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Chapter 3 - God's Grace Questioned
The Fear of Being Exposed (vs. 8-10)

Genesis 3:8-10: 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 God among the trees of the garden. Then the LORD God called to 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; so I hid myself."

Genesis by its very title, is a book of beginnings; the beginning of so many things; the beginning of creation obviously, as we've looked at the first chapter in particular, but it is also the beginning of sin. In the beginning of sin, it is the beginning of things that come along with sin. The perception is that the woman and the

man were tempted by virtue of the outside sources and yet Scripture is very clear about the fact that that's not what makes us sin. James 1 displays very clearly that the reason why we sin is by our lust. The lust of our flesh begins to long for things inside internally, and so then the external things begin to allure us and reveal those things that are within us. If you were to look at most of us from the outside, you would say, "Well, looks like a pretty good person." But the Lord knows the heart, doesn't He? There are things that are there and that are hidden and need to be revealed. The question might arise, "Well, why in the world does something need to be uncovered? Why does it need to be revealed?" And the answer would be because God is seeking for real. How can you have a relationship if real isn't involved? It would be impossible. So, it is the graciousness of God; it is part of His grace that unveils the very things that are in our lives, and He uses forces to do this. In this particular text, in Genesis 3, it is the serpent. Now, what we know is that the serpent was more crafty than any other animal. Once again, I want to emphasize the word "crafty," "*ārûm*," which means to uncover. He has the ability to uncover. Now, Scripture

tells us that God literally created the serpent this way for this purpose, that he might reveal what is hidden. We would say, "How horrible that is." No, it's a wonderful thing because if in fact, man continued to live in that stealth relationship, suppressing the feelings, then the reality of the relationship never would have existed, but God is seeking for something greater. It is bizarre that you're in a garden and it's a garden of perfection, and yet the one thing that God tells you not to eat of is the one thing you want the most. The sense of rebellion and the willingness to forego the relationship in the pursuit of pleasure, in the pursuit of the things that you want. So, this begins to unveil the very heart of man and God uses the serpent to do it. Now once again, I just want it to be noted, when it uses the word "crafty," "*‘ārûm*," making reference to "the one who is crafty" in having the ability to unveil, the same root word is used if you drop on down to the passage that we're looking at, in verse 10, in which Adam begins to proclaim, "I was naked." (*‘ārûm*) Same word, basically in the root, which makes reference to uncovering or unveiling. God is revealing the heart of man and sad to say, inside the heart of man are selfish

emotions, uncaring, unfaithful. If you were to look inside, he is deceptive, disingenuous and clearly insincere, and God wants this unveiled. God is going to begin to reveal these things.

We read a passage such as Psalm 139 that says,

(Psalm 139:4) “Even before there is a word on my tongue, Behold, O LORD, You know it all.”

There's a passage in Jeremiah; a small verse, but it says a tremendous amount if you look with me in Jeremiah 11:20, as Jeremiah is wrestling with many of the things that are being done and committed against him. I think sometimes there's concern because man is so good at being stealthy in the way that he does things that he's getting away with things, but Jeremiah knows that God knows the heart.

(Jeremiah 11:20) “But, O LORD of hosts, who judges righteously, Who tries the feelings and the heart...”

The feelings, the motivation, the intent, what moves people, He knows what's going on in there and the very

details of our thoughts, He's very well acquainted with. The problem is that we would deny it. Oftentimes when we're caught, one of the first things we say is, "I didn't do it." There are very few guilty people in prisons today, if you were to ask them because the nature of man is to cover up; to declare a denial of sense. If you think about it, we throw up all kinds of defense mechanisms. I would say, it's basically our way of hiding behind the trees when we're found out. Through those defense mechanisms, we deny, we go into regression, we go into oftentimes a kind of passive aggressive behavior in which we don't want to show our anger, but we just want to let people know that we're not happy with them, but we're really righteous people in our process. People develop facades; people develop rationalizations that we oftentimes call "rational lies." They begin to throw out those kinds of reasonings that would say, "I have a good excuse." And I wouldn't put it past anybody to throw out blame. If you can blame somebody else for what you did, "Well, the woman made me do it." then it takes the focus off of you and off of your responsibility, and man has a way of blaming others and oftentimes he'll try to deal with this situation just

literally by ignoring it or overachieving or becoming a workaholic. We have all kinds of ways to run and hide. This is what we find in this particular passage, the sense of being found out, and in being found out, the greatest fear is being exposed.

