

## Daring to be Loved

Series: Daring Faith

Brad Bailey – November 4, 2018

Genesis 3:7-10

*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.<sup>8</sup> 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.<sup>9</sup> But the LORD God called to the man, "Where are you?"<sup>10</sup> He answered, "I heard you in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; so I hid."*

Without faith in God's love, we will become...

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*Your unfailing love, O LORD, is as vast as the heavens; your faithfulness reaches beyond the clouds. - Psalm 36:5 (NLT)*

1 John 4:16-18 (NLT)

*We know how much God loves us, and we have put our trust in his love. God is love, and all who live in love live in God, and God lives in them.<sup>17</sup> And as we live in God, our love grows more perfect. So we will not be afraid on the day of judgment, but we can face him with confidence because we live like Jesus here in this world.<sup>18</sup> Such love has no fear, because perfect love expels all fear. If we are afraid, it is for fear of punishment, and this shows that we have not fully experienced his perfect love.*

**Daring to be loved calls us to...**

1. Be \_\_\_\_\_. (God's acceptance)

Romans 5:5-6, 8 (NIRV)

*And hope will never bring us shame. That's because God's love has been poured into our hearts. This happened through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us.<sup>6</sup> At just the right time Christ died*

*for ungodly people. He died for us when we had no power of our own....<sup>8</sup> But here is how God has shown his love for us. While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.*

2. Be \_\_\_\_\_. (God's mercy)

*"...her many sins have been forgiven; that's why she loved much. But the one who is forgiven little, loves little." - Luke 7:47 (CSB)*

3. Be \_\_\_\_\_. (God's favor)

Luke 1:28-30

*The angel went to her and said, "Greetings, you who are highly favored! The Lord is with you."<sup>29</sup> Mary was greatly troubled at his words and wondered what kind of greeting this might be.<sup>30</sup> But the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, you have found favor with God.*

4. Be \_\_\_\_\_. (God's preeminence)

Ephesians 3:16-19 (ESV)

*"....according to the riches of his glory he may grant you to be strengthened with power through his Spirit in your inner being,<sup>17</sup> so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith—that you, being rooted and grounded in love,<sup>18</sup> may have strength to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth,<sup>19</sup> and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.*

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Intro

We're continuing in our **Fall venture** into the **nature of faith**.

**Faith is stepping into what God has promised...and provides.**

So we have engaged the nature of **daring to move forward... daring to commit...daring to plant...** and today... **DARING TO BE LOVED.**

That **might not sound** very **daring...** or even fitting to be considered something that requires faith. But it may be the very foundation of faith...the **root of trust** within us.

In the **first book of the Bible...**Genesis...which means the book of beginnings... we are told of **how humanity chose to become independent...**and **what unfolds is telling. God describes life as a garden in which human lives flourishes in union with God. Human existence is at peace in the presence of it's source. There is simply a warning...not to eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. For evil does not exist...it would be separation from God. But they are drawn to distrust God's goodness...and seek to become like God...and they are now in state of standing before God... but now in fear.**

**And as we read...**

Genesis 3:7-10 (NIV)

*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.<sup>8</sup> 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.<sup>9</sup> But the LORD God called to the man, "Where are you?"<sup>10</sup> He answered, "I heard you in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; so I hid."*

A depiction of what it means to now stand before the true and living God with whom we have created a separate nature that was never meant to be.

*"I was afraid because I was naked; so I hid."* - Genesis 3:10

Naked...exposed. This is not merely the nakedness of the body...but of the soul... of being exposed for the separation they have caused. It is the shame of separation...like a child who has broken trust...one can try and pretend everything is the same...but it's not. You have eaten from a tree that would bring the knowledge of evil...and it would now define you. And to the love of the one in whom your very existence lies...there may be love...but there is something between you...something we can't simply shed...and the love exposes. [1]

This separate person could be **referred to** as **our ego...** the self that claims it's independence of existence... a false and fragile form of self.... only a dying shell of what we were meant to be....but being so fragile...there is always a desperate need to defend itself.

