

# Nakedness & the Holiness of God

by Tim Keller

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*The sermon explains that our problem of nakedness is a result of sin, and that God's solution is to help us see the truth and admit our flaws, so we can be known and loved for who we are.*

**Duration:** 46:56

**Scripture:** Genesis 3:7-13, Genesis 3:24, Matthew 6:33

**Topics:** "Holiness Of God"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker addresses the need for control and the fear of being seen as unworthy. He highlights the drive to work hard and the inability to disappoint others. The sermon references Genesis 3, which explains the state of the world as a paradise that has been ruined by human actions. The speaker emphasizes that despite the wreckage, God comes into the situation and offers hope for redemption.

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## Transcript

Genesis chapter 3, I'm going to read from verses 7 to the end, 7 to 24, and then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they realized they were naked, so they sewed fig leaves together, and they made coverings for themselves. 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. But the Lord God called out to the man, where are you? He answered, I heard you in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked, so I hid.

And he said, who told you you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree I have commanded you not to eat from? The man said, the woman you put here with me, she gave me some of the fruit of the tree, and I ate it. And 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. So the Lord God said to the serpent, because you have done this, cursed are you above all the livestock and all the wild animals.

You will crawl on your belly, and you eat dust all the days of your life, and I will put enmity between you and the woman, between your offspring and hers. He will crush your head, you will strike his heel. To the woman he said, I will greatly increase your pains and childbearing.

With pain you will give birth to children. Your desire will be for your husband, and he will rule over you. To Adam he said, because you listened to your wife and ate from the tree about which I commanded you, you must not eat of it.

Cursed is the ground because of you. Through painful toil you will eat of it all the days of your life. It will produce thorns and thistles for you, and you will eat the plants of the field.

By the sweat of your brow you will eat your food, until you return to the ground, since from it you were taken. For dust you are, and to dust you will return. Adam named his wife Eve, because she would become the mother of all the living.

The Lord God made garments of skin for Adam and his wife, and clothed them. And the Lord God said, the man has now become like one of us, knowing good and evil. He must not be allowed to reach out his hand and take also from the tree of life, and eat and live forever.

So the Lord God banished him from the Garden of Eden, to work the ground from which he had been taken. After he drove the man out, he placed on the east side of the Garden of Eden, cherubim and a flaming sword, flashing back and forth to guard the way to the tree of life. This is God's Word.

You know, Genesis 3, which we're looking at all month, explains the world. Some people say that the truth that it's getting across is just being given to us pictorially. Others say it's also being given historically, and that's my view.

But whatever it is, here it is. Whatever you think, this is the message. And the message is this.

The world was a paradise. No sickness or death, no sadness or distress, no violence or conflict. And we have made a wreck of our lives, and we've made a wreck of the world that we were given.

And I think it's hard to find anybody who wants to argue that basic truth on any terms at all. But Genesis 3 tells us that God comes into the wreckage. God comes to the bombsite, you see.

He comes on in, and instead of saying, is this what you've done with what I've given you? Instead of recriminations, instead of destruction, instead we have God coming in, searching for us. He comes into the wreckage. He comes into the site of the bomb blast, and he's searching for us.

He says, where are you? And God asks humanity three questions. They're right here in the text. We read them.

And what's wonderful about the three questions is that God's reason for asking them could not be to gather information. God couldn't be asking for information. The things he is asking, he already knows the answer to.

So why would God be doing this? And the only way to answer that question is this. God is the wonderful counselor. God is coming and asking us questions, the answers to which he already knows, because he knows that it will redeem us.

It will change us if we realize the answers. If we discover the truth. If we admit what's going on.

Here is a fascinating definition of what it means to be healed. What it means to be whole. What it means to be redeemed.

What it means to be saved. Here it is. To tell back to God from your heart what God already knows.

To tell back to God the truth. God is asking humanity three questions. Where are you? Who told you you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree I told you not to eat from? And this week and next week we're going to look at those three questions.

Next week I want to look at question one and three and the overall pattern, because here we have the counseling methods of God. But today I want to look at just one question, the middle question, because if you understand that question, if you understand the answer to it and the meaning of it, I submit you will understand the message of the whole Bible. You will understand the psychological and social history of the world.