Now, there are two things that are really exposing within the text. One is going to be the darkness of, I would say, the dark forces that are coming in to tempt or allure, they're going to unveil the heart. Then, you're going to have what would be clearly seen as the light of truth, and the light of truth, of course, as God comes and asks, I would say, a very simple question, but very exposing question; God begins to reveal that light. Now, in both cases, man is trying to avoid exposure at all costs.

If you pick up with me in Genesis 3:8, as they begin to hear the sound of the Lord. The way the King James actually translates the word sound is "voice". It could be voice in that sense, but it is also easily translated "sound". I like the fact that both are used because there is a sense of God's voice in this in which He calls out to man and as

He asked the question, begins to reveal a kind of exposure to man.

(Genesis 3:8) “They heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden...”

The phrase “walking in the garden” seems to convey a sense that He's walking around. As you go on, what you'll see is this perception of Him looking for Adam and Eve. There is a searching that is going on by God. Now, obviously God is omnipresent and there's nothing that He doesn't know. So, He's omniscient. Nevertheless, He's wanting them to know that He's looking for them. So, like Chronicles says, the eyes of the Lord search to and fro throughout all of the Earth, looking for a heart that's holy His. God wants us to know that He's searching. God wants us to know that He desires. God wants us to know that He wants to have this relationship with us and He's going after us, so to speak. So, here He is walking around and not just walking around just to be walking around but walking around for the sake of the relationship. The garden, of course, was to be the place of perfection, joy,

pleasure and yet, one of the greatest places on Earth now becomes one of the worst places to live.

It says that it's "in the cool of the day," and the Hebrew word that he uses for "cool" is "*rûah*," which is the same word for "breath" and "spirit". It is an interesting combination because it can clearly be used in the context of day to make reference to a cool breeze. It can also be referenced as I would tie it together as well that the breath of God was moving, that God was desiring this relationship and calling out. You have this wonderful picture of the Spirit of God reaching out to us; how He begins to move in the calling out. You see it at the very beginning of creation, in Genesis 1,

(Genesis 1:1) "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth."

(Genesis 1:2) The earth was formless and void, and darkness was over the surface of the deep..."

What was the game changer?

"...the Spirit ("*rûah*") of God was moving over the surface of the waters."

And now life is coming. God employs His Spirit upon us with a great desire to have a relationship, and you sense this in the phrase that is being used.

(Genesis 3:8) “... and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God among the trees of the garden.”

The one thing I was encouraging you to note as we were beginning this particular chapter is how the serpent as well as Eve referred to God as simply “God,” “'ēlōhîm”. That is to say, “the strong one.” Before, as you would look in particular in Chapter 2, as God was actually bringing the soil to the position of making man, breathing the breath into the life of man, placing him in the garden, it uses continually not just “'ēlōhîm,” but “Y^hōvâ 'ēlōhîm”. In this particular passage, it's the personal God, “the strong one.” Up to this point, the woman and the serpent have been just simply talking about God in a more generic way, but God says, “No. I'm the personal God that is looking for you.”

So, the way it reads in the passage is,

“They heard the sound of the LORD God (*Y^ahōvâ 'ĕlōhîm*) walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the...”

Once again, the repetition of this is letting us know this is the God that is personal, that is looking for them. This is not just the “strong one,” the generic, this is the one that has the personal relationship. Once again, you go all the way back to Moses and Moses saying, “Who do I say that You are?” And he uses this particular name in that conversation.

They “hid themselves from,” what does it say in the text?

“...from the presence of the LORD God...”

“*pānîm*” - the face of God

The “face of God” is that place of the relationship which you talk and are transparent with one another. Now, they’re hiding from that place. Scripture tells us that in His presence is fullness of joy; at His right hand are pleasures forevermore, and that you would hide yourself from that place, is hard to imagine. The realization is that now it's

no longer a pleasurable thing to be in the presence of God and they hide themselves “among the trees.”

Once again, we have so many things that we hide behind. We like to fake people out, but God's not going to let us be there. I would say that probably we think in our minds and in our heads, “If anybody ever really knew what I was like, they would hate me.” I mean, could you imagine all your sins just being out there? I mean, even a thought of a loved one at a particular moment, you probably had a bad moment, and you thought something bad towards them, would be exposed? The one thing that brings the greatest amount of fear in our lives is that sense of exposure.

