

(Trees in the Christian Experience) 1. the Man Behind the Tree

by Roy Hession

The sermon teaches that people hide from God's presence because of a guilty conscience, but God loves us and wants to save us from our sins.

Duration: 48:45

Scripture: Genesis 1:1, Genesis 2:7, Genesis 3:15, Isaiah 55:7-8, Matthew 6:33, Romans 5:1

Topics: "Christian Experience"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher discusses five incidents from the Scriptures where a tree is significant. The first incident is the story of the man behind the tree in Genesis chapter three. The preacher emphasizes that God's attitude towards sinners is not one of condemnation, but of seeking and saving the lost. This is demonstrated by the fact that God gave his son for us, showing his love and willingness to forgive. The preacher encourages listeners to come out from behind the tree and not hide, as God offers forgiveness and mercy through Jesus Christ.

Transcript

Now, the theme of our Bible readings for these mornings, this week, is going to be five incidents from the Scriptures where a tree figures. It's quite fortuitous that the incidents in question figure a tree. The thing that matters is not this common theme, because it's very surface, but the truth which these incidents illustrate.

But the fact that there is this link between them will, I believe, help you to recall at the end, when you get home, the whole series. So we're going to look then at five incidents each morning. And the first incident we're going to look at is the story of the man behind the tree.

And for that I want you to turn to Genesis chapter three. Genesis chapter three. What a wonderful book this book of Genesis is, and how absolutely marvelous are not these opening chapters of the book of Genesis.

My heart has been bowed and subdued recently as Pam and I went through the book of Genesis again, especially where we bowed and stirred at the opening chapters. They seem to be so relevant, so contemporary, because here you have the Genesis of everything given. The Genesis, first of all, of the

universe.

You know, there's a recognition that our scientists and evolutionists and others haven't got it straight. It's quite extraordinary to see the evolutionary theory in disarray today, and strangely to find them on the defensive as they see their sacred cow being challenged. And you turn with relief again to the book of Genesis.

Nobody really knows what the Genesis of the universe is. They don't know. Why not be content not to know, just to make little discoveries, generation by generation.

God, in his word, has told us all we need to know. He's decided, here is my version of the unknowable, in broad terms, doesn't go into details. It's the scientists who try and do that and get it wrong.

Here is all we need to know, the story of the Genesis of the universe, and I'm so glad I've not been taken up with Big Bang theories and all that sort of stuff. Here it is, in the beginning, God. Oh, so satisfying.

To the human heart and more, I believe, to the human intellect too. Then here, in the early chapters of Genesis, you have the Genesis of the human race. How did it begin? What pathetic theories men have advanced.

And they're all different, and they're in disarray, and there's a growing scepticism today with regard to man's evolutionary theories. And you know, I've been most interested to read how Darwin himself was a devout reader of the scriptures, found his peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. And it would seem regretted that people had taken up what were only theories in his mind to use them against revelation.

But here we have God's version of how the human race began, the Genesis of the universe, the Genesis of the human race. And then, in the chapter we have before us, the Genesis of sin. Where did it come from? How did it happen? Was it part of the original intention? Oh, how good of God to give solid revelation of how it all began.

And in giving us the revelation of how sin began, the book of Genesis sets the stage for the main story of the Bible, which is the story of redemption from sin. That's what it is. Redemption is not part of the divine story.

It is the divine story. That's what it's all about. And therefore, God couldn't begin until he'd shown us how things had gone wrong and what was to be redeemed and who was to be redeemed and how.

And strange, though I'm not going to deal with it this morning, the very chapter that tells us that Genesis of sin has the first promise of redemption. When God speaks about the seed of the woman, who, bless his holy name, will bruise the serpent's head, but in so doing will get his heel bruised. The first promise of the gospel.

What a wonderful treasure this precious book of God is. Here lies highest wisdom. Happy the man who spends his whole life in it, day after day, week after week, year after year.

Well, now, let's read, then, this particular part, Genesis 3, and within it we will find the first incident I especially want to underline, the incident of the man behind the tree. Now the serpent was more subtle than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made. And he said unto the woman, Yea, hath God

said ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden? And the woman said unto the serpent, We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden, but of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God has said ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die.

And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die, for God does know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, no longer subservient to God, but a god yourself. That was attractive to them, knowing good and evil. And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, it usually is the forbidden tree, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, yes, very often so.

