

Hide No More

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Preacher: Cory Brock

[0 : 00] And this is the word of the Lord. Then the eyes of both Adam and Eve were opened, and they knew that they were naked.

And they sewed fig leaves together, and they 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 God among the trees of the garden. But the Lord God called to the man and said to him, Where are you? And he said, I heard the sound of you in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked, and I hid myself.

He said, Who told you that you were 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.

And then the Lord God said to the woman, What is this that you have done? And the woman said, The serpent deceived me, and I ate. And the Lord God said to the serpent, Because you have done this, cursed are you above all livestock, and above all the beasts of the field.

[1 : 12] On your belly you shall go, and dust you shall eat all the days of your life. I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring.

He shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel. This is God's holy word. Let's pray. Father, we come today, all of us in different places emotionally, different places and circumstances in our lives right now.

Some of us here or watching having lost a loved one. Some of us facing losing people in our lives. Some of us dealing with long-term disease.

Some of us dealing with the weight of emotional and mental strife. Some of us with decisions that are coming this week that are difficult. Some of us celebrating good news, recent news.

All of us from different places, Lord, you know every one of us. You know what we need today. So we pray now, Holy Spirit, living breath of God, open our hearts to receive your word in exactly the way we need it.

[2 : 23] Exactly the way you come to speak through it to us, each of us. And we pray that now, in Jesus' name. Amen. We're in a five-week series looking at Genesis chapter 3.

So five weeks, one chapter, because Genesis 3 is so foundational and so important. And Genesis 3 is all about what broke the world. And the answer so far that we've seen is that we broke the world. Humanity broke the world. So we did not trust in the Lord. God gave a command in the beginning of human history, don't eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. And it was a lack of trust that God is good, that God loves us, that brought humanity to this breaking point here in the beginning. And Milton, John Milton, in Paradise Lost, I mentioned this a couple of weeks ago, he talks about how this scene, he described this scene, where Eve takes from the tree the fruit and she bows before the fruit.

And C.S. Lewis commenting on that says, in the beginning humanity bowed before a vegetable. And that's what broke the world. And it's a cheeky thing to say, but what he's saying there is that we as human beings always choose, our hearts choose to worship creatures rather than the Creator.

[3 : 42] We bow before vegetables. We bow before anything in this world that God made. And we turn things into God. We flip the world upside down in that way. And that is called sin. So sin is what Genesis 3 is all about.

And there are people in our modern city, a city like Edinburgh, that will come and say sin, it's just this puritanical, old traditionalist concept. But sin is real. And I think every single one of us knows that.

We feel that down in the bottom of our souls. No matter what you might believe in today, I think probably there's some sense at the bottom of your heart where you wrestle with the sense of guilt that I am not who God made me to be.

And that's all that we mean by sin. And so Adam and Eve, in this moment, you know, they light a match, they set the world on fire. They open the floodgates, the waters come pouring in, the world breaks.

If you pick up an old clock, you know it has lots of different gears in it. And if one of the teeth on one of the gear wheels breaks, it throws that entire gear wheel off its circuit.

[4 : 43] And the whole clock stops. And in the same way, the teeth, the image of God, we, the gear that God made to be the pinnacle of His creation, humanity, we broke.

And so with that, the whole world got messed up. The whole clock got messed up. And that's called sin. And last time we were looking at verse 7, we were looking at the same set of verses, and we focused on verse 7 and 14 in particular, and this concept of nakedness.

That nakedness is not just physical nakedness. It's spiritual as well. It's exposure. It's that we know from the beginning of history that we are not who we should be. We feel that guilt and shame. And we looked at how the serpent was so crafty and deceiving us.

Verse 14. And so last time we said, because of our sin, there is alienation in our lives in all sorts of ways. We are alienated from ourselves. We don't really know ourselves.

We're alienated from other people. You know, Adam blamed Eve and broke marriage in a way in that moment. But today we come to learn that the greatest cost of sin is our alienation from God.