So, the passage reads this way as the Lord begins to call out in verse 9,

“Then the LORD God called to...”

That's “to accost” or “to bid them to come to Himself.”

“Then the LORD God called to the man, and said to him...”

Let me just say this, it is to be noted that He calls to the man. That is to say, somebody's responsible; it is the man.

One of the passages in Leviticus in particular makes reference to the fact that a woman could even make a vow, but the man, the husband could actually bring back the vow as she is under his authority, but that won't happen when the man makes the vow. He's going to be held to it. So, the passage makes it clear that the man is the one responsible. It is the man that God calls to, and He said to him, just a very simple phrase,

“Where are you?”

If you were to put it in the Hebrew, it would be this long-drawn-out phrase, “'ay”. That's it. It has the connotation of not only “where,” but “Why aren't you here?” That's a good question, isn't it? “Why aren't you here?” I mean, “We meet, here, we come together here. This is the place; I'm looking for you. Why aren't you here? Where are you? How is it that you're not meeting with Me?”

There's actually one particular passage that I can think of in Scripture that actually uses the word “how” to define this particular word “'ay”. “How is it that you're not here? What happened?” Now, once again, God is clearly in the know of what is going on, but man would deny; man

would cover up; man is covering up. He's hiding and his perception is that "God will never love me now."

So, it reads this way in verse 10,

"He said, "I heard the sound of You in the garden, and I was afraid..."

Remember we talked about that Genesis introduces all of these beginnings. That's the first time ever that man experienced fear. Think about that, the first time ever. What is this thing called "fear"? We desire to know. I mean, the whole thing of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil is "to know," right? To know His power and it's going to bring so much more pleasure "if I just know more." Of course, Ecclesiastes will say there is a lot of sorrow in knowing more. There is a trade off in knowing more too, because really what you have in the garden is God says, "I don't want you to know about this right now." And so, He says, "Don't eat of this." Now, Scripture is telling us that a God who is a caring God, who is a loving God, who is a benevolent God, who is a gracious God, who is a giving God, is saying, "Don't mess with this right now. This is something you don't want to know about.

Trust Me on this.” Which is really testing the trust of the one who has been so gracious, who has given so many things. I mean, everything that He made was good, and it was very good, as it ends in Chapter 1. Nevertheless, as we come to this, charm and beauty begin to allure and begin to reveal the heart.

At the end of Proverbs 31:30, it says, “Charm is deceitful and beauty is vain...” But those who fear the Lord are going to see wonderful things. The problem is that we're willing to substitute a relationship for the external and it will oftentimes draw us away. We trade in relationship, loyalty, trust, fidelity; all those things we throw caution to the wind for the sake of perhaps a moment of understanding something that we hadn't understood before.

So, what was it that man was actually being deprived of? Well, if you think about the things that he was deprived of, as you look at the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, or calamity, you realize that now, though, he had been deprived of things like emptiness and futility, self-glory, disappointment, shame, guilt, fear; now, he's going

to experience them. We think in terms of how God seems to deprive us of things by telling us, "You don't want to go there." And it really is that He is depriving us of bad things. It is His graciousness to do that. Nevertheless, we just don't trust Him.

I think we forget the verse since Psalm 84:11, "...No good thing does He withhold..." He does withhold the bad things from us, but no good thing will He withhold. In order for us to embrace the very things that God tells us not to, we have to give up. I think one of the interesting points of creation itself is God makes these distinctions, separations between, if you look at the very beginning, light and darkness; He makes the distinction between the waters above and the waters below. His point is that when there are distinctions, there's choice, and where there is choice, you have to let go of one and embrace another. No man can serve two masters. That's a choice. One, you'll cling to; the other, you'll be repulsed by, but in the choice, you're letting go of one thing. So, when you embrace the darkness, you're embracing hate; you're letting go of love. When you embrace the experience of

fear, you give up peace. All the way through, you begin to let go of certain things, whether it's your selfish ambition as you embrace, you give up relationships. I mean, you're going to give up a relationship if in fact you pursue what you want. You're going to always give up something. Darkness embraced will give up light.