And a tree to be desired to make one wise, the first sin was committed in the sphere of higher education. A tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her, and he did eat. And the eyes of them both were opened.

And they knew that they were naked. They were naked before, but they were unaware of it, but now a sense of shame has come. And they sowed fig leaves together, and made themselves aprons.

And they heard the voice of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day. And Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God among the trees of the garden. And the Lord God called unto Adam and said unto him, Where art thou? And he said, I heard thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked, and I hid myself.

And he said, Who told thee that thou wast naked? Hast thou eaten of the tree whereof I commanded thee that thou shouldst not eat? Verse 22, And the Lord God said, Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil, and now lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat and live forever. Terrible possibility! A sinner in his sin, living forever! That mustn't happen. Therefore the Lord God sent him forth from the garden of Eden, to till the ground from whence he was taken.

So he drove out the man, and he placed at the east of the garden of Eden cherubims, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life. And the special verses are verses 7 and 8, And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked, and they sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves aprons. And they heard the voice of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God among the trees of the garden.

And there you have Adam behind those trees, the man behind the tree. And what's he doing there? He and Eve are hiding from the presence of the Lord God. But they hadn't always done that.

They never used to hide from his presence. Indeed that hour, when in the cool of the day the Lord God moved and came down to commune with the man and the woman whom he had made, they were the one great hours of every day. I imagine that moment, when the unseen God appeared in a special way in the garden, everything went quiet.

The birds ceased their singing, the leaves even perhaps ceased their rustling. And Adam would get hold of the hand of his wife Eve and said, Eve, he's come, he's come, let us worship him. And they ran into some clearing in the forest, and they fell upon their knees, and they loved and worshipped and praised him, for I know not how long, each evening.

But what a different situation now. Yes, the same hours come. The garden has gone all quiet again.

But instead of running to meet him, Adam gets hold of the hand of his wife Eve. He says, Eve, he's come, let us hide from his presence behind the trees of the garden. Why are they hiding from the presence of the Lord, when before they never did it? Simply because Adam and Eve have committed sin.

They have broken the clear commandment of God. And that sin has given them a guilty conscience. Which guilty conscience makes them quite sure that God is against them? Don't you hear him say? He's calling my name! And it made him feel that God now was against him, who'd broken his commandment, who'd committed sin, and he was in no mood to meet a God whom he thought was against him.

But the truth was, God wasn't against Adam at all. All the sin that Adam committed later, and his race, and that first sin, not for one moment has it succeeded in turning God against man. True, he did say, Adam, where art thou? But that was not the voice of a policeman looking for a criminal.

It was the voice of a father who'd lost a son, a son whom he still loved. Adam, Adam, where art thou? But Adam didn't believe it. He was quite sure God was now against him, and for that reason he hid from his presence behind the trees.

Now the first effect of sin upon us is always to make us want to hide, especially from his presence. John 3 says, Hate is the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved. You see, sin, whatever it is, whether in a Christian or in one who's not a Christian, always gives the person concerned a guilty conscience.

And that guilty conscience, the logic of it is that God now is against me. We're quite sure if other people knew what we've done, and what sort of people we really are, they would be against us. It's obvious that he's against us too.

And so it is when there's any approach of God to ourselves. Our first reaction, as creatures of darkness, is to hide from his presence, behind whatever tree in the garden seems to offer us some hiding place. Whether it's in the case of a person who's not yet a Christian, or even in the case of one who is, but in whom things have gone wrong, who wants to hide, who feels God's against him still.

And so it is, this is the story not only of Adam, but of you and of me. We've all of us at one time or another been men behind the tree. And there must be some of us even now, people behind the tree.

People have come to our conference for years, and it's only just come out. There were things of darkness that were hidden away, which they hid. And we wondered why there was that reticence.

Why they only got so far and no further, and then eventually the truth comes out. For twenty years they were hiding behind the tree, some tree or other, the cause of sin that was accusing them. We can give names to the various sins.

I don't suppose I may name to the various trees, I mean, behind which we hide. I may not name your particular one. It's a wonderful thing when the Holy Spirit shows you.

That's a tree behind which you're hiding. That's the thing that's hindering, it's not the sins so much that's hindering you, it's the fact that you've hidden it. Oh, as we shall see, there's mercy with the Lord for sinners, but not when they're hiding from his presence behind some tree.

