

Summary of Chapter 4

Tennent dives into shame-based and guilt-based cultures by exploring both through the lens of how they appear in Scripture, how we should talk about the atonement in a shame-based culture, and how the two relate in positive ways. He provides evidence from the Old and New Testaments with examples of the importance of shame and honor. He establishes that seeing the atonement as only freeing us of guilt removes the importance of the public and relational realities of Jesus's death that are tied to Him also taking on our shame. Tennent ends by stating that anthropologists agree that no society is exclusively guilt or shame-based. There are components of both in every place, but since much of the Majority World have cultures where shame-based is dominant, we must understand how to share about Jesus within the context of both, not just guilt.

Key Learning/Questions

Tennent's point that we are not just free of condemnation because of the cross, but that the shame we will experience as followers of Christ on earth was also flipped on its head through the resurrection. I have never thought about how vital it is that Jesus's death and resurrection was so public. It could not be in private to complete the work He came here to do. I also love his point that because of how guilt and shame-based cultures view sin differently, we have the beautiful opportunity to show each other sin through new perspectives that help bring it fully into the light.

Missional Implications

This creates a shift in my mind in how I want to talk to everyone about what Jesus did on the cross. We are not just free of guilt, but the weight of shame. I need to become more versed in talking about this with certainty. I also feel a shift in how I view communal conversions. It is not something to look down on or worry about, but a beautiful way for a group of people to experience the love of Jesus then walk together.