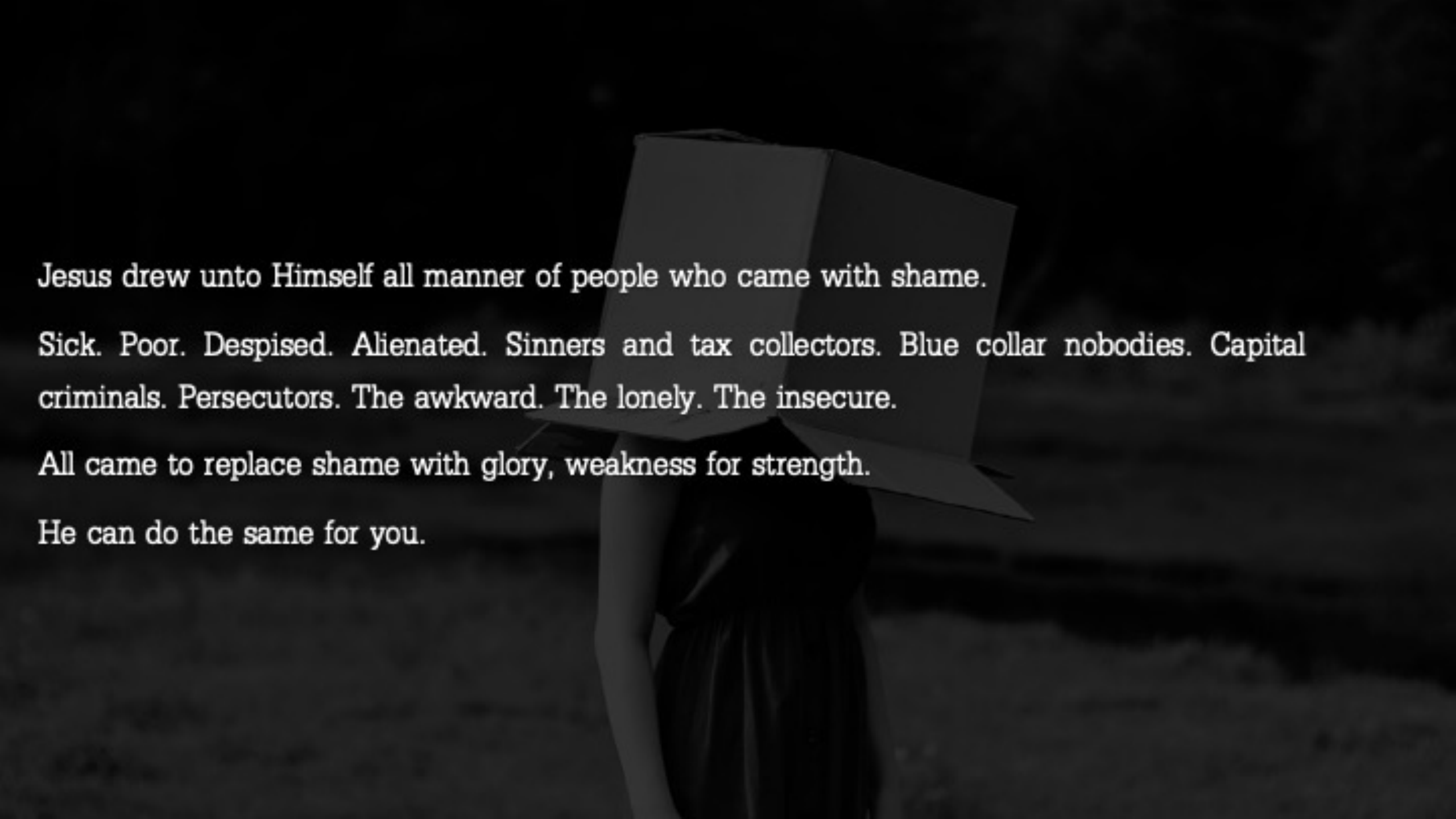
- Instead of always seeing our weaknesses and embarrassing features as holding us back, we need to see them as opportunities. Jesus was able to connect with people because of His upbringing and status.
- Similarly, Paul found that his weaknesses drove him toward greater dependence on God, ultimately leading to greater strength than he could have ever found on his own. See 2 Corinthians 12:7-10. After all, God chose the “weak things” as His instruments (1 Corinthians 1:26-2:5).



## **Application #4**

### *Temporary Things Are Temporary*

- My weaknesses are a great reminder that I need to look beyond the flesh and the ways of the world. Our bodies are just “earthen vessels” (2 Cor. 4:7-11), prone to breaking. We are humiliated and struck down.
- But the temporary conditions we experience in this corrupted environment cannot compare to the glory far beyond all comparison (2 Cor. 4:16-18). Everything that is weak, humiliating, and discouraging will, in the great resurrection of the dead, give way to glory (Phil. 3:21).

A grayscale photograph of a person from behind, carrying a large, rectangular box on their head. The person is wearing a dark, sleeveless top. The background is a bright, hazy outdoor setting, possibly a beach or a field. The text is overlaid on the left side of the image.

Jesus drew unto Himself all manner of people who came with shame.

Sick. Poor. Despised. Alienated. Sinners and tax collectors. Blue collar nobodies. Capital criminals. Persecutors. The awkward. The lonely. The insecure.

All came to replace shame with glory, weakness for strength.

He can do the same for you.