

AM Genesis 3:1-13 Where are You?

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[0 : 00] Genesis 3, verses 1-13, it's on page 3 in your Bibles.

Genesis chapter 3, and we begin from verse 1. Here is the word of God.

Now, the serpent was more crafty than any other beast of the field that the Lord God had made. He said to the woman, did God actually say, you shall not eat of any tree in the garden?

And the woman said to the serpent, we may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden. But God said, you shall not eat of the fruit of the tree that in the midst of the garden.

Neither shall you touch it, lest you die. But the serpent said to the woman, you will not surely die.

For God knows that when you eat of it, your eyes will be opened and you'll be like God, knowing good and evil.

[1 : 21] So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food and it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate.

And she also gave some to her husband who was with her, and he ate. Then the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked.

And they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loincloths. And they heard the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day.

And the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord. The presence of the Lord God among the trees of the garden.

By the Lord God called the man and said to him, Where are you? He said, I heard the sound of you in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked and hid myself.

[2 : 35] He said, Who told you that you are naked? Have you eaten of the tree of which I commanded you not to eat? The man said, The woman whom you gave to be with me, she gave me fruit of the tree, and I ate.

Then the Lord God said to the woman, What is this that you have done? The woman said, The serpent deceived me, and I ate. Amen.

May God bless his reading to us. Now, if you can turn with me to the passage that we just read in Genesis chapter 3, on page 3 of the Church Bible.

Genesis chapter 3. So, what I intend to do this morning is just to go through, to walk through these verses that we have just read in Genesis chapter 3, about the fall of man.

That's what I'm going to do this morning. And before I do that, let's just pray. Father, I just pray that you would take these words of the Bible, your word, and just massage it in our souls, that we might get something from there, that would build us, build our faith, encourage us on our walk with you, on this journey of faith.

[4 : 18] So, I just pray, in the name of Jesus, that these people before me will not hear me, but you through me. And they will not see me, but you through me.

To the praise of your name. Amen. Amen. So, the Bible says that you and me, we are created as independent persons, made in the image of God, yet with the capacity to reveal ourselves and connect with others.

That is special about you. More than any other creature in the world. You were created with the will to choose.

With the capacity to reveal yourselves and connect with others. No other animal, no other creature has that gift.

So, God loves you. And the first fact the writer of Genesis records about the man and the woman after creation, is that they were both naked and they were not ashamed.

[5 : 51] See, when you read Genesis chapter 2, verse 25, just up there, before chapter 3, it says, And the man and the wife were both naked and were not ashamed.

And why does the writer say that? I don't think that it was because Adam and Eve worked out a lot and had a really low percentage of body fat.

The writer is talking about perhaps the deepest of human longings. The longing to know and to be known.

Try to imagine for a moment the wonder of the first and foreign man and woman. Just imagine for that.

Before they fell. The wonder that they were in. Every deed they did. Every word they spoke. Every thought that passed their minds.

[6 : 59] Brought a narrowed joy to the one they loved. The thought of hiding simply did not occur to them. They literally had nothing to hide.

When you think about it, it's incredible. It's incredible. There was no hiddenness. No concealing. No guilt. Secrets.

To separate them. It is expressed physically. Naked and not ashamed. And when it says they were naked, it was physical. Physically they were naked.

But they were not ashamed. Because you see, the language of sexual love is the most intimate language available to human beings.

And in ancient Hebrew, the act of sexual love was referred to as knowing someone. Which is very, very interesting.

[7 : 58] Even in Africa, I come from Uganda. In our language, if you say, I know someone, it has a different context.

So, if you ask me and say, Benison, do you know that woman? And I say, yes, I know that woman. The context is that I know that woman.

I have some kind of relationship with that woman. So, in Hebrew language, knowing someone was referred to as kind of sexual intimacy.

So, Adam and Eve in the garden, they knew each other. And some people think that probably these people, Adam and Eve, were in the garden and so they had no relationship.

No, they had sexual relationship. So, they had that intimacy together in the garden. It is the ultimate act of vulnerability and self-giving and is expressed for the first man and woman.

[9 : 17] Complete transparency in every facet of their relationship. They were fully known and fully accepted. And that is the wonder of a foreign man.

And then, as we have read, the fall came. The man and the woman God had made disobeyed him. And what follows is an absolutely brilliant exposition of how temptation works.

It begins with a shrewd question from the serpent. The serpent was more crafty than any other beast of the field.

Verses 1. And the Lord had made. And he said to the woman, this is brilliant from this question, from this serpent. Did God actually say, did God actually say, you shall not eat of any tree in the garden?

The serpent was asking the woman. Now, God did not say they could not eat from any tree. You have to answer that question.