[5 : 52] The greatest cost is that we are separated. We're alienated from God. We hide when God shows up. And that's what we read about here in this passage today. Our greatest problem, we hide from God.

And God's tender solution is the seed. So let's think about those two things. Our great problem is that we hide from God. God's tender solution is what we learn here is called, in verse 15, the seed. So first, hiding from God. If you look down at the passage with me, in verse 8, God shows up into the Garden of Eden and it says here that they, Adam and Eve, they heard the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day.

That's how it's translated here. Now there are two big interpretations of this moment. And it's okay to be on either side of this, let me say up front.

The way it's translated here that God came walking in the garden in the cool of the day is translating it the way the King James Version did. And the King James Version translated the way a very old translation did, the Latin translation, many, many centuries ago.

[7 : 03] And it took what is sort of a metaphor in Hebrew, the cool of the day, it literally says the wind of the day, and translated it understanding that it's talking about something like the evening breeze, the cool part of the day.

And so in the first interpretation of this moment, it says, God walked into the garden and you could hear His sound. And He came in the evening breeze, the cool of the day.

And you get the sense that there's sort of a gentleness about this. There's a calmness about this. God breezing in, walking in in a gentle way. The other interpretation is almost the exact opposite.

Okay? And it's because these words in Hebrew can mean multiple things. And so the other interpretation is that when it says God walked in the garden, sometimes the word to walk for God is used in other parts of the Old Testament where God the judge walks into the space, the courtroom, temple, the courtroom, temple, garden, perhaps.

And the word sound is sometimes used for those moments to talk also about thunder. And the literal translation of the cool of the day is, there's a footnote in your ESV Bible, the wind of the day.

[8 : 15] And wind has already been used in Genesis 1 as a word, a metaphor for the Holy Spirit.

And if you've read much of the rest of the Old Testament, you might know that the day, the word the day, is often used to describe the day of judgment, the day of justice.

So Zephaniah 2.2, the day of the Lord, the day of judgment. And so some commentators, especially now, come and say, actually what's happening here is they heard the thunder of God coming in the day of the Lord, the wind of the day, the spirit of God coming in the day, the day of judgment.

And so they hid themselves away. Now let me say this. There are gospel-believing folks and good commentators on both sides of those interpretations. And it's okay, it's okay that we're not totally sure which one it is because the outcome is exactly the same no matter what way you go with it.

And the outcome is this. that just after that when God says to Adam and Eve, when they're hiding, they're shaking in their boots in fear, God says, where are you? Who told you that you were naked? That moment is an interrogation, a questioning, a line of questioning full of mercy. No matter which way you go with it, whether God comes in thunder or God comes gently, when he says, where are you, that is a question of mercy.

[9 : 35] That is a question where Adam and Eve are immediately not getting what they deserve in the very beginning of human history. And let me show that to you. In verse 14, we looked at this a couple weeks ago.

Verse 14, when God curses the serpent, is there an interrogation in that moment? When God turns to the serpent, is there a line of questioning? Does God say to the serpent, where are you, serpent? Where are you, Satan? Not at all. There's no questions. Instead, God comes to the serpent and says, you shall eat the dust. In other words, he's saying, there is no hope for you.

Redemption is closed off to you. Death, the only thing you can taste is death. And that means that when he comes to Adam and Eve, even if he comes in thunder, when he says, where are you, he's giving them an opportunity.

He's giving them an opportunity to come out from behind the fig leaf, the tree, and to come clean and to run. He's coming. This is what Moses wants you to see as he writes this.

[10 : 36] He wants you to see that when God comes in this moment, he's drawing and he's wooing and he's inviting and he's saying, come close. Even in the midst of sin, even in the midst of deserved judgment, real guilt, this is God.

The questioning is invitation. It's drawing and wooing. There's a very similar moment in the next chapter, chapter 4, verse 9, where Cain murders his brother Abel and God comes to Cain and says, where is Abel, your brother?

Just like he came to Ab and Eve and said, where are you? He comes to Cain and says, where is your brother? Now, God knows where Abel is. God knows Abel is dead and God knows where Adam and Eve are.