So, in this particular passage, what we find is that “We heard You in the garden and we were afraid because we abandoned You. We chose something else.” And now the fear comes. Scripture is telling us within the text that fear actually comes when love is gone, when the relationship is gone. Where does fear come from? Why do we have fear? What is it that causes fear within our life? Why does fear exist? Because literally, we believe that God doesn't love us anymore. I mean, if you actually believe there is a God, and you believe that God is omnipotent, all powerful, that He controls all things, and you're not right with Him, that's a pretty fearful thought. It is a horrible thing, a horrific thing to fall in the hands of an angry God, as one evangelist put it. You begin to realize, “I made a bad choice and I'm not in this relationship anymore.” Fear

begins to overwhelm up inside of you and you begin to hide yourself and fear will either fight or flight and you begin to make excuses; you begin to put up barriers; you begin to put up walls. Oftentimes, we live in that particular realm our whole life.

“... “I heard the sound of You in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked...””

“I was exposed, and I was afraid because I was exposed. You saw me for who I was.” I mean, many a man proclaims his loyalty, but a faithful man who can find? You've seen people make all kinds of promises, and then once they're exposed, it's the worst thing that could ever happen to them. It's the greatest fear of their life. We put on facades, and we try to dress it up.

There are two things within the passage that reveal these things in our life, and one of the reasons why we find ourselves running from God.

The first is, if you look with me in John 3, it will give you what I would say would be defined as the truth or the word of God. It really summarizes the person of Christ Himself.

(John 3:19) “This is the judgment, that the Light has come into the world, and men loved the darkness rather than the Light, for their deeds were evil.

(John 3:20) “For everyone who does evil hates the Light, and does not come to the Light for fear that his deeds will be exposed.

(John 3:21) “But he who practices the truth comes to the Light, so that his deeds may be manifested as having been wrought in God.”

In other words, something has to transpire to where you perceive that God's not going to judge you, but He's going to embrace you. That's why this text starts off, “For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son.” It is the one game changer that moves us away from that fear of “What if I was found out?” And God says, “I don't care what you did. I can forgive it.” And wow. Man is afraid that he's going to be found out and the word of God, the Spirit of Christ, begins to unveil. Why do people hate the name Jesus? Why is it they are repulsed by those who proclaim the word of God, by the gospel itself? Why do they make fun of it? Why do they hide from it? Why do

they shun from it? I mean, if in fact it's just plain innocuous, then why criticize it? It's no big deal. It's not going to hurt you. No, no. There's hostility towards it because there's a fear, not of salvation, but of being exposed. The one thing that the gospel repeats over and over again is "you're a sinner." Man doesn't want to admit it, and that's part of being exposed. It is interesting that God will oftentimes use the difficulties in our life to expose those things; like a calamity, like a serpent begins to uncover. "Oh," we say to ourselves, "I'm strong. I'm powerful." God goes, "Ok, let's see." So, He sends out the serpent that began to stir things up, and you're in an accident, or you find this storm, or it finds you, and your life begins to be turned upside down. At that juncture, you go, "You know what, maybe I lied to myself." And God goes, "We're exposing things." Hopefully, when the light then shines out of that darkness, we begin to embrace it, but if in fact we go into the cover up zone, we run.

There's another passage in Ephesians 5 that makes reference to this as well. It says that the church is light. If

you've ever read Matthew 5, Jesus says that you are a city of light set on a hill. That's what you are. Why do people hate the church? By virtue of the church just being the church; by virtue of you just proclaiming truth; by virtue of you just proclaiming righteousness. It's something to be repelled because it's very exposing. I mean, when you begin to preach the word of God and you define what love is, the world goes, "You've exposed me." I mean, "I thought love was me being selfish and getting whatever I want, and that was love." And God goes, "No, it has nothing to do with love."

(Ephesians 5:9) (for the fruit of the Light consists in all goodness and righteousness and truth),

(Ephesians 5:10) trying to learn what is pleasing to the Lord.

(Ephesians 5:11) Do not participate in the unfruitful deeds of darkness..."

When the church does not do the things that the world does, it is exposing in and of itself.

“Do not participate in the unfruitful deeds of darkness, but instead even expose them.”

How do you expose them? By being light; do the right thing. I mean, you don't have to go around pointing people's faults out. All you have to do is the right thing. They're going to be convicted. I just want to remind you that light doesn't do a whole lot of talking.

(Ephesians 5:12) “for it is disgraceful even to speak of the things which are done by them in secret.

(Ephesians 5:13) But all things become visible when they are exposed by the light...”