[10 : 27] And to understand what God said. God did not say that they cannot eat from any tree. God said they can eat from any tree. Except one tree.

So, what is the serpent up to?

See, the serpent wants to plant a seed in the woman's mind to raise doubts about God's goodness. Doubt. So that the woman can doubt.

I don't think I can trust God really enough. I think that if I really obey God fully, I will miss out on something good. I think I have to watch out for myself.

I would better be prepared to set aside what God says if necessary. Those doubts. This question brought those doubts into a woman's mind. The decision of sin always includes the thought that I cannot really trust God to watch out for my well-being.

[11 : 52] So, the serpent teaches the woman to doubt God in the first place. To doubt and deny God in the first place.

And the woman corrects. The serpent. But she too gives an inaccurate rendering of God's instructions. Because she says, look what the woman says.

In verse 3. Well, in verse 2.

And the woman said to the serpent, we may eat of the fruit of the tree in the garden. So, wait a minute. We may eat from any tree of the garden.

But God said, you shall not eat of the fruit of the tree that is in the midst of the garden.

[12:57] Neither shall you touch it, lest you die. That's the woman.

She's trying to correct the serpent. But she also gives an inaccurate rendering to what God actually said. God had forbidden eating the fruit of the tree in the midst.

But he said nothing about touching it. So, the woman is making God a little severe. A little unreasonable.

So, the disobeying him becomes a little justifiable. And notice something else. The enemy will strike at people's vulnerable points.

When God originally gave the command, only the woman was present. When God was giving the command about eating the fruit and what, the woman was not there. When you read Genesis 2 verses 16 and 21.

[14:00] God was giving instruction to the man. And the woman was not yet created. Presumably, the woman had gained some knowledge from the man. But, of course, she distorted it.

But the serpent knows that the woman is vulnerable because she doesn't have first-hand information. So, the serpent goes after the one who was not present to hear what God said.

Not also, she does not involve the man in the process. So, she made herself even more vulnerable to the temptation by keeping it a secret.

By keeping in isolation. It was Eva's weakness to enter into talks with the serpent.

And we are told that the Bible, the Bible tells us that the woman is captivated by the fruit. She is believing that it is both good and pleasing to the eye.

[15:03] And desirable for gaining wisdom. And we get this impression that she is obsessed with the fruit. And she keeps thinking of what she would miss if she didn't eat it.

And without God or any person to challenge her thinking, the next step becomes inevitable. She eats it. She also gave some to her husband who was with her and ate.

So, the steps of transgression. Steps of transgression downward to the pit.

She saw. She took. She ate. She gave. He ate. She ate. And the Bible says, after they ate, their eyes were opened.

Their eyes were opened. Verse 3. Chapter 3, verse 7. Their eyes were opened. That is what the man and woman had been hoping for.

[16:17] But when their eyes were opened, what did they see? They saw nightmare beyond belief. This was the birth of shame and of guilt.

The man and the woman looked at each other and the beauty of the image of God had become horribly twisted and marred.

They looked at each other and saw strangers. They covered themselves with fig trees and went into hiding.

And we are told that Adam hears God's footsteps in the garden at the accustomed time. Always before that sound filled him with joy. Always before when he heard those footsteps, he ran towards them like a little child praying daddy's home.

When the front door opens at 5 o'clock. But this time, Adam's body is flooded with feelings he had never known before.

[17:31] This time, the sound that until this day brought only eagerness and delight now brings terror and shame. This time, he ran not toward the footsteps, but away from them.

Now, he has known shame and fear. This time, he hides. He hides.

You see, hiding is a curse. Because it came into being after the fall. You see, hiding is motivated by shame.

Because it involves pretending and deceiving. Hiding is the place of fear and anxiety. It always diminishes our contributions to community.

You see, Adam hides and God says, Where are you? And that is a very big question we want to think about this morning. Where are you?

[18:42] You can imagine God asking you, Where are you? What does that mean? What does that question mean? Where are you? Because this is one of the most astounding questions in the scripture.

Because why does God ask it? Why doesn't God just use his x-ray vision to locate Adam? The reason is that, of course, This question is not really about Adam's geographical location. We sang earlier on in the verses, That he is everywhere. Even if you go beyond heaven, you will find him there. Even if you go under the sea, he is there.

Wherever you go, he is there. God is omnipresent. So, this question is not about Adam's geographical location. It's not really a request for information at all.

As if God needed a global tracking system for his creatures. See this question? Where are you? It is an invitation. Adam, I know where you are.

[20 : 00] You have blown it up. You are hiding. I am inviting you back. It's an invitation. God allows Adam to hide, And yet, he offers him the opportunity to reveal himself.

