

**“Start Here Part 2: Where Are You?” | Genesis 3:1-13 | Pastor Ryan Welshans  
January 19th, 2025, @ Mundelein Nazarene**

I wanted to let you know where my heart has been this week. I’ve been reading the Bible consistently multiple if not every day of the week since I was 20. For 17 years I have been reading this book, and something just hit for maybe the first time the other day. I was starting our reading plan that we’re in and reading Genesis 1 and I could feel my heart begin to slow down, my mind focused, and I felt so at peace. And just a few lines stuck out to me, I was journaling them in the plan booklet and I just thanked God because the scriptures are enough.

I have walked with so many people throughout the years whose main source of getting any scripture is, through reading devotional books, listening to songs they love, or teachings by their favorite celebrity pastor, and even shows like The Chosen, which are all good and some great!

But they should be supplemental at best in your walk with God.

God wants to speak to you, directly, and one of the main ways he does this is through his divinely inspired Word.

These scriptures are enough, they are sufficient, they are words you can hang your life on because they are a revelation from God.

**Genesis 3:1-13 (NIV)**

*3 Now the serpent was more crafty than any of the wild animals the Lord God had made. He said to the woman, “Did God really say, ‘You must not eat from any tree in the garden?’”*

*2 The woman said to the serpent, “We may eat fruit from the trees in the garden, 3 but God did say, ‘You must not eat fruit from the tree that is in the middle of the garden, and you must not touch it, or you will die.’”*

*4 “You will not certainly die,” the serpent said to the woman. 5 “For God knows that when you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.”*

*6 When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom, she took some and ate it. She also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it. 7 Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they realized they were naked; so they sewed fig leaves together and made coverings for themselves.*

*8 Then the man and his wife heard the sound of the Lord God as he was walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and they hid from the Lord God among the trees of the garden. 9 But the Lord God called to the man, “Where are you?”*

*10 He answered, “I heard you in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; so I hid.”*

*11 And he said, “Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree that I commanded you not to eat from?”*

*12 The man said, “The woman you put here with me—she gave me some fruit from the tree, and I ate it.”*

*13 Then the Lord God said to the woman, “What is this you have done?”*

*The woman said, “The serpent deceived me, and I ate.”*

## There Are Worse Things

**Do you remember when you were a kid and, for some of you, not all of you, but for some of you, do you remember when you made a mistake, broke a rule, or broke something, how did you react?**

All four of my kids deal with wrongdoing differently:

Jacob the oldest will admit his wrong, but if he can he will defend his decisions like a lawyer.

Noah will avoid the conversation altogether, but when he has to admit it he will and will sulk some.

Avery's first reaction is to deny it or see if she can find anything else to pin it on.

Asher, well he's the youngest and so he just smiles and kind of puts his hands up in a "what do you expect".

There's something in all of us that desperately wants to avoid consequences and punishment when we mess up, in a word, we have accountability issues. **No one likes being held accountable.**

I don't mean accountability in general, because the Lord knows we don't hesitate to hold other people accountable we demand accountability from others.

People are screaming from the rooftops about California leaders needing to be held accountable for the spread of these fires and the lack of appropriate resources and budget cuts that happened, but no one wants to deal with the personal fires we've all created and haven't put out.

**We love holding others' feet to the fire, but we will do everything we can not to get burned ourselves,** it's just a human thing I guess.

But if we let that remain an attitude we have, there's a kind of dishonesty that can develop in us, where we're not honest with ourselves, our pains, and our need for help.

But that's something I love about the scriptures actually, the writers of these narratives, poems, histories, and eyewitness accounts are extremely honest, almost too honest at times.

Abraham is a liar, Noah gets drunk after getting off the ark, Moses is a murderous fugitive with anger issues, David is an adulterous murderer, and Peter denies Jesus right before he goes to the cross. The scriptures are nothing if not at least honest about people's issues.

**And that's a great thing because honesty is where we are, not where we want to be. Honesty is where God meets us, not where we hope or want him to meet us.** Honesty is where the **roots** grow down the tree and can bear great fruit, and where a **spark** can catch something on fire in our lives.

Many times our struggle in faith, in moving forward in our walk with Jesus, and our seeing spiritual fruit grow in our lives comes because we're not being honest and real about where we are.

### **Made Be Naked**

**You and I were made for honesty and vulnerability.** There's not a person on the planet who would disagree that honesty is a good thing and when we can be vulnerable and open with others it's such a gift to us. That's what makes the best friendships and relationships, we can be real with each other.