**And what does the ego do before the presence of God?**

**It tries to cover itself. It can certainly seem a bit humorous to think of sowing fig leaves... to cover one's naked exposed self. But that is precisely what we do. We don't want to stand exposed... so we cover ourselves...and hide behind whatever we can find.**

If we consider the recent tragic hate crimes...shooting of Jewish IWithout faith in God's love, we will become...

- **Driven** (tend to feel one "must" accomplish or succeed)
- **Defensive** (tend to react to responsibility for problems with anger, blame, excuses, etc)
- **Demanding** (tend to use others for personal attention and affirmation)
- **Dangerous** (tend to view some as enemies worthy of degrading or destroying)

Recent hate crimes... bombs mailed to those deemed enemies... shooting those attending a synagogue those deemed enemies... we may be given plenty of political **explanation** and meaning... but **look at the root...** and you will see **an ego ... fragile and threatened...** desperate and dangerous.

If I am honest... there are elements of all these signs running in me in varying degrees. The truth is that we will never be able to cover ourselves. What we lost was God and what we need is to be united with God again...inseparably united.

- Adam's hope lies not in himself...no cover will suffice
- His hope lies not in making God some mere sentimental idea.

> **Hope lies in the power of God's love ...to provide...**

This is what **those closest to God's heart rooted their hearts in.**

As God was raising up a people to know him... David... would become king of Israel...but is referred to as a man after God's heart.

Few would know they were a sinner more...and discover it so deeply.

In a **book of poetic prayer... Psalms...** he describes the destructiveness of sin... **BUT then he speaks of God's love...**

Psalm 36:5 (NLT)

*Your unfailing love, O LORD, is as vast as the heavens; your faithfulness reaches beyond the clouds. [2]*

**He looks to a love that is beyond mere earthly nature.**

Why should we not.

**Is there anything that life in this realm has been more drawn to than the nature of love?**

It is deemed our **deepest longing...** the **ideal of philosophers...** the **underlying theme of storytellers.**

***Love is what we long for most deeply... an ideal forever looked for... .. because it's perfection exists.***

**God is love**...and the unique nature of his love to reunite us becomes manifest in Christ. He comes to bear our shame...separation.. and to cover us in his own united nature.

That is the transforming power of God.

It is not the cheap sentimental notion that says: “everything you do is okay because I don’t want to judge or exclude anyone” idea of love... but a love which truth and goodness and mercy are united.

It is a love that **no ego will want**...but we can come out of hiding and be reunited with God.

As the closest disciple to Jesus describes...

### **1 John 4:16-18 (NLT)**

*We know how much God loves us, and we have **put our trust in his love**. God is love, and all who live in love live in God, and God lives in them. <sup>17</sup> And as we live in God, our love grows more perfect. So we will not be afraid on the day of judgment, but we can face him with confidence because we live like Jesus here in this world. <sup>18</sup> Such love has no fear, because perfect love expels all fear. If we are afraid, it is for fear of punishment, and this shows that we have not fully experienced his perfect love.*

**This declared what it means to dare to be loved.**

**We “put our trust in his love.”**

### **Such loves has no fear.... [3]**

I know that may sound encouraging but perhaps a little unclear.. For many are familiar with the Bible saying that “fearing God is the beginning of all wisdom.” So we may wonder how to be encouraged to fear God...and then told that if we know God’s love we will no longer fear.

If we reflect on what each is stating...they speak of very different meanings to fear. Fear can speak of fearing something because it seeks our harm...but it can also speak to fearing something because it’s powerful nature.

I love the ocean... in part because I fear it... I grasp it’s immensity.

We should fear God because he is all good...all powerful...the beginning and end of all existence. To fear him means to realize that our relationship to him matters above all. To ignore the supremacy and goodness of God has consequences...for he is the all powerful source and his love does not seek punishment.