Where are you? He knows that they're shaking in their boots behind the tree over there. He sees that, right? And in the same way, what is he asking Cain? He's asking Cain the same thing he asked Adam and Eve. Where are you?

Where are you is what is going on in your heart? Will you not come out and come to me and tell me what has happened?

[11 : 40] And I'm ready. I'm ready to deal with this. I'm ready to receive you if you would just come out and come and meet with me. Guilt and shame is present in every one of our hearts.

We all feel that. And God is also present in every one of our lives. We learn in the New Testament God is not far from every one of us.

In him we live and we move and we have our being. He is always revealing himself to us. Always. And because of guilt and shame, because of our sin, our sin drives us into more sin.

Our sin drives us to run and to hide from God over and over and over again. And to get behind the fig leaves and the trees and never come out and say to the Lord when he says, where are you?

What's going on in your heart? And he's drawing you and he's wooing you and he's inviting you.

The human being, our hearts, we run from tree to tree to tree, fig leaf to fig leaf to fig leaf, hiding and staying away from him.

[12 : 42] And we want him. Do you know that? That the deep truth about our souls is that you want God. You want to be with him. You want to know him. And yet at the same time, your heart wants to suppress him and push him down in unrighteousness.

We are Jonah, you know, running to Tarshish every time God shows up in our lives. And here in verse 8, God shows up to Adam and Eve and they go and they get behind the tree and he longs for them to come out and to meet with him.

Parents in the room, you parents in the room, or if you've ever worked with children or if you've ever been a kid. See, this is an all-inclusive illustration.

I think I can capture just about everybody. If you've ever worked with children, if you've been a parent, if you've been a child, you know that children feel guilt and shame faster, quicker, a little more.

They're smitten and struck by it quicker than we hard-hearted adults often are. Our consciences get seared over the years and we don't feel guilt quite as quick as kids do. And so what do kids do

when they steal, they lie, they hit their sibling, they first, they run and they hide quite often and then they do what?

[14:01] Then when they're exposed, they're naked, that sin is naked, they blame shift and, you know, he made me do it, she did it. And when a good parent, what does a good parent, a good teacher, a good leader, what do they do?

What do mom and dad want? Mom and dad, mom and dad do not want to punish. You know, there's no desire. I don't enjoy punishment. None of us want punishment. Instead, what we want is we want them to come out and to say, I lied, I cheated, I stole.

And in tears, to put their heads into the shoulder of dad, right? For dad to get down on his knees, open arms, and in tears to have the little one say, I lied.

And you say what? You say, come here. And you put a tearful shoulder on, a head on the shoulder and you say, we will fix this, we will reconcile, we will bring justice, but I want you to know that I do not love you less because of the bad things you do.

Right? And you got to understand that in the beginning of human history, when we broke the world, God the Father came in thunder, perhaps, yeah, as a judge, yes. Guilty? Do we have guilt? Yes, we do.

[15:12] We feel that. But he came into the garden, he got on his knee and he said, where are you? Come out from hiding, put your tearful head on my shoulder and I will bring you home.

That's what's happening here in the beginning of world history. Now friends, you can hide from yourself, the truth about yourself from yourself, you can hide from each other, but you can't hide from God.

And when we try to hide from God, the truth about what's going on in our lives, we hide it from God. Have you ever played hide and go seek with a toddler? You know, they can be standing in the middle of the living room and you say, now you go hide and what do they do?

They put their hands, if you're only listening to this, I just put my hands on my eyes. They put their hands on their eyes as if they've hidden because they think, if you can't, if I can't see you, you can't see me.

And if I think, and my heart says, if I can't see God right now, God can't see me. And we hide from God and it doesn't work and it doesn't need to work because God is on his knee with open arms saying, come home, come back to me.

[16:20] A tender father is the God that made you. So how can you hide? Let me run through these really quickly and we have to move on. Number one, we learn here that you can hide from God today by convincing yourself that there is no such thing as sin at all.