God wants that for you and everyone. **God wants you to live unashamed and... naked.**

Get the laughs out now, but for real, look at Genesis 2.

I'll set the stage:

→ In Genesis 1 we get a cosmic wide-angle macro story of the creation of time, rhythms, seasons, and the world we live in.

→ Then in Genesis 2, we zoom into focus much more on people, place, and purpose. Even the words that are used to describe God's action, are more intimate than the first account, God **forms, takes, puts, and brings.**

#### **Genesis 2:5-7 (NIV)**

*5 Now no shrub had yet appeared on the earth and no plant had yet sprung up, for the Lord God had not sent rain on the earth and there was no one to work the ground, 6 but streams came up from the earth and watered the whole surface of the ground. 7 Then the Lord God formed a man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living being.*

**Dry Ground → Water → Mud → Man → Alive**

Humanity, you, and I are more than just Earth. Like we said last week, we're more than just a body, **we're alive because of the very breath of God. And here you see it's "Lord God", this is the first time we see God's personal covenant name, Yahweh, so in Genesis 1 we see God (Elohim, The Mighty One), and here in Genesis 2 we see Lord God (Yahweh the Covenant keeping Redeemer)**

#### **Genesis 2:15-17 (NIV)**

*15 The Lord God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it. 16 And the Lord God commanded the man, "You are free to eat from any tree in the garden; 17 but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat from it you will certainly die."*

So now, in Eden (paradise), there's **purpose, choice, free will, and command from God,**

But he's not done, God then sees that man needs a "helper" and so he brings him animals, although I am sure Adam loved being the first zoologist and making all these creatures, needed a companion. And so we see the **first surgery take place**.

**Genesis 2:21 (NIV)**

*21 So the Lord God caused the man to fall into a deep sleep; and while he was sleeping, he took one of the man's ribs and then closed up the place with flesh.*

And this is the best part right here:

**Genesis 2:22-25 (NIV)**

*22 Then the Lord God made a woman from the rib he had taken out of the man, and he brought her to the man.*

**First wedding ceremony**, where God walks his daughter Eve down the Eden aisle to Adam. And Adam, looking at his bride boats out on the first love song:

*23 The man said,  
"This is now bone of my bones  
and flesh of my flesh;  
she shall be called 'woman,'  
for she was taken out of man."*

And then we see a picture of the **first marriage**:

*24 That is why a man leaves his father and mother and is united to his wife, and they become one flesh.*

*25 Adam and his wife were both naked, and they felt no shame.*

This is what it was meant to be, **naked and unashamed**.

Not to be too graphic, but we all know the vulnerability of being naked, and if you're married you remember the first time someone else saw you naked, it's a very vulnerable and powerful moment of trust.

For some of you in the room, there may be some painful betrayal associated with being naked and trust being broken that has caused you to associate nakedness with shame, guilt, or pain. It's not meant to be!

I was thinking about how our thoughts and our attitudes around nakedness change over time.

→ When you're a little kid it's like you always want to be naked, kids are running around with underwear on their heads and smacking their puts, and as the adult you're trying to teach them they can't streak around the house.

→ Then they get a little older and they don't want you to see them naked, they cover up quickly, and ask you not to look.

→ And then they become teenagers and if you dare even make one comment about any aspect of their appearance you have crossed the line.

I've told my boys before that they need a haircut and you would have thought I pulled a knife and stabbed them.

But in all seriousness, this story and those words of **nakedness** and being **unashamed** give us a powerful look at what our original state was as humans, **what we're made for. We're created to be real, and vulnerable with each other but more importantly God.**

And yet sin and evil cause different reactions in us.

So, let's look at the good book and we'll certainly see ourselves in this story, but also God's powerful invitation as well.

### **An invitation For Confession**

In the first line of chapter three, we're introduced to the serpent:

#### **Genesis 3 :1 (NIV)**

*1 Now the serpent was more crafty than any of the wild animals the Lord God had made.*

This crafty creature throughout the biblical story, we'll come to know this creature as the enemy of God, a force of evil, he's called satan, and the devil. His presence and existence are real, and his mission in the world is to craftily distract, denigrate, and destroy God's people. He's the Father of Lies as Jesus calls him (John 8:44), and this is our introduction not just to this being, but to evil and how it captures humanity's vulnerable state.