And we can be. They can be very subtle or they can be very obvious. And as I say, only the Holy Spirit can really identify for you and for me what is our particular tree behind which we're hiding from his presence and from the fellowship of even other Christians.

Well, I suppose an obvious one is arguments. You know, people come along with intellectual arguments, ask us intellectual questions. Then they even, if they're Christians even, have arguments against the sort of message that seems to be given at Southwell.

And it would seem if they can only answer their question, that's perfectly good, they'll be convinced. It's nothing of the sort, it's only a tree. And if you succeed in cutting that tree down, they'll find another tree behind which to hide.

Frankly, they're not greatly exercised about the veracity of the Christian faith, that's no real problem at all. It's just a very convenient tree behind which to hide from the presence of the Lord. Sometimes the tree can be our very religiousness.

The fact that we're deeply involved in our church. Lawrence Barham tells the story of how he went to an Anglican church and after the sermon there was the choir in the vestry and the leading choirman was there in his cassock and surplice. And Lawrence asked him, was he saved? Awkward question when a bishop asks you, are you saved? And this man stood to himself and said, twenty years in the choir was me.

And those twenty years were but a tree behind which he was hiding. And our very religiousness can be hiding what we are and where we are and the fact that we have no real relationship with God or if we had it, it's gone dead. Sometimes you can even find yourself and other people too hiding behind other people's sins.

When they say, me become a Christian? Look at the hypocrites in the church. Look what they do. Probably right, there are some hypocrites.

But he's not concerned about the purity of the church for one moment. The fact that there may be some hypocrites is just a convenient tree behind which to hide. And you can point to other Christians and excuse yourself because of what they do.

But you're not concerned that they should be revived and changed. It's simply, you're glad to have some sort of a tree behind which to hide. And there are all sorts of other subtle ones which even we Christians can adopt.

A sort of a manner, a jocular manner. Now there are some people who are never serious, always joking. And you know that can be a tree.

They don't want you to know the real person. And even that can be a tree behind which you hide. This was very much the testimony of our brethren in East Africa, the missionaries.

We're challenged by the Africans over this very thing. You know the Englishman's a great leg puller. Always, you know, got a smart answer.

And this was very much the case among the missionaries before revival came. The Africans gave it a special name. Oh, they believed in joy.

You should hear them sing and praise. But if a missionary wasn't right, he could have this jocular manner. And they had to see it was a tree behind which they were hiding from the presence of the Lord.

On the other hand, it may be the very opposite, a very quiet manner. You see, I'm very reserved, I don't talk very much. How convenient.

You do not then feel yourself under any obligation to make any humbling self-disclosures. I never talk very much. Man, that can be nothing more than a tree.

Oh, there is a difference in temperament, but we can make it a tree. And God requires openness on the part of the man of quiet disposition as he requires it of the man of ebullient disposition. Or it could be plain, straightforward lies.

Not always spoken lies, but acted lies. And perhaps even in our homes, we've been content for others in the home to have a certain impression of us, which just isn't the truth. We've acted the lie.

And if we're challenged, we don't scruple to tell the lie, to hide from God, as we must imagine, and certainly from our brethren, the truth of how it is with ourselves and where we are. And this is something very basic to us. And I believe the reason is because, like Adam, we feel God is against us.

If people really knew, they would be against us. So we think. Not always right at all, but we think they would.

And if they would be against us, how much more God? And you're in no heart to come out into the eternal light to let the truth about yourself be known by God. And therefore, we back off any challenge, any approach of God to ourselves that might have that effect, because we think that sin, our sin, our failures, has put God against us. But it hasn't done that at all.

Not for one moment has the sin of man put God against man. It's only in the realm of your thought. It's only something, the logic of a guilty conscience that tells you so.

It just isn't true. When he comes after us and comes after us, he does. And he says, Adam, where art thou? That's not the voice of a policeman looking for a criminal.

It's a father who's lost a son, and he's come to seek and to save that one whom he has lost. The fact that this is God's great attitude to sinners is shown by the fact that he gave his son for us. Thou didst not spare thine only son, but gavest him for a world undone, and freely with that blessed one thou givest all.

Does that look like the work of one who's against sinners, who gave his son for us? Years ago, Stanley Boca and I worked as a team in California. We were talking about it together, remembering the beautiful experience it was. And we had a few days free, and we went to a great auditorium where there was a youth campaign or something on, and there were thousands of young people there, and a very, I don't know how to express it, a fruity evangelist.