So here, we learn, well, in the next passage, God comes to Cain after he murders his brother and says, where are you, where's your brother? And Cain says, am I my brother's keeper?

And then, I've come from the southern U.S. and in the southern U.S., we have a way of saying that. We say, I ain't done nothing. That's what he's saying. And he's saying, look, there's nothing wrong with me. I am morally upright.

Or perhaps even you intellectually, you use your brain, to try to convince your heart that there's no such thing as sin at all. That it's just a construct. A traditionalist idea.

A puritanical idea. That there is no such thing as sin. And yet, your heart, the heart knows what the heart knows. The heart knows that that is not true. That sin is the concept that makes most sense of this world, in fact.

[17:21] And so you can, modern person, you can be hiding from God by trying to tell yourself by way of quote-unquote science that there's no such thing as sin. Or you can hide from God secondly, by doing what Adam does here in verse 11, by blame shifting.

And so, God comes to Adam and says, where are you? Who told you that you were naked? And Adam says, she did it. She gave it to me. It's not my fault. But it's not really, we looked at this a couple weeks ago, but it's not really a blame shift at Eve.

Instead, what does he say? The woman you made made me do it. And you see who he's actually blaming there? You can hide from God by actually turning things around and blaming God.

That's what Adam does. The woman you made made me do it. And if you wouldn't have created me like this, if you wouldn't have given me these circumstances, you can hide from God by blame shifting and anger at God himself.

And God is saying in this moment, all he's saying in these questions to Adam and to every single one of us today is, where are you? Where is your heart? Will you come out and just, what does he want?

[18:31] He wants confession of sin, sorrow and tears, repentance, and to put your tearful head in his shoulder and to come home again. That's all.

That's all God's looking for here. Time does not allow us to explore all the ways that we can be hiding from God today. But if you'll let me, I just want to, and you have to let me, right? But I'll just rattle off a few more that may be true of us right now. Some of us have old sins, sins from our past, where we are saying right now in our hearts, I could never be forgiven for that. I am too far gone. And that is hiding from God in regret. You can hide from God in regret, never coming to him because you feel like you're too far gone.

And some of us are hiding, instead of that, we're hiding in new sins, new patterns of sin that we're currently walking in. And we're like toddlers covering our eyes pretending that God doesn't know that.

[19:35] And we're not, we're hiding behind trees not yet willing to come out and confess in tears over what we're up to right now in our lives. And some of us might be hiding and I think this is probably the most dangerous place to be hiding in distraction, hiding in, from God in the normal, normalcy of life, just getting on with it and therefore never actually coming to the Lord, never taking Christianity seriously, never taking the claim that your heart, that check engine light is on in your heart and you say, I know there's something wrong, but you're never willing to take the step of coming to the Lord, hiding by normalcy, hiding by distraction.

And some of us maybe are struggling with hiding in a fear of vulnerability, hiding inside stoicism where you're not willing to let your heart be as broken as it should be over your sins.

And so you're hiding from being vulnerable. You know that you would have to become like Isaiah in Isaiah 6 when he says, before the Lord, woe is me, I am a person of unclean lips. And you're afraid of vulnerability, hiding in stoicism from the Lord.

Or you could be hiding a fear of commitment. What would this cost me? This is what Simon was preaching about last week. You could be hiding from God, hiding from God in philosophy, thinking, if I can't work out every jot and tittle of the claims of Christianity and make sure I know beyond all shadow of a doubt I'm not willing to step towards God before the Lord, hiding in philosophy.

You can be hiding today as a Christian in your doctrine, you can know a lot about God but never come to Him, never come to Him in prayer. Right? And there's a wonderful moment in Flannery O'Connor, one of her stories, about a character named Hazel Motes.

[21:27] And she writes this about him. He learned that the best way to stay away from Jesus was just to avoid sin. You can be hiding within your decency and your goodness and your religion but let me say that this applies not only to everybody in this room that's not standing on the platform but to every person who comes and stands right here too.