But I want to focus on how this serpent operates within this story.

This should feel very familiar because **evil hasn't changed, satan hasn't come up with new schemes, so and so you and I recognize these tactics, lies, and half-truths now. What we'll see here is how the enemy works on all of us.**

He starts first with a question, the very first question ever asked in the scriptures:

#### **Genesis 3:1 (NIV)**

*1 He said to the woman, "Did God really say, 'You must not eat from any tree in the garden?'"*

All we've heard up to this point in the story is about God creating, giving, purposing, speaking light into darkness and breathing life into his image bearers, creating the world with his Word, and the first question from the enemy is twisting God's Word.

This tactic is still in play today. One of the easiest ways to trip people up is to misuse and misdirect someone by saying something God never said. And it takes real arrogance and pride to put false words in the mouth of the one who spoke everything into existence, including the mouth.

The enemy will use God's Word against you now, putting false ideas in your head, and misquoting scripture, the tactic is all the same.

**Genesis 3:2-3**

*2 The woman said to the serpent, "We may eat fruit from the trees in the garden, 3 but God did say, 'You must not eat fruit from the tree that is in the middle of the garden, and you must not touch it, or you will die.'"*

Eve corrects the serpent and tells him they're only forbidden from eating from the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil.

And now the serpent goes for the lie:

**Genesis 3:4-5 (NIV)**

*4 "You will not certainly die," the serpent said to the woman. 5 "For God knows that when you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil."*

God's been holding out on humanity, God's been not fully honest, and he's keeping humanity in the dark, hindering them from living their full potential, and being like God.

God has already made humanity in his image, and now the serpent is saying that if they eat this fruit they'll be like God... they already are, on his terms!

This is crucial for us friends... anytime someone tries to convince you that God's Word and commands are holding you back from living the life you were always meant to live or being the person you were always supposed to be, you're being told a lie that's been at work since the beginning. Don't fall for it. God is not and never has been in the business of holding you down or back, he's always in the creation and resurrection business.

God protects and provides, sin lures and waits for an attack.

Then we see Eve process walk down a very clear path from temptation to sin:

**Genesis 3:6 (NIV)**

*6 When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food → Physically appealing and pleasing to the eye → Aesthetically pleasing and also desirable for gaining wisdom → Intellectually Beneficial*

And then she goes for it:

*She took some and ate it.*

*She also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it.*

Evil loves to spread and be shared, and the only real way it can is through a willing human vessel.

This is normally where we would stop and talk about how to avoid all these kinds of mistakes, **but I want to specifically talk about the effects that sin has on us as humans, and how should we respond to it if and when we do sin.**

What we do as people when we miss the mark, is what Adam and Eve do here in the story:

**Genesis 3:7 (NIV)**

*7 Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they realized they were naked; so they sewed fig leaves together and made coverings for themselves.*

They saw they were exposed, so they hid! They took the very creation they were called to steward and used it to cover up their nakedness.

We do this, we cover up, we hide, we take our resources, and try to escape our mistake.

And then comes one of the most powerful moments in the whole Bible:

**Genesis 3:8-9 (NIV)**

*8 Then the man and his wife heard the sound of the Lord God as he was walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and they hid from the Lord God among the trees of the garden.*

They're hiding from the one who created them out of love, and they're hiding amongst the same creation God made for them to enjoy.

*9 But the Lord God called to the man, "Where are you?"*

This question, the first question God asks in the biblical story, **it's an important question because when any of us sin, we have different ways that we think God approaches us.**

*He's angry and out to get us*

*He doesn't care because he just wants us to be happy  
He's caring, but he is helpless to do anything about it, we're all on our own here*

But God, like a Father wants to know where his lost kids are, just wants them to be with him.

***Genesis 3:10-11 (NIV)***

*10 He answered, "I heard you in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; so I hid."*

*11 And he said, "Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree that I commanded you not to eat from?"*

Okay, most people read this like God has Adam in the courtroom or some police room and he's interrogating him, with harsh lighting, and asking These questions with a finger pointed right at Adams's face. In fact, in my Bible, the section heading, which is not scripture, is just the heading the publisher put in their labeled this section "God Interragtes Adam and Eve". I can't stand that. That's a terrible way to view this conversation, so I marked it out and wrote in "God Pursues Adam and Eve".

God is not playing some detective game here, he's God! **He's offering Adam a chance to confess!** He's allowing his son to not hide, to not cover-up.