He was full of quips and full of fun, and yet suddenly he could become so serious, and you could hear a pin drop. Bill McKee, I haven't heard of him since, but I can never forget a part of his message. They'd had much singing and different items on the program, and Bill McKee had been sitting quietly in his seat, waiting his turn to give the message.

And when he got up, he said, Young people, as I've sat here, I've asked God to help me love you. And he said, I want to tell you, I love you. And then he suddenly switched off to talk about his son, his boy, only a kid, and of the dreams which he dreamed for that small boy of his.

In his dream he was going to be the greatest American footballer there was. He had all sorts of wonderful dreams for that boy, his first son, his first child. And he told us how much he loved him.

Then he said, Young people, I love you, but not enough to give my son for you. I'd do anything than let you touch him. I would kill you before I permitted you to kill him.

I don't love you enough to give my son for you. And then he said, But God did. God did.

And in that context he quoted to us, God so loved the world, that he gave his son for that world, that believing on him they might not perish, but have eternal life. That's the God you think's against you. Doesn't seem like it, does it? And it wasn't only God who gave his son, but Jesus who gave himself.

I'd be most interested to discover that literally, whenever that phrase comes, Jesus gave himself for us, in the Greek it is gave himself up for us, who loved me and gave himself up. You know what it is for a man to give himself up to the police? To offer himself to be arrested? That's exactly what Jesus did. Please turn the cassette over now.

Do not fast-wind it in either direction. In John 18, they came to arrest him, and he said, Whom seek ye? They said, Jesus of Nazareth. He said, I am he.

And when he said that, they fell down backwards. He said, Tell me again, who are you looking for? Jesus of Nazareth said, I am he. If you want me, take me, and let these go their way.

He gave himself up for me, absolutely voluntarily. For the very man who feels that God must be against him, I want to tell you, it just isn't true. And that's why it's so important for us to preach the cross of our Lord Jesus, because it gives the lie, eternally, to man's guilty suspicions of God.

You were loved, and you are still loved, in your sin, in your failure. You've been died for. God's given a sign to you.

Never for one moment think that God's against you. He may have to discipline you, in order to provoke you to repentance, but it's only that you might receive mercy. It's love that sometimes takes disciplinary action against us.

And there's every incentive in the world for you to come out of hiding. Be honest, and give yourself up to him. And as I say, this is the great, grand incentive for us sinners, whether we be unsaved sinners or Christian sinners, to come out from our trees, whatever they may be, to God, to Jesus.

This fact that we are loved. You know the famous passage in 2 Corinthians 5, verse 20? We read there, Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you through us. We pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God.

Listen, for, for, for, for! He hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin, that you might be made the righteousness of God in him. I like that. How the other versions have it, I don't know, but that's how the authorised version.

We beseech you, be reconciled to God, and here's the grand reason, here's the grand incentive, because, for, he has made his son to be sin for you, who knew no sin. He's not holding your sins against you. He's charged him to take count of his son, and that very fact is the grand incentive for us to repent.

Not only does the cross offer us pardon when we repent, but it gives us every incentive so to do. When I survey the wondrous cross on which the Prince of Glory died, I'm finished! When I really see it, when it's really come home, and I'm fighting against one who is my enemy. Grace is the grand incentive to take the sinner's place.

John Newton took it, he said, thou callest burdened souls to thee, and such, O Lord, are mine. I don't suppose he would have confessed himself a burdened soul had he not seen that Jesus specialised in burdened souls. There was good things for burdened souls.

He said, that's the case when I'm one. And nothing provokes penitence and honesty about our present state as seeing Jesus, seeing Calvary, seeing grace. I beseech you, be reconciled to God.

He's not against you. He couldn't be. Look what he's done.

And so it is the cross gives the lie to the sinner's fears and the guilty saint's fears of God. And he finds there's no need to hide. And he can give himself up as he sees Jesus gave himself up and come openly as he is and be willing to be known for what he is.

You get the same thought in that passage that was read to us yesterday, Isaiah 55, yesterday morning and verses 7 and 8. Let the wicked forsake his way and the unrighteous man his thoughts and let him return unto the Lord and he will have mercy upon him and to our God and he will abundantly pardon. Man, if you and I are only plain honest about ourselves and are prepared to acknowledge what it is we've been hiding, nothing's going to happen to you except you're going to be forgiven, except you're going to have the burden lifted and be enveloped in love. I like that.

