

Hey Church family! My name is Chris Tower, and for today's devotional, I want to ask you, "Are you being honest?" If you're like me, growing up in the local church and serving since you can remember, then you've become accustomed to the proverbial one-liners we often say. One of my favorites is, "God is good! All the time! And all the time, God is good!"

Trust me, I love declaring truth together as a church family. But what about the times when you're having a hard time believing that "God is good"? Have you ever been there? Or better yet, have you ever admitted it? If we're not careful, a truth like "God is good" can quickly become a mere platitude that helps us keep up the appearance that "I've got it all together" to the outside world. But deep down, we're actually having a real internal struggle.

It's in moments like that where fear is actually dominating our hearts. Maybe with our heads we acknowledge that it's God's perfect love that casts out fear. But in our hearts, we don't really believe it. What do you do when that's the case?

Well, when you're in that predicament, it means it's time to get honest. Are you being honest?

This very thing reminds me of the scene in the garden of Eden. Adam and Eve just ate from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil and immediately notice that they are naked. And what's the first thing they did? They sewed fig leaves together to try and cover up their nakedness, to cover their own sense of shame. And then, they hear God walking through the garden in the cool of the day. And they hide! And God calls out to Adam, "Where are you?"

Adam heard God's voice and he came out and did something remarkable: he confessed. In Genesis 3:10, Adam answers: "I heard you in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; so I hid." We're still doing the same thing today! Our shame makes us afraid and then we choose to hide or self-protect. And self-protection can come in the form of "Oh yea! God is good, brother!" And that's the worst kind when our hearts truly are not in agreement with such an amazing truth as that.

So what's the answer? It's honesty. Adam came out and confessed. I was afraid...so I hid. This recently happened to me. I was avoiding a situation because I was afraid. And as my wife and I were praying, I found myself admitting these

words: "I'm afraid I'm a disappointment." There's fear & shame. And as I was closing my eyes, I immediately saw this picture of a giant green checkmark, and I knew the Father was saying, "No. You're approved! I love you and am so proud of you."

You know, that changed everything for me in that simple little moment. Hearing God like that. Once I was able to confess my fear, get it out in the open, out came the false identity: I'm a disappointment. We think admitting our fears and weakness is bad. But in God's program, that is the key to posturing yourself towards receiving the truth that makes you free. The truth is, I am approved and loved in Christ. That's my true identity. 1 John 1:9 says that if we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us and cleanse us from all unrighteousness. That's a powerful exchange. That's repentance: admitting the false and making room for God to speak & change our minds.

And in Christ, we have it WAYYYY better than Adam & Eve. All that judgment against sin was poured out on Jesus on our behalf so that we could truly know, in all honesty, the mercy and love of God.

So, Are you being honest with God?

Let's pray. Father, thank you that you are not afraid of what's going on inside our hearts. Help us to be honest, to confess, so that we can get the false out of us. Thank you that you are the God who speaks, and as we empty ourselves of the false, you are so faithful to fill us with your truth that makes us free. Father, what false thing is keeping us in bondage today? And what is the truth you want us to know in its place? We thank you for speaking. In Jesus' name, AMEN.