That's a very interesting text, isn't it? Once again, Scripture is revealing that there are forces that God is using in our lives to really project what is real in our lives, that we might have a real and genuine relationship with Him. Oftentimes, it takes those dark forces to stir up and to reveal just how destitute we really are, but when the light comes, will you embrace it? That's the question.

It is also to be noted within the passage that fear, and a lack of fellowship are directly correlated within the text.

In other words, if in fact there is fear, there is no fellowship. Now, specifically what he's talking about within the passage is the fellowship with God and a fellowship with His people. Where there is great fellowship with God's people, then the fear is going away, but where there is not, it's evidence that there is still fear of being exposed. Why do people hide, go back; you begin to see them wane, fall back? What is that? It's fear of being exposed. Scripture will tell you this.

In fact, one of the great passages dealing with this is found in 1 John. If you turn with me to 1 John, you begin to see just how this whole fear and fellowship thing comes together.

(1 John 4:16) “We have come to know...”

Isn't it wonderful that we can have true knowledge; a knowledge that will actually save us from the very fear, anxiety, and problems that we have embraced initially in our sins?

“We have come to know and have believed the love which God has for us...”

That's the game changer. If you back up, he is very clear about the fact that the love of God was manifested in us, not because of anything that we did, obviously, as Titus will really emphasize.

(1 John 4:10) “In this is love, not that we loved God...”

I'm so glad that this verse is in Scripture because the nature of man is to hide. We don't know how to build a relationship. We know that in us dwells no good thing, and though on the external we might proclaim certain things, we might say certain things, we might put on a facade or face to other people; they might perceive that we're really, really, really nice people, but we know deep down inside. That we've had certain thoughts, and if those thoughts were ever exposed. I mean, there's really no love in me; there's no love in you. If we say we have no sin, we're lying. What God does is He exposes, and there have been different things in my life where God has just exposed and revealed to me, “Gary, you just thought you knew how to love. You have no idea.” I have found that most of my love is really, fundamentally, based on reciprocity; if somebody does something good for me. If

somebody does something bad to me, I don't love them anymore, but the love of God goes far beyond that, doesn't it? His love for us while we were yet sinners; while we were crying out with our breath, "Crucify Him." Instead of having the relationship with Him, we were wanting Him dead. He loved us, and He died for us. Now, that's a love that's divine.

The passage reads,

"In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins."

Not for His sins, for our sins. It was my sins that nailed Him on the cross. I think about that and I go, "He could never love me if he knew everything about me." And the Bible says He does. He knows everything about you, and He loves you. "In this is love." This is such an amazing story.

It says in verse 16 that when we come to know and believe that God loves us, it literally wipes out all fear. Think about that. The fear and anxiety that man has within him, if in fact you believe that God is for you, you would have to say, "Well then who can be against us?"

There would have to be a fearlessness. It's one of the reasons why the apostles themselves, as they initially were dealing with fear before Christ's resurrection, after Christ's resurrection, when the Spirit of God's truth endowed their being with this sense of the love of God being poured out in their hearts, they were fearless. I mean, everybody was going, "Aren't these guys from Galilee? They're basically nobodies, and yet they're walking around talking like they own the universe."

There's this great confidence that they have, and it was the confidence that they were filled by the Spirit of God's love. What is it that causes fear in your life? I was talking to somebody not too long ago and they were talking about their problems and their illnesses, and they said to me, "I must have done something really bad." I said, "We all have, but isn't it wonderful to know that we've been forgiven, and I don't have to be afraid?"

One of the great verses that oftentimes come to my mind is in 2 Timothy 4, where Paul knows that he's getting ready to die and yet he says, "I know the Lord will bring

me safely home.” There is this sense of confidence. He's not afraid. There is no fear.

(1 John 4:16) “We have come to know and have believed the love which God has for us. God is love, and the one who abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him.”

(1 John 4:17) By this, love is perfected with us, so that we may have confidence in the day of judgment...”

We're not hiding anymore.

“... because as He is, so also are we in this world.”

(1 John 4:18) There is no fear in love...”

Fear was experienced when the sense of love was broken. Oh, God didn't stop loving. It is interesting that God can just simply ask a very simple question, “Where?” And it begins to convict our hearts. In that “where,” I not only hear Him asking where I am, but “Why aren't you with Me? Why aren't we walking together? Why don't we have this relationship anymore?”