Return to the Lord for he will abundantly pardon. Is there a difference between being pardoned and being abundantly pardoned? I like to think there is. Being pardoned is having it told to us that the old account was settled long ago.

That God is prepared to forego his claim upon us because it's already been settled. That's being pardoned, hallelujah, no longer in debt. Is there something further than that, being abundantly pardoned? Well, I like to think there is.

It's God who pardons the sin undoing the mess that the sin has created. And it does create mess. The situations it creates.

It only produces more problems and greater miseries for you. But when you come clean and come to Jesus, you're not only forgiven the thing you confess, but Jesus loves to undo the mess that is created. Something beautiful, something good.

All my confusion he understood. All I had to offer him was emptiness and strife, but he made something beautiful of my life. You know, you can afford, I can afford, to come out from hiding.

I know, I have my battles. Don't always want to tell Pam I'm not in good shape spiritually. Don't always want to share with my brothers on the team that I'm not on top these days.

But I'm only being honest toward love. And you know, I find that love reflected by my brothers too. And I find that which I'm feeling so guilty about and hiding, who is creating such problems for me, is not only itself gloriously, eternally forgiven, the old account is settled, but he undoes all the mischief, all the problem in my heart.

And the sun shines again. Sometimes his recreating of a situation which sin has messed up can be very quick. Sometimes it's progressive.

But even if it takes a little time for God to undo that situation, the man in the middle of it is at perfect peace because he's been reconciled to God by the death of Jesus Christ. He's got peace with God. Dear old Jonah in the belly of the whale wasn't in a very happy condition.

At least it wasn't a very comfortable condition. But there's this one thing you'll remember. When he was in the belly of the ship and hadn't repented, he couldn't pray.

The mariners prayed to their gods. This prophet couldn't pray to his, but he repented. He told him, it was me, I'm the fellow.

And the only thing you can do is drown me. And he was willing for that. Yes, Jonah repented in style.

He found himself, however, in the belly of that great fish. I don't know the situation was any better except for this. Jonah in the belly of the great fish is praying and praising in chapter 2 when he couldn't do it in chapter 1. And though as yet, he's not yet out of that belly, he himself is at peace.

And when God takes a progressive time to un-mess the mess, the man who caused it is at peace with God as it's possible to be. For when I call sin, sin, the blood of Jesus puts me utterly right with God. And then God gets to work on all the consequences and the relationships that need to be healed in his own way, in his own time.

Meantime, you're at peace. This is the God that we've been hiding from behind various trees of the garden. And this was very much my experience when I first began the Christian life.

Strange to say, I found Jesus Christ for the first time here in South Wales, long before this conference was thought of. To this day, there's still a CSSM conducted in South Wales. In those days, it was one of the larger ones in the whole country.

And Dr. Joe Church was in charge of a boys' house party, a little wing of the CSSM, 17 of us, 19 of us, all just left school, big husky chaps. All of us got saved at that time. But I didn't go saved.

I was very reluctant to come to South Wales. I knew what these sort of Christian holidays were. And I was hiding behind the trees because I felt God must be against me.

I felt that there was no... And it began by coming to the Lord. He'd only make a mess of things, make me unhappy. And as I spent that time, I looked at the young men running that boys' house party, had to confess it didn't look as if Jesus had made things unhappy for them.

There was a light in their eyes, a spring in their step that I knew nothing of. I felt, by comparison, morally shabby. And then I remember, in a garden, I think Joe and I had tried to find out where that house was and where that garden was.

There was a boys' meeting. And Howard Guinness, a student at St. Bart's, at Bart's Hospital at the time, came down to speak to that boys' meeting. And I can see myself in that garden squinting against the sun, listening.

And there he spoke on the verse, Oh, we like sheep have gone astray. We've turned everyone to his own way and the Lord has laid on him, the innocent one, the iniquity of us all. And for the first time I understood what the cross was all about.

I said, that doesn't look like the work of one who's furious with me, who's against me, who's going to spoil my life if I let him have his way. And two days later, I came out from behind the trees and I gave myself up. I owned what I was.

And Jesus came in and took over my life. It was down there on the seafront in 1926 that this happened. I've been behind the trees on other issues since.

And the only thing that draws me out is a new sight of the love of God in Jesus. The fact that I'm still loved. He's not against me.

He took my place. He's taken the blame out of sin and there needn't be any for me. And as I see that again, I give myself up again.