And you might actually even find the missing piece of the puzzle that is you. Who told you you were naked? This text tells us, first of all, the problem of nakedness, the human solutions to nakedness, and the divine God's solution. The problem of nakedness, our solutions, and God's solutions.

Let's look at what this text tells us. First of all, the problem of nakedness. The reason that God asks the question is because Adam has already made an excuse.

God walks in for his normal chat and walk with Adam, that he does every night in the cool of the day. Adam hides and God says, where are you? Adam says, well I'm behind a tree, I'm cowering back down here behind the tree. And of course Adam has to explain why he's running away from God.

You have to explain why you're running away from God. I do too. We'll actually look at that a little more next week.

But the point is, Adam says there's a reason for why he's trying to avoid God is, I'm naked. Now why does that, why does God ask who told you you were naked? And I'll tell you the answer is, the reason God's after this is, the point is, Adam you've always been naked. You know, what kind of answer is this? God comes by and says, let's take a walk.

Adam says, I can't, I'm naked. At the end of chapter 2, we're told that the man and the woman were naked and not ashamed. So God looks at Adam and says, Adam, you're not actually giving me a good answer here.

There must be more to it than that. You've always been without clothes. And so he says, who told you you were naked, Adam? What has changed? Who's messed with you? Something has happened.

And see what's happened is, not that Adam no longer has clothes, he never had clothes. When it says in verse 7, their eyes were opened, it can't mean that they physically were blind and they looked down and said, oh my gosh, I've got no clothes on. What it means is there was a new consciousness of his nakedness.

There was a new awareness. And God is saying, where did that new consciousness come from? What has changed? Why is nakedness now something that you can't stand? Because nakedness originally simply meant to be known. What it means to be naked, it's to be known.

Before Adam and Eve decided to be their own masters, they had no problem with radical vulnerability. And now, suddenly, being vulnerable, being seen by somebody, being observed, being visible, being open and uncovered is traumatic. Suddenly, the minute that Adam and Eve disobey God, they have to completely control information about themselves.

They have to completely control what's seen. They can't take it. You see, in the Bible, nakedness originally means to be so known that you're vulnerable.

It's somebody, and it's more than just the clothes bit, far more. If you're walking along with somebody and you suddenly hear a shot, and somebody says, get cover! You do. Why? Because you're being seen by someone who you can't see.

You need cover because you're vulnerable. Nakedness is vulnerability. Not just the vulnerability that comes when you have no clothes on, but any kind of vulnerability.

Nakedness is vulnerability. And the reason you die for cover is because you're being seen by somebody that you can't see. That's nakedness.

If we're all in bathing suits on the beach, you don't feel naked. But if you show up to a dinner party, and everybody else is in formal attire, and you're in your bathing suit, why do you feel naked? Well, it's the same suit. Because what nakedness is, is to be seen by someone you can't see.

To be vulnerable to somebody. It's to be open. To be unable to control the information a person is getting about you.

Now you see, originally there was no problem with nakedness. They were naked and unashamed. Have you ever opened to somebody and told them something where you showed your weakness? And they looked at you and they said, oh I really admire you.

I admire you more for having told me that. That kind of experience is to die for. Because you see, we were built to be known.

We want to be known. We want someone to look in and say, I love what I see. We die for it because that's what we were meant for.

To be naked and unashamed, which means to be known and loved. Most of us feel like the best we can do is just be loved. In fact, the essence of the human condition now, Genesis 3 tells us, is that we feel like we can only be loved if we're not known.

What happened is that now, because of sin, as soon as we disobeyed God, the vulnerability became a painful thing, which means that nakedness is actually a sense of being unacceptable. Have you ever been talking to somebody? Maybe you wrote it in a letter. Maybe you were speaking on the phone and you were saying something very nasty.

And suddenly you realize somebody's heard you. You've been overheard. You feel naked.

Why? You suddenly, your unacceptability, your flawedness, your smallness has been shown to someone you didn't want to see. You lost control of the information about your flaws. You feel naked.