And, you know, a good preacher can hide behind a microphone. A talented speaker can hide behind a microphone and be an absentee dad, an absentee husband, can be a prayerless minister, a thousand ways we could be hiding from the Lord today.

And I just want to say where are you? God is saying to you right now on his knee where are you? Come home. Come and confess your sins and repent and reconcile and God is ready to receive you.

God is speaking to you today. He's a tender father. Now, what does God do here secondly and finally? Look, our great problem is we hide from God. The great solution is Genesis 3.15.

Finally, and here's what happens. We learn here about the seed. So in verse 14, the curse of the serpent is total. There is no hope for Satan.

[22:42] But when you come to verse 15, notice that what God says, I will put enmity between the offspring of the woman and the offspring of the serpent. Notice that that is not a direct curse aimed at Adam and Eve or humanity.

Not at all. What is going on here? Some modern commentators since the 19th century have come to this moment and said, this is an ancient mythology that helps explain or simply gives a myth for the reasons why human beings hate snakes.

Why snakes and humans have never done well together. And look, that is in the commentary sometimes. And let me say that that is so superficial, so facile, so silly of an interpretation.

And that is the kind of interpretation you come to when you deny that God is the ultimate author of scripture. You have to say something like that. But that is not at all what we get here. Instead, what does God do?

Understand that when God comes to Adam and Eve and Adam and Eve hide from God, they are in that moment on team serpent. They are hiding from God. They refuse to come out.

[23 : 49] They are fighting for team serpent. They are on team devil. And they never change that in that moment. Not at all. And what does God do in verse 15? It's God who then comes and says, I, God, will put enmity between you and the serpent.

In other words, it's saying that God is the one who comes and drives the wedge between evil and humanity. God is the one who comes and says, you refuse to come to me so I will come and save you.

I will come and rescue you despite yourself. I will get you off team serpent despite your desires.

And so here's how he does it. He says, I, I, will put enmity between the seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent.

The seed of the woman will crush, bruise the head of the serpent and the serpent shall bruise the heel of the offspring of the woman.

Now, Sinclair Ferguson says that the rest of the Old Testament is a footnote to Genesis 3:15. And that's exactly right. You see, what we call here, this is called, often called seed theology and the reason for that is the word offspring here is literally the Hebrew word seed.

[24 : 59] And in this promise, the seed of the woman will come and crush the seed of the serpent is a, a little, a literal and metaphorical seed in the sense that in the very promise of Genesis 3:15, you have the seed that will unfold the rest of the story of the Bible.

And at the same time, you have seed being referred to in a singular masculine noun, a boy, a male son, a child. That's what's being talked about here.

You know that, I'm told this by the people who know these things, that a seed contains a plant already fully encased within it. So the DNA of an entire oak tree is already contained in the seed when it's sown.

And so all that needs to happen is water and soil and it will bud up into the full tree. And in this moment, Genesis 3:15, you have the seed of the entire story of the Bible and you have the seed at the very same time of redemption itself.

All encased in this one word, seed. It's right here. And what does it say? And Jonathan Gibson points this out. He says this, number one, let me give you six things it says in 90 seconds.

[26 : 09] Number one, this is what we learn. Whoever this offspring is, this seed is, he would be a son because the word offspring, the offspring of Eve is used in the singular masculine, a child.

And as the seed begins to unfold this idea, we come to places like Isaiah 7:14 that says, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son. We learn that the seed is unfolding there.

Number two, there is no mention of a father here, not at all. In an age where genealogies were always written according to the male, the male heir, the men.

Here, we're being told something very uncommon in the ancient Near East. Look for mothers and their sons. Read the Bible with an eye to mothers and their sons.

And so when you flip to Matthew chapter one, very unusual for the Greco-Roman culture. In Matthew chapter one, there's a genealogy and there are five women, five mothers in it. Very unusual. Number three, we learn whoever this young man is, this boy, this child, he would represent many when he came.

[27 : 14] How do we know that? Because this word seed is like the word fish. All right? So in English, fish is both singular and plural at the same time.