God has the audacious grace to treat Adam as a person, Even when Adam has defied him. Adam, where are you?

And as we think about this question, You need to put your name there. Benson, where are you?

Think of the things that are going through. Things that are going through in your mind.

Right now. And listen to that gentle voice of God, Asking you that question. Where are you? Even though you are here in the church, Where are you?

And Adam responds, I hid you in the garden, And I was afraid, Because I was naked. So I hid. By the way, So, Genesis chapter 3, verse 10.

[21 : 19] This is the first mention of fear in the Bible. So before then, there was no fear. Before the fall, there was no fear. And God asks, Who told you that you were naked?

Who told you that? Have eaten from the tree that they commanded not eat from? And of course, blaming enters human race story. Blame and denial and evasion.

These are all forms of hiding that have marked the human race ever since the day, That day. So Adam blames the woman, The woman blames the suffering.

So, friends, Imagine, Imagine, What our lives would be like, If all pretenses were to vanish from it. Imagine the freedom and relief of not trying to convince anyone, That we are smarter, Or better than we are. You see, Adam does not answer God the question.

[22 : 31] The question is being asked, Who told you? He said, The woman you gave me. You brought to be with me. Gave me under eight. That is Adam trying to be smarter than he was really is.

And the woman said, The serpent. Again, This is a woman trying to be smarter than she was really is. But, I said, As we think about this, I want us to put ourselves in the shoes of Adam.

And be Adams and Avas. Don't we pretend also? Don't we try to convince others that we are smarter than, Or better than them?

And this is where God is planning for human race, life. There is nothing more attractive than a person who is secure enough in being loved by God, That he or she lives with the spirit of openness and transparency and without a guy.

See, One of the defining moments in any dating relationship Is the first time the man sees the woman without makeup. Makeups, Or makeup, Whatever it is, Is the art of, It is the art of facial management.

[24 : 09] So, You don't want to let a guy look at your actual undone face. So, Makeup is designed to make eyes look bigger, To make lips look fuller, Nose look nausea, So you enhance your face to hide the blemishes and flaws.

But it is not just our physical blemishes that we try to hide. Most of us work, Work pretty hard To conceal the flaws That mar our character.

We hide ourselves Under masks And vows And we pretend To be Who we are not. So the message this morning Is this.

We don't have to pretend To be more radiant Than we really are. We can live without unveiled faces. No concealing, No masks.

Now today, Mask is a very common thing. When you are putting on masks, Sometimes people don't know you. No masks, No hiding.

[25 : 29] We are talking about something more than The pursuit of emotional health. Now the reason that we don't need to put on masks Is because Jesus came. And in him, We can live a life Without masks.

We can live a life Without pretending. We can live a life Without deceiving That we are smarter and better Than others. We can live a life Of forgiveness.

We can live A life That is full of joy. See, Our problem Is not simple That we are Bashful children Who hide When we ought to be Open.

See, Self-disclosure alone Does not cure Our deep Foreignness too. We don't just need Disclosure, We just need Forgiveness, Healing and grace Because honestly speaking, Sin has killed Our relationship with God And with one another.

And that's what God is saying to us This morning. And so as we celebrate This Christmas, Let us receive The gift of the Son Jesus Christ Once again To take away Our veils And our masks That's why That's why he came That's why he went To the cross Because at the cross Our disclosure At the cross Our disclosure The full measure At the cross Our disclosure The full measure Of our sin And the full measure Of God's grace.

[27 : 15] The only place Where disclosure Is truly safe Is at the foot Of the cross Of Jesus Christ. Because without the cross The discipline of confession Would be only Psychological Therapeutic.

But it's so much more. It involves an objective change In our relationship With God And subjective change In us. It is a means of healing And transforming The inner spirit.

So Jesus came That we may take off That mask. So let me ask you A personal question.

What is your veil? What is your mask? What is it? What do you hide behind To keep from being known?

What? Are you hiding behind Superficial conversion? Are you hiding behind Humor And smiling face?

[28 : 27] Are you hiding behind Intelligence Or timidity Or ignorance Or high tech Vails With a remote control Or mouse pads Because that's what People now use today?

They have remote controls And iPads And stuff like that And iPhones And what do they do With those Gadgets?