Nakedness in the Bible is being vulnerable, being unable to control people's knowledge about your flaws and your weaknesses and about your unacceptability. One of the most spine-chilling of all examples in all of literature, I think, of a sense of nakedness that we dread so much is in the play *Death of a Salesman*, where the young Biff, who worships his father Willie Loman, in fact he's the only one in the world that respects his father Willie Loman, comes to Boston trying to find his father to help him fix a grade. You remember this? And he catches Willie in a room with another woman and Biff suddenly realizes his father

routinely, as a traveling salesman, cheats on his mother.

And as Willie is there making excuses and trying to throw things up, suddenly Willie experiences Biff's eyes. His eyes go right down into Willie's heart. Through all the pretensions, through all the facades, through all of the swagger, through all of the bragging, through all the smokescreens, and he sees Willie for what he is.

He sees he's a principle-less, small-minded little man. And Biff looks at him in a sense and says, I don't want your help. Ever.

And we have a nightmare about that because that's exactly the reason that all of us are afraid of being exposed. We were originally built to be known and loved and now we believe that we can never be both together. Oh, we want to be both, but we feel like the best we can do is be loved.

Because if someone really exposes us, if someone really looks to the bottom and sees that we do not live by principle. We do not live even up to our own standards. We don't want people to see how anxious we are, how upset we are, how depressed we get, how unhappy we are, how disappointed we are, how weak we are.

And as a result, Genesis 3 explains a fact that I don't know if anybody else has been able to explain. Why is it that we so desperately need to control what other people see of us, in fact, why we so desperately need to even control what we see of ourselves. We are even hiding from ourselves.

Genesis 3 tells us the reason why we feel nakedness. Why we have to control what people see. You know what the answer is? Because everybody is this room, every one of us knows that there really are two eyes out there somewhere.

They are pure. They are true. They are totally honest.

They are completely unbiased. They are incorrigibly just. And not one of us will be able to stand before them.

You know, if there aren't two eyes like that out there, there's no hope for the world. Evil will triumph. If there's not an unseen seer, if there's not a judge of all the earth, if there aren't two eyes that are completely pure, completely honest, completely truthful, totally unbiased, incorrigibly just out there, what hope is there for the world? But if there are two eyes like that, what hope is there for us? We can't stand before them.

And we're desperately afraid of those eyes. It says in the book of Hebrews, nothing in all creation is hid from God, for all things are uncovered and laid bare before the eyes of Him with whom we have to do. Don't you know what happened to Adam and Eve? Adam and Eve didn't lose their physical clothes.

They never had their physical clothes. They lost something though. They lost their righteousness.

They lost their acceptability. They lost their greatness. They lost their glory.

They lost their purity. And that was the thing that enabled them to stand before any eyes without any kind of fear. That's why they weren't defensive.

That's why they were vulnerable. That's why they could be known. But now they know that they've lost something.

There's been a sense of loss. They've lost their real clothing, their purity, their acceptability. They feel inadequate.

They feel small. And they can't stand to be known. Don't you see this in your own life? Don't you see this? Don't you have that same sense of loss? That sense of inadequate, the sense of unacceptability? Yes, the scientists tell you you're just a bag of chemicals.

When you die, you become fertilizer and you know they're wrong. So I know I'm not just fertilizer. I know I'm not just an unusually complicated and complex and sophisticated bag of fertilizer.

I know I'm more than that. There's a greatness about me. You know, you don't want to say it out loud, but that's why everything in life disappoints me.

There's a sense of loss. Genesis 3 explains it. Why is it that you feel the way you do? It's a memory trace of glory lost.

It's a memory trace of greatness lost. It's a memory trace of paradise lost. Now, that's the first thing the Bible shows us.

There's a problem with what we've got. It's the sense of being unacceptable. The sense that we've lost something.

The sense that we've got to control what people see or they'll never love us. There's a sense of being naked but being very ashamed and it comes from what the Bible tells us. That desire we had, that decision we made to be our own masters.