You've had moments like this when your kid or grandkid or someone you know messes up and you just hold them and say "Tell me what happened, go ahead, tell me", not because want to tear them down, but because you know you you you you that letting the truth out feels so good, so free!

But he doesn't, instead, he does what our instinct is... he blames his wife, which is always a good idea.

***Genesis 3:12-13 (NIV)***

*12 The man said, "The woman you put here with me—she gave me some fruit from the tree, and I ate it."*

But he also blames God for giving her to him.

And so God looks to her and offers his daughter the same invitation.

***Genesis 13 (NIV)***

*13 Then the Lord God said to the woman, "What is this you have done?"*

And she shifts the blame too.

*The woman said, "The serpent deceived me, and I ate."*

Blaming the devil... always an easy out.



After this God confronts the serpent, and curses him, then there are curses laid on Adam and Eve, and sin is now fully at work in the lives of God's people and we're still feeling the effects of it today in every area of life.

But I want to spend some time looking at this "crucial conversation" I want to draw our attention to those words one more time, "**Where are you?**"

Shame, guilt, hiding, and a life with God is a terrible mix!

God is the ultimate giver of freedom, sin is the ultimate giver of shame and enslavement.

When we sin, when we miss the mark, when we have too much to bear on our shoulders, God is with us.

I love the Psalm that we heard this morning, the Psalmist's words are so good!

**Psalm 32 (NLT)**

*1 Oh, what joy for those*

*whose disobedience is forgiven,*

*whose sin is put out of sight!*

*2 Yes, what joy for those*

*whose record the Lord has cleared of guilt,*

***whose lives are lived in complete honesty!***

***3 When I refused to confess my sin,***

***my body wasted away,***

***and I groaned all day long.***

*4 Day and night your hand of discipline was heavy on me.*

*My strength evaporated like water in the summer heat.*

***5 Finally, I confessed all my sins to you***

***and stopped trying to hide my guilt.***

***I said to myself, "I will confess my rebellion to the Lord."***

***And you forgave me! All my guilt is gone.***

*6 Therefore, let all the godly pray to you while there is still time,*

*that they may not drown in the floodwaters of judgment.*

***7 For you are my hiding place;***

*you protect me from trouble.*

*You surround me with songs of victory.*

***8 The Lord says, "I will guide you along the best pathway for your life.***

***I will advise you and watch over you.***

*9 Do not be like a senseless horse or mule*

*that needs a bit and bridle to keep it under control."*

*10 Many sorrows come to the wicked,*

*but unfailing love surrounds those who trust the Lord.*

*11 So rejoice in the Lord and be glad, all you who obey him!*

*Shout for joy, all you whose hearts are pure!*

Friends, God's gift to you is confession!

## **We're Not Made To Hide From God But To Hide In God**

### **A Confessing People**

You may want to run away from your Heavenly Father, and you can, but just know he has not moved away from you, and he is waiting with open arms to embrace you!

Don't run from God, run into his arms!

We are called to be a people of freedom, and you can't have freedom without first admitting that you're in chains.

And you may not even be in rebellion or sinning, but it's just good to let go of stuff, and let God be God.

### **Confession**

I just want to give anyone who needs it, time at the altar, time in your seat to confess to God where you are, what you're dealing with, what you need his help with.

### **Questions For Personal Reflection Or Group Discussion:**

1. How did you deal with getting in trouble as a kid?
2. How do you think you respond to accountability now?
3. What do you think about God's original plan for humanity to be naked and unashamed?
4. What sticks out to you about the story of Eve's temptation (and where was Adam?)
5. Does the enemy work the same way with you in temptation? How do you battle it?
6. Check out Luke 4:1-13. How does Jesus battle the devil? What are his tactics?
7. "Where are you?" How would you answer that right now in your life?

### **Readings For This Week | Jan 20-24**

**Mon: Genesis 3:1-24**

**Tue: Genesis 4:1-16**

**Wed: Luke 8:16-17, Ephesians 5:1-20**

**Thu: Psalm 32**

**Fri: Reflection**

### **Work Cited**

The Story of God Commentary: Genesis by Temper Longman

Varughese, Alex; Bohn, Christina. NBBC, Genesis 1-11: A Commentary in the Wesleyan Tradition (New Beacon Bible Commentary) (p. 379). The Foundry Publishing. Kindle Edition.