You can never Believe it. So what is your mask? What is it that you are hiding From being known? And the irony Of the mask Is that Although we wear them To make other people Think well of us They are drawn to us Only when we take them off Or maybe your mask Involves some deep secrets Secrets Of your hearts And you won't even Reveal them Even To your best friend And let me tell you The truth Everybody On this planet Everybody on this planet Carries A few deep secrets A few deep secrets Which you will never And which you cannot Share with anyone else But God knows them And you can share them With God And God Can heal you Maybe You have done things That

You are desperately Ashamed of Or made choices That are so painful That you try not even Think About them Maybe Things were done To you That have such a sense Of darkness About them That You can't talk About them At all Maybe they involve Feelings of depression Or anxiety So deep You didn't know If you could go On Maybe You have wounds Of childhood The wounds Of teenagehood And the wounds Of adulthood And the wounds These wounds Are so deep And even though You walk about You go to church You praise God These wounds Have got a sense

[31 : 10] Of darkness In your life And the question For you This morning Is where Are you God is Inviting you To come To him Maybe these Masks Involve Habits Of behavioral Patterns That you can't Break And you feel So weak Friends Every human being Carries hearts Or scars Or wounds We all carry them See sometimes People think that When they are going Through tough Times They think They are alone You are not alone We all go through

Hearts We all carry hearts And scars And wounds But you see Our tendency Since the fall Is to hide As if our lives Depend On them And this is Exactly wrong Our life depends On getting Found out Adam was Found out He thought He was so Far away From God That he couldn't Be found out By God God found him Out And there is No healing In hiding Because See the human Heart cannot Deal with The guilt Of secrets Or shame We try And try Hard And push And push Hard But still We can't Get anywhere Because we Can If we were Able to Deal with Them Then Jesus Would not Have come Maybe And we read

The first Verses Of Matthew Where Jesus Was You come To me Or we Are heavily Laden And I'll Give you Rest Because it's Easy And light Yours is Very heavy You can't Deal with Yourself You can Never And so Let us Not fear Let us Not hide Hiddenness Is always The first Response To an Awareness That we Have Seen And this Has been The flight Of human Race Since the Garden See human Beings Were not Made To hide Friends From the Beginning Our craving Was to Know

and To be Known And this Is Significance Of the Statement About Adam And Eve That they Were naked And they Were not Ashamed No Hiddiness Because there Was no Reason To hide No Junk To hide In their Lives Full Knowing With sin This was Lost And so Their story Changed Their story Changed And that's Why I have A story I can Have a Story And my Story Can be Like this I hide Because I Don't want To be Exposed In my Foreignness In my Darkness I don't Want to be Exposed So I Have to Hide I hide Because I Am afraid If the Truth about Me is Known What if They know This I will Never be Loved What if My wife Knew that I cheated On him She will Never love Me So I'll Keep What I'll Never Say What if My kids Know What if My husband Know He will

Never love Me at All I Hide From other People I hide From God I hide From truth In a Sense I hide Even From myself Friends Sin And hiding Are inseparable And here Is the Irony I hide Because I Am afraid If the Full truth About me Is known I won't Be loved But the Truth is Whatever is Hidden Cannot be Loved How can You love Something that You don't See That you Don't Know You know Kids always Say but if I tell you The truth This He will Hate me No You're not Going to Be Hated I can't Tell mommy The truth Because she Will be Annoyed at Me She'll be Mad at Me No Your Mommy Is not Going to Be mad at You Just tell Him Honestly What Went

[36 : 18] Wrong Here kids You tell Daddy Your dad Is not Going to Be mad At You Your Daddy Will love You When you Tell him The truth If you Say mommy This is What happened Your mommy Will cuddle You Because you Are a good Girl A good Boy But if You don't Then your Mommy Will not Know Your dad Will not Know And that's Not good So whatever Is hidden Cannot be Loved I cannot Be loved To the Extent That I'm Known I cannot Be fully Loved If I'm Fully Known And so God is Inviting Adam You come If you Come to Me I'll Love you I know You have Done it I know You have Blown it You have Eaten from The tree That I Commanded Not Eat But I'm Here For you Come What Love Is that Is that Love

Came On Christmas And that Is the Love we Are Talking About So this Morning God is Still Patient Asking Us The Question He Asks In the Garden So long Ago Adam Put in Your name Where Are You Come Out Wherever You Are The Time Of Hiding Is Over The Timing For Coming Home Has Arrived No Penalties No Punishment No Getting Caught Just Come Will You Trust Me Will You Stop Hiding Will You Come Back To Me This Morning Is Your Day Come Home I Mean Let's Pray So

Father We Come Because You Know Our Hearts We Can't Hide You From We Can't Hide You Anything Because You Know Everything About Us And All We Can Say Is Forgive Us Forgive Us Lord We Thank You For Your Grace And We Thank You For Your Love And We Thank You That You Are Willing To Come To Us And To Invite Us To Come And Meet With You And So We Thank You For This Word We Pray That It Will Bear Fruits In Our Minds As We Follow You Amen Amen