Now, the second thing the Bible tells us in this text is not only that we have a problem of nakedness, but that human beings are unbelievably creative and infinitely creative in their devising of coverings for our nakedness. If you want to understand human behavior, if you want to understand psychological and social history, if you want to understand yourself, you've got to realize that at the root of almost all of the things that you do is the desire to cover your nakedness. To cover the sense that you've got that you're unacceptable.

To cover the flaws that you don't want other people to see. That you think is the only way, the only way you'll ever be loved. If I cover.

If I hide. You can see it right here in the text. Adam and Eve, within the space of a couple of verses, within the space of a couple of minutes, do at least three kinds of cover-ups.

The first thing is they hide from each other. They sew a garment of fig leaves over themselves so that they can hide from each other's eyes. The second thing they do is they get behind the trees so they can hide from God's eyes.

The third thing is they make a list of excuses. God comes and says, what happened? She made me do it. It made me do it.

And so they're already not only covering up from each other's eyes and from God's eyes, they're even covering up from their own eyes. The Bible tells us that you have such a desperate need to control what people think because you're sure that you can't be naked and unashamed. You're sure that you can't be known and loved.

The best you can ever hope for is just to be loved. You can see it in the most mundane almost ludicrous daily behavior. You can also see it in the most profound drives and motives of your life.

For example, look at look what happens when somebody you really want to be interested in you asks you out. Look what happens to you. Almost all of your preparations and almost all the things that you do are basically forms of cover-up.

For example, let's just say this person's going to come to your apartment to pick you up. Well, let's just say, you know, your apartment is an absolute mess. You have, there is no way you want this person to realize how undisciplined you are.

So what do you do? You cover it up. You say, well, I'll meet you somewhere else. Or you do the first deep cleaning of your apartment in seven years.

What is that? I wouldn't want that person to see how I really live. You make sure that you dress in such a way that you minimize a lot of your physical tendencies. You want to be thinner looking or fuller looking or taller looking or shorter looking than you really are.

And you make sure that you take the conversation only into those areas where you know something. You wouldn't want the person, you know, to realize really how poorly read you are. And so what you do is you move into areas where you look like you'll be competent.

What is all that? You know the reason you do all that? That person, you know why? Because that person is just like you. You know they are. They want to see but not be seen.

They want to judge but they don't want to be judged. Or, put it another way, not only do you see the need to cover, the need to control information about yourself in even the mundane aspects of life, but you also, if you look at your main life motives, if you look at the things that drive you, if you look at the things that you most want in life, you'll see the same thing. Why is it that some of you, some of us, work so hard? Why is it that we don't feel that we're worthwhile? We don't feel like we can even look ourselves in the face unless we've worked ourselves almost to exhaustion.

We say, well I'll work real hard till I get to this level. We get to that level, we keep it up. Why is it that some of you have got to help the world? Any poor, you know, anybody who's in trouble, you're to the rescue.

Why is it that you can't possibly disappoint people? You can never turn anybody down. You're always helping and you're always serving and you're always doing for people until you are also to a point of nervous exhaustion. And you've got to have that.

Why is it that some of you are extremely private people? Nobody sees you sweat. Never let them see you sweat. What do you think that tough exterior is? Why is it, let me keep going here, why is it that some of you, basically, the thing that dominates your life is your anger that certain groups or certain individuals have ruined your life.

Some people who are political activists are that way. Because these people have ruined my life. These are the reasons that I am in the situation I am.

My mother did it. My father did it. These people have ruined my life.

Why are you so bitter? What do you think that anger is doing? Why is it that some of us absolutely have to be attractive to the other sex if you're nobody till somebody loves you? And we really believe that and we really feel it. Why are some of us such perfectionists? I'll tell you what the reasons for all of it. You know what the work is? You know what the anger is? Hmm? You know what the makeup is? Do you know what all the helping is? They're fig leaves.

You know that you've got flaws. You know you have the sense of inadequacy. The sense of being unacceptable and you can't deal with it and you're covering it up frantically.

If I work enough, if I help enough, if I'm angry enough at this person, then I won't feel it's my fault. The anger, the makeup, the hard work, the privacy, the tough exterior, it's all fig leaves. I've had to hide over and cover myself.