And in Hebrew, the word seed is singular and plural at the same time. So when you look at a fishbowl, there might be one fish and you say, there's a fish. And you look at a fishbowl and there's ten and you say, there are the fish.

Singular, but plural. And the word seed is like that. And so in this, the seed is also the offspring, the seed of the seed, the many. That whoever this one is would also represent many.

Number four, he will be a warrior. So notice the order. It says, he will come and crush the head of the serpent while the serpent bruises his heel.

And you see the order of that. The order of that's so important. Whoever this child is, he will come on the hunt to crush the serpent. He will be hunting. And number six, something about us.

[28 : 12] And that's this. In the ancient Near East, sorry, I should say, A and E. Adam and Eve is what I meant to say. Adam and Eve, as soon as they deserve judgment, as soon as they deserve judgment, as soon as we see them on Team Satan, God comes in with Genesis 3.15 and drives the wedge, plants the promise.

And this is called the Proto-Evangelion, the first gospel. That's just a Greek for saying first gospel. And let me say two things to you. Number one, if you want to read the Bible rightly, if you want to read the Bible for all it's worth, you've got to see Genesis 3.15 for all it's worth.

Here we have the opening of the full story, the flower of redemption in this very moment. But number two, more importantly, if you today come as we all do in guilt and shame, covering your eyes like a toddler from God, hiding from God in any way, shape, or form, you've got to look here and see that in Genesis 2.17 God said, if you eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, you shall die, die.

That's what it says in Hebrew. And as one commentator puts it, Adam and Eve in this moment live three times, four times, ten times as long as any of us could ever imagine. They don't get what they deserve. They get hope.

They get promise. They get a tender father inviting them home. We have never gotten what we deserve. Never, none of us. If you're breathing today, we've never gotten what we deserve. And still even more, we have a tender father coming today and saying, come home through the seed of the woman.

[29 : 45] Who is the seed? Who is the seed of the woman? In the second century, Justin Martyr and Irenaeus, two of the early church fathers, they said that this promise is the promise, the promise of Eve and her boy is the promise fulfilled in Mary and her boy.

And you can go to places like Galatians 4.4 where Paul says, when the fullness of time had come, God sent his son born of woman. What is Paul quoting from?

Genesis 3.15, the son born of woman. And I have lists here of passages from the New Testament speaking of the one born of woman.

And the moment that Jesus Christ hung on the cross, Jesus Christ suffered at the hand of an ancient foe, the serpent.

The serpent came and bit his heel. The poison ran through his body. He bore our sin, our injustice, our shame, our guilt in that moment. And it crushed him. But you've got to understand that this is saying at the very same time the son of God came, Jesus Christ, and in that moment the shock, the scandal of the gospel is that he was stomping upon the head of the serpent.

[31 : 06] All evil. He came on the hunt. He first came on the hunt for the serpent and secondly, in that moment he came on the hunt seeking you, drawing you, come out from hiding, come and put your teary eyes in the shoulder of the father through the son by the spirit this morning.

The first Adam blamed his wife and he blamed God. The second Adam took the blame. And so, as we close, don't forget that at the moment of the cross there was Mother Mary.

Mary, sometimes as Protestants we forget. There was Mother Mary standing there looking up at her son. There she was. Mary, the new Eve with her eyes gazing upon her son and her savior, Jesus Christ hanging upon the cross.

The seed of the woman right there in that moment. And that means that just like Mary looked at him today, you've got to look at him. Don't hide. Look, friends, whatever's going on, do not hide your heart from God today.

He's telling you by the power of the cross come out from behind that tree. Be repentant, tearfully repentant.

[32 : 26] Put your head in the shoulder of the Father through the power of the Son and come home. Come home today as we come to the table of our Lord. Let's pray.

Father, we thank you for the proto-euangelion, the first gospel. and we ask, Lord, that you would bring sinners home today. We thank you for a tender Father, a Father full of mercy and so we ask, Lord, we ask, Lord, right now that you would show up and give us your mercy as we come to the table.

We pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.