Perfect love... God’s love...brings the end of fear. It resolves the fear of punishment. We may begin fearful...but as we more deeply take in the love of God... such fear will be no more.

**John is clear...this is a process...**

**He says we will “...live like Jesus here in this world.” Jesus lived as one belonging to his father and the Spirit in heaven. That is something that likely every one of us might deem profound ...something to aspire to...but not something we have arrived at yet.**

In process... has **not been perfected. And he says very clearly...**

“And as we live in God, **our love grows more perfect**. ...If we are afraid, it is for fear of punishment, and this shows that we have not fully experienced his perfect love.” - 1 John 4:17,18 (NLT)

And how can we dare to be loved?

***Daring to be loved calls us to...***

**1. Be seen. (God's acceptance)**

Perhaps the hardest aspect of being loved...is being exposed. Adam is sewing coverings...hiding in bushes... he is scared.

And so humanity has proven to have become **master coverers**.

Philosophers spend lifetimes trying to explain why there is nothing really wrong... just some primordial leftovers we will eventually be free of...or some silly socially formed conscience we will evolve from.

And within ourselves... there is an imposter that emerges... a false self that we hope will be acceptable. But that false self can never be loved...because it doesn't exist. Only the real me can really be loved.

But God says come...I see you...the real you. As the Bible says...

***Romans 5:5-6, 8 (NIRV)***

*And hope will never bring us shame. That's because God's love has been poured into our hearts. This happened through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us.<sup>6</sup> At just the right time Christ died for ungodly people. He died for us when we had no power of our own....<sup>8</sup> But here is how God has shown his love for us. While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.*

The first step in daring to be loved...is daring to be a sinner.

**Not the generic sinner that simply says:** “I am part of a group and therefore must identify with that group” kind of sinner... but one who personally hides in shame of real “I want to rule above God” kind of sinner. Today...common to speak of sinners...sort of like accepting that we are in some way “part of the group”... so we can “get in on the deal.” But pseudo sinners will only know pseudo forgiveness.

So we need to be seen...and this leads to...second point...

***Daring to be loved calls us to...***

**2. Be forgiven. (God's mercy)**

When the love of God in Christ shows up... he **comes to those** who are **seen..** and **are sinners**. This becomes a **rather defining issue**...he explains that like a doctor... he only comes to those who are sick.

At one point... the religious leaders are once again threatened by the way those identified as sinners come to him. A religious leader invited Jesus to eat dinner at his home...and a woman who had lived a sinful life comes and anoints Jesus' feet with a bottle of perfume... which generally serves as one's life savings. And the religious leaders get upset....and Jesus says...

**Luke 7:47 (CSB)**

***"...her many sins have been forgiven; that's why she loved much. But the one who is forgiven little, loves little."***

What is he saying? That it is better to have sinned more? No...he thinks the religious leaders are the worst types of sinners. His point is not that she has sinned so much...but that she knows it.

**If you want to dare to be loved...** find a moment later today...during this week...and just **confess your sins...** real ones.  
Then BE FORGIVEN.

***Daring to be loved calls us to...***

**3. Be blessed (God's favor)**

There is a tendency to accept that perhaps God has done something to simply solve a problem... but we still feel our life is cursed in this lifetime.

The entire **force of Jesus' life...**confronted the entire **false perception** of who was blessed and who was cursed...of who had favor. [4]

He came to those who bore every element that human life was correlating with being cursed...and said you have favor.

(And he warned those who presumed they had some favor that they needed grace as much as anyone else.)

the whole world Jesus entered had it wrong...they perceived sickness and poverty as a lack of God's blessing... Jesus declared how wrong they were...joined them... became the one deemed cursed.

And that is what Jesus had faith in...that even when the cup would not be removed... he could trust his Father's love.

Consider how **God began his entry** to show come to us... the exchange with the young woman named Mary who was to give birth to Jesus...