This sense of impurity, this sense that there's something wrong with me, this sense that I'm inadequate. And you know what? It just doesn't work. John Paul Sartre in his book Being and Nothingness has an entire chapter called The Look.

It's a fascinating, fascinating chapter because in that chapter you've got a man looking at somebody else through a keyhole and boy it's fun because you know you look he's looking through the keyhole and he's seeing things and nobody sees him and of course that's wonderful to be seeing and not seen which of course the only unseen seer is God and we desperately want to be God and that's why we want that more than anything. So there he is and it's great to be looking through a keyhole till Sartre, this is the way the chapter goes, he realizes somebody's looking through a keyhole at him looking through a keyhole and suddenly he stands up and he realizes I can't do that anymore if somebody's looking at me and he's outraged because he can't be free because you see if someone sees you who doesn't see someone sees you who you can't see you're vulnerable. You're being dehumanized.

You're the object of someone's gaze. I can't stand it. If you want to understand religion and the way most people have attitudes to a religion you won't be able to understand it unless you understand the problem of nakedness.

On the one hand many many many many people who are very religious you can explain why they're so unpleasant if you understand the problem of nakedness. Why are so many religious people so unpleasant? Why are they so defensive? Why are they so condescending and smug? Why are they so hostile? Why do they feel the need to get the enemy? Why do they feel the need? If you question their beliefs, you question their conduct, why do they scratch your eyes out? Why are they so unpleasant? Because they're using religion as a fig leaf. They're using religion as a desperate way of convincing themselves I'm alright.

I'm covering this up with religion and that's the reason why they're so defensive. That's the reason why they're so touching. But on the other hand not only can you use strong religiosity as much as you can use work and enabling behavior and makeup and toughness and all these other things.

Not only can you use religion as a bunch of fig leaves to patch up a righteousness of your own to patch over your sense of inadequacy. On the other hand you can do the same thing with irreligion. Irreligion.

A minister friend once told me the story that he was speaking to a group of students at a college campus. And at the college campus after he was done speaking, a young college woman stayed behind and came up and said, I think your views are narrow-minded. I don't know how anybody can believe that anymore.

I just don't believe that anymore. So the minister asked a few questions and found out this woman was raised in a traditional Christian home. In fact that she, this is only her first year.

This is her freshman year. Not only that, that she had brought a Bible to school and actually she had only given up her faith this year. And he said, well when did you stop believing? She says, around Thanksgiving.

It just didn't make sense to me anymore. And he asked, is there anything that's happened to you in that time? I mean did you go through any changes? Was there any kind of major change in your life that happened at that time? And very hesitantly it came out that she had moved in with a guy and had gone against all the Christian ethical teaching that she'd been taught. And suddenly the minister realized why it didn't make sense suddenly to her.

She couldn't stand the gaze of God. And her irreligion and all of her intellectual arguments and all the reasons why, well what about all the heathens never heard about Christ? And how in the world can you believe in the Bible because it's so full of contradictions? And all of those intellectual irreverent questions. All the skepticism.

Her irreligion was just as much a bunch of fig leaves to patch over her sense of inadequacy, to patch over her desperate desire to get out from under the gaze of God as the people who are terribly religious. Or the people who are working too much. Or any of these folks.

Sartre says, because God can see me and I can't see him, I am dehumanized. And therefore, he says, if you want to be free, you've got to get rid of God. I can't believe, he says, in a God who sees me that I can't see.

That dehumanizes me and I won't be free. But don't you see? Where's the logic? You can't disbelieve in a God just because you don't like it. What makes me say because I don't like that kind of God, therefore he can't exist.

Because here's the point. Here's the point. No matter how hard you try to patch up a righteousness, no matter how hard you try to deny that there's those two eyes out there, no matter how hard you try to get out from under his gaze, you can't do it.

See, the serpent told Adam and Eve to do just what Sartre is telling us. What did the serpent say to Adam and Eve? He said, stand up for yourself. Create your own reality.

Decide what you want to do and do it. Don't be an actor in someone else's script. Write your own script.