I come out from hiding. And so it is this simple step of honesty that makes you a candidate for the grace of God. You become a candidate as you never were before.

When you're quite a good person, you're no candidate for grace. Grace is for the bad, not for the good. But you're not bad! You're pretending you are.

But when we come out, then we become candidates for the grace of God that flows from Calvary's cross. As I say, it's a new sight of God's love for the sinner, of the great welcome he's going to receive that provokes him to repent. I'm thinking, however, of a case of my own experience when I can't understand how I managed to do it.

I wasn't a Christian years before. But I remember when I took a step of honesty, how it was received, even on the human level, a picture of how it is on the spiritual as well. At the school where I was, boarding school, I was in the sixth form, and we had a very fearsome sixth form master.

If you didn't behave yourself, you had a book thrown at you. And he was quite free with the stick, too. He really drilled those sixth form boys.

And he, though his name was English, he taught us French. And on one occasion, we used to have, regularly, French dictation. And he would read the French, and we were to take it down and get it right.

And then, on one occasion, he said, now, I won't collect your papers, I want you to correct them themselves. Here's the original, and then you can correct them, and then you can give me the marks. You would judge yourself.

Well, I, there were quite a few mistakes in mine, but I was correcting them. And I must confess, I went a bit easy on myself. And I gave in my marks.

And I thought, well, I suppose everybody else is doing it. So I did it. But as it so happened, everybody else didn't do it.

There was only one boy who'd done it. And the next morning, that man with a face like thunder said, there's a boy here who's been cheating in his French dictation. And I want that boy to come to me and tell me so, and confess it's him.

Then he moved on to something else. I did feel a little uneasy, but I said, I'm sure I wasn't the only one. And the next day he said the same thing.

And the third day he said the same thing, I'm still waiting for that boy to come. And I felt more and more miserable. I was no Christian.

I was just an ordinary boy with an ordinary boy's conscience. I felt I couldn't sleep very well at night. Because I knew the next morning he was going to say the same thing.

And as I say, he was a man known for being a pretty fierce sort of teacher. And somehow or other, I couldn't bear it any longer. And I dragged myself up the stone corridor, up the stairs to a certain door, and I knocked.

And he said, come in. And I said, sir, was it me? And he said, it's for you to tell me that. Well, sir, I said, it was.

Right, he said, I'm so glad you said it. I can report this to your housemaster for him to do what he thinks right. And in due course, I was called for an interview with my housemaster.

And he said, I've heard what's happened. We had thought we would ask you not to come back again next term, which was one step removed from being expelled. We had thought of asking you in the sixth form, in some position of seniority, you've done this, not to come back again next term.

But he said, I'm going to make you a prefect. I never expected that treatment. And I want to tell you, I worked for that master as I'd never worked before.

I was doing what we used to call in those days Higher Certificate, that's what the A-level would be called today. And the particular course we were on was a two-year course. I passed it in two terms.

But somehow I had a new motivation. And I knew something of that master. He'd made that recommendation to my housemaster.

And I did that, not knowing it beforehand. I don't know how in the world. How much more, does the Lord let him return to the Lord and I will have mercy upon him.

And to your God, for he will abundantly pardon. And I believe this might be the very first step we might need to take at this time. Men, women, young people, behind the tree.

There's no need to hide. There's no need to feed us against you. He's not.

Calvary makes that clear. And you're going to receive the same gracious treatment that I received at the hands of an earthly schoolmaster. Let us pray.

Lord, we thank thee for this story of the man behind the tree. We're so sorry. He didn't voluntarily come out until he had no other option.

And when he did come out, he blamed Eve. And she blamed the serpent. And none would take the blame.

Therefore, at that time, none truly qualified for that grace which was really waiting for them. We don't know what might have happened had they made that confession. We don't know what would have happened, what grace would have done for them.

Maybe they would never have been driven out from that garden. We don't think, can't think quite what the human race would be like now if our first parents had repented voluntarily. But they didn't.

And Lord, we don't always. In spite of all we know about that wondrous cross in which thy love for the sinner has been declared, we still feel guilty. We still won't confess.

We still won't be honest and call it sin and call ourselves sinner. Lord, Amen. Just that chorus he laid aside his reputation.

Thank you very much.

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/18/SID18748.mp3>

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/roy-hession/trees-in-the-christian-experience-1-the-man-behind-the-tree/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net