**Luke 1:28-30 (NIV)**

*The angel went to her and said, "Greetings, you who are highly favored! The Lord is with you."<sup>29</sup> Mary was greatly troubled at his words and wondered what kind of greeting this might be.<sup>30</sup> But the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, you have found favor*

with God.

**“Highly favored... the Lord is with you.”**

> That is what it means to have favor...it means God's is with you.

May face lots of limits and losses... may feel alone...but you are not alone...not abandoned.

Now her life would be hard... she would know many sorrows... suffered as a peasant...under an oppressive empire... travel all the way to Egypt as a refugee with a young infant... lost her husband... eventually watched her son be crucified.

Mary believed...God is in this... God is for me... she had faith to believe she was loved with God's favor.

**Luke 1:45 (NIV)**

*Blessed is she who has believed that what the Lord has said to her will be accomplished!"*

She believed it. She had daring faith that she was favored...God was with her.

*We need to understand... prosperity may be a gift from God, but it is not a sign of God's blessing. That blessing is reserved for those who are poor enough in spirit and in circumstance to yearn deeply and sincerely for the final coming of the kingdom of God.*

***We need to join the Psalmist in saying:***

***"Surely your goodness and love will follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the LORD forever." - Psalm 23:6***

***(Let's declare that out loud together)***

***Finally, Daring to be loved calls us to...***

***4. Be rooted (God's preeminence)***

**Roots are what develop deeper... unseen...but actually provide what matters most.**

We all here right now in Los Angeles...equally present in this moment...but some are more rooted.

In a similar way... most would say they identify with being loved by God...but likely how ROOTED in that love differs.

**Ephesians 3:16-19 (ESV)**

*"...according to the riches of his glory he may grant you to be strengthened with power through his Spirit in your inner being,<sup>17</sup> so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith—that you, being rooted and grounded in love,<sup>18</sup> may have strength to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth,<sup>19</sup> and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.*

Daring to be loved involves becoming **ROOTED** in love...grounded in love.

**Where does this take place?**

“In your inner being.”

**What does the Spirit bring?**

An inner realization of the love and fullness of God.

Life was **once rooted** in love **in the garden...now by the Holy Spirit.**

**Closing Prayer**

**Notes:**

1. Along with our shame...we are told very clearly that the one who drew us into doubting God's goodness...and eating what was forbidden... now enjoys the work of accusing us. This carries on ... subtle doubting of God's nature...and our unworthiness.

We need to see what the fate of the one who claims such to be true is. In Revelation 12:9 it says, *The great dragon was thrown down the serpent of old who is called the Devil and Satan who deceives the whole world: he was thrown down to the Earth and his angels were thrown down with him. Then I heard a loud voice in Heaven saying, "Now the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God and the authority of his Christ has come: for the accuser of our brethren has been thrown down, he who accuses them before our God day and night."*

2. Similarly,

Psalm 57:10 (NLT)

For your unfailing love is as high as the heavens. Your faithfulness reaches to the clouds.

Psalm 103:11 (NLT)

For his unfailing love toward those who fear him is as great as the height of the heavens above the earth.

3. Regarding love in contrast to fear, consider also: 2 Timothy 1:7 – “For God gave us a spirit not of fear but of power and love and self-control.”

4. We find this theme of clarifying God's favor throughout the testimony of Scripture:

1 Samuel 2:8

He raises the poor from the dust and lifts the needy from the ash heap. He seats them among princes and bestows on them a throne of honor. For the foundations of the earth are the LORD's, and upon them He has set the world.

Job 34:19

who is not partial to princes and does not favor rich over poor? For they are all the work of His hands.



Matthew 5:3

“Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

James 2:5

Listen, my dear brothers and sisters: Has not God chosen those who are poor in the eyes of the world to be rich in faith and to inherit the kingdom he promised those who love him?

Further consideration of the Biblical view of “blessing” - Is Prosperity a Blessing?

JANUARY 18, 2011 FEATURE, DANIEL BOERMAN -

<https://www.thebanner.org/features/2011/01/is-prosperity-a-blessing>