Sing your own song. Be your own person. Don't be afraid of anything.

Live in authentic freedom. And so Adam and Eve got up there. I'm not afraid of anything.

And now they're terrified. Look, you can say, I don't believe in sin. You can say, I don't believe in hell.

I don't believe in a judge. I don't believe in that stuff anymore. All those ways to desperately patch up that sense of inadequacy and get away from those eyes.

But it won't work. You've got a sense of condemnation. You've got a sense of judgment.

There's a voice in all of us that are saying you're cowards. Those of us who are the most successful are the ones who have best kept from the outside world the sense that we hear that voice. But we all do.

We don't believe in God. We don't believe in judgment. I work very hard.

I've accomplished things. I'm a very religious person. And inside there's that voice that says you're a fool.

You're a coward. You're guilty. We blame it on complexes.

We blame it on stress. We blame it on our parents. We try to secularize it and we can't get rid of it.

It's there. Why? There's a sense of loss. You can't avoid it.

It's the unseen seer. And no matter how hard we work and know how much we help people and know how religious we get or how irreligious we get we can't stop it. We can't cover up.

Shakespeare has a perfect example of it. Shakespeare says there's no way to get rid of the condemnation the sense of it. It's that great place in Hamlet where he says I could end it all.

He says I could end it all. But then he goes on a little further and he says but the dread of something after death the undiscovered country from whose born no traveler returns puzzles the will and makes us rather bear the ills we have than fly to others that we know not of thus conscience doth make us cowards of us all. Thus conscience doth make cowards of us all.

He says I could kill myself but you see I sense that there's more to me than just fertilizing and I'm afraid that if I kill myself the unseen seer will be out there. No matter how much you try, no matter how much you try to move away from it, how hard you work, how much you try to be skeptical or disbelieve you can't cover yourself up. It won't work.

Midnight's coming Cinderella and we know it. And what's going to happen when the facade goes away? That sense of inadequacy, that sense of loss, that sense that we're not acceptable is something that drives us all and nobody's able to deal with it. Now lastly we've seen the problem we've seen all of our supposed solutions finally and lastly we have what God tells us here is his solution.

You can't cover yourself. Have you ever been in those situations where you opened up somebody had the chance to really nail you. Somebody had the chance because you did something and you show your skirt is showing and your flaws are showing and somebody sees and instead of coming in and just exposing you further rejecting you says it'll be okay I really really respect you we can work this out don't worry and they cover you up we desperately need somebody else to cover us we can't cover ourselves.

I've got one of the great ambivalences of my life is that virtually every night at one o'clock in the morning my nine-year-old comes into my room having gone to the bathroom and says daddy would you please put my covers back on and almost every other night I say couldn't you put your own covers back on and every

time he says but I like it when you do it daddy. Now we've got a God who says I and I alone can and will cover your inadequacy and your nakedness. We need somebody else to do it.

We can't do it ourselves. When we try to do it ourselves we find that we never really really have the security necessary to move out into the world. We're still defensive we're still grumpy we're still irritable we need somebody else because daddy I like it when you do it.

God says I am the God who covers your sins. In the book of Ezekiel for example chapter 16 it goes all through you by the way do you remember remember in Hosea the book of Hosea we looked at it back in the fall Hosea finds his wife who has been sold into slavery and she's up on the on the slave block and she's naked and he buys her back at great cost in spite of what she's done to him and he covers her up and gives her dignity back and then the Bible says the Lord says that is how I will treat you and in the book of Ezekiel chapter 16 there's a place where it says God says let me tell you what I'm like and let me tell you what you're like. You're like a little girl baby thrown out into the field naked and still kicking in your own blood.

We have got a letter that archaeologists have found for us. It's a letter by a Roman businessman living around the time of Christ who was out on business he was in Alexandria and he was writing home to his pregnant wife and it's a spine-chilling letter because in it he says I hope the pregnancy is going okay and you'll probably have a child before I get home and I hope everything is well with you and don't forget if it's a girl throw it out which was typical until Christianity humanized Western civilization there was just no reason you know not to throw out girl babies. What can they do for you? There's big parts of the world where that still happens.