You go through in particular with Cain, and Cain rebels against God in the sense of not wanting to really to give Him best, and because his brother gave better, he was

upset. God turns to Cain, and He goes, “Why are you angry? Why?” It doesn't take a lot to examine, and that's what the word of God does. The word of God begins to speak to us in simple ways. We find ourselves drifting away from the Lord and find ourselves pulling back, and the word of God goes, “Why aren't you here?” And you begin to realize there's something wrong inside, “The love of God is missing; something is missing in my life. That's why I'm not here. I mean, why am I angry?” He goes on to ask Cain, “Why is your countenance falling?” You begin to see all the ramifications of sin, those things that we felt like we had to experience in order to really enjoy life; that anger and depression, right. Those are wonderful things to embrace, aren't they? We go after all these things so hard, and God goes, “Ok, you have it, but why? Why did you want this? Why are you leaving Me? Why are we not having this relationship?”

“There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves punishment...” (correction, penalty)

It's me waiting for the other shoe to drop. Well, I'm basically feeling like I need to get evil on me because I did evil. I deserve it, right? But there is no fear in love.

“... and the one who fears is not perfected in love.

(1 John 4:19) We love, because He first loved us.”

Now, what's interesting about this particular text is that we see how intricately tied together fear is with fellowship. In other words, you're going to have strong fellowship with the body of Christ, if in fact you've embraced His love. If you don't feel loved, you'll begin to pull back in the fellowship with Christ. We feel very comfortable with the world, and just to make note, Adam and Eve felt very comfortable together. They both hid together. Misery loves company, right? They both felt very comfortable together and we feel very comfortable with the world. We feel very uncomfortable with those who follow God, because “How could God ever love me, and how could the church ever love me?” But if you have the love of God in you, you know the answer to that. How could we not? God has forgiven us. He's displayed His love for us in that while we were yet sinners, why would we

not love you? It really is a place in which love is proclaimed. Yes, righteousness is proclaimed, and it is very exposing. Yes, I agree with that, but it's the forgiveness of God that is proclaimed in the light, and it's in the light where relief is found. The very thing that we find ourselves hiding from is the very thing that we need the most; it's the very thing that will literally cast out the fear in our lives.

He goes on in this chapter,

(1 John 4:20) “If someone says, “I love God,” and hates his brother, he is a liar...”

He actually ties the two together at this juncture. Have you experienced the love of God? You say, “Yes. I've experienced the love of God.” Then you're going to love the church because that's where the love of God lives.

“... for the one who does not love his brother whom he has seen, cannot love God whom he has not seen.

(1 John 4:21) And this commandment we have from Him, that the one who loves God should love his brother also.”

(1 John 5:1) “Whoever believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God, and whoever loves the Father loves the child born of Him.

(1 John 5:2) By this we know that we love the children of God...”

By this we know that the love of God is within us. The wonderful thing about the message, the wonderful thing about the gospel, the wonderful thing about the church that lives the gospel, is that it proclaims that wonderful forgiveness; you sense the love of God no matter what, and we all really, if you think about it, should never be gathering together, pointing out each other's faults, because obviously we all have them. Instead, we should come together, saying how wonderful it is that we've been forgiven, and rally around that wonderful message rather than the message of condemnation. Because there is therefore now no condemnation in Christ Jesus. God is pulling us together. He wants us to have fellowship. If you have fellowship with Him, you'll have fellowship with the light, and you'll walk no longer in the darkness, trying to hide, trying to put on facades. That means that as those

that are in the church, we're walking in the transparency of sincerity and genuineness. I oftentimes literally make jokes of the fact of how horrible sinners we are, not because it's a funny thing that we are sinners, but because we oftentimes think of ourselves in such grand thoughts, and we should be thinking of ourselves in the sense of "how wonderful Christ saved me."

Closing Prayer:

Father, we come before You today and we give You thanks for uncovering. In many of our lives, You use the crafty to reveal the things that are hidden. Difficulties, trials, tribulations, hardship came into our life and began to expose the shallowness of our thinking. Thank You for that, but oh, thank You that in that moment of darkness, light began to shine, and we heard Your voice cry out to us, "Where are you?" That You would want to be with us still; that You would want to walk with us again. We abandoned You for pleasure. We abandoned You for beauty. We went after our selfish motives and our selfish

desires. We left You. How could You ever love us again? Oh, how Peter must have felt, and yet, how embracing You were.

Your heads bowed and your eyes closed, if you're struggling with any fear in your life, Scripture is telling you by going back to the beginning, where fear begins, John will tell you where it can end.