Therefore God in Ezekiel 16 says you know what you're like and you know what I'm like and in Ezekiel 16 we read these wonderful words he says on the day you were born your cord was not cut nor were you washed with water to make you clean nor were you wrapped in cloths you were thrown out into the field from the day that you were born you were despised and as I saw you laying and kicking in your blood I said to you live and I spread the corner of my garment over you and I covered up your nakedness I entered into a covenant with you declared the sovereign Lord and you became mine and your fame spread among the nations because of the splendor I gave you to make your beauty perfect that is the kind of God that I am. In Isaiah 61 the prophet says I will rejoice greatly for he has clothed me in the garments of salvation and he's wrapped me in a robe of righteousness. Now how does God do that? What a wonderful idea if you come to him see the serpent says don't let God get his clutches on you if you are naked to him he will expose you he will use you he doesn't have your best interests in mind you can't trust him and here's God saying to Adam and Eve get out from behind that tree the only way you'll get over your fear the only way you will get over the trauma that's happened to your soul the only way that you will be happy again is if you are naked and unashamed come out from behind that tree open yourself to me admit what you've done come to me and I will clothe you I will cover your sin you will be naked and not ashamed.

You know how it's done? Paul tells us in Romans chapter 4 verse 7 he's talking about what it means to receive Christ as Savior he's talking about what it means to have Christ as your Savior and then he says blessed is the one whose sins are covered blessed is the one whom God imputes no sin.

Now there we have it first of all it tells us that when you come to God through Christ he covers your sin which means the only eyes that matter God's eyes don't see the sin this person may say this about you

and that person may say that about you it doesn't matter because God has covered your sin God says I don't see it I don't want any longer regard it well somebody says that's bad isn't it cover-ups are bad Watergate was a cover-up that was a bad thing but look in the same sentence Paul explains how God covers it up blessed is the one whose sin is covered blessed is the one to whom God does not impute sin you know what the word impute means it means it's a it's an accounting word some of you out there will really get into this it means to charge somebody I eat a great meal and I'm ready

to pay for it my friend says no no he says to the waiter charge it to me which is the same thing impute it to me the way God covers your sin is not by just sweeping under the rug he charges Jesus and you know how that happens the last verse of this chapter says that God threw Adam and Eve out of the garden so they couldn't reach out and get the tree of eternal life and there is an angel he says it says they're put before that tree with a sword that goes right and left back and forth the only way back to that tree through the sword and anyone who will lead you back to the tree of life and give you eternal life is going to have to go into the sword why because the penalty for disobedience is to be cut off and the Bible tells us about the Messiah about Jesus Christ he was cut off from the

land of the living he went under the sword all of your sins were charged to him so now they're covered in God's sight now here's how you can tell whether you're Christian look at yourselves today if I say to you do you see that today you can be a Christian entirely because of what Jesus Christ did on the cross for you do you see that you can be completely accepted completely loved totally do you see that and if somebody says well I'm a Christian but I I think I'm a Christian I'm trying to be I hope to I really have to get some things out of my life before I can really say I'm a Christian you don't get it those are fig leaves do you want to be about one of those absolutely overbearing pretentious smug condescending nervous religious people you know why they're that way because they're

saying well maybe maybe if I'm good enough and if I get it together enough then maybe I know I can be a Christian don't you see those are fig leaves those are patching up your own righteousness even if you get yourself in a position where you think now I know I'm a Christian because of the way in which I'm living it'll just make you a Pharisee the difference between a hypocrite a moralist and a Christian Pharisees repented for their sins so do Christians but the Christians also repent of their righteousness they say only God can cover me daddy only when you do it and friends if you're willing to do that what a difference it's going to make I knew a woman when I was down in Virginia in another church who even though she'd become a Christian she was a very very beautiful woman and like many

many people who are physically beautiful from the time she was very little she was taught her beauty was her calling card and therefore you've you've got to always have some man in love with you and she found that as she got older she was completely controlled by men if a man looked at her and looked like he was interested in her there was a voice in that said you better go with him honey because if you don't have a man who loves you you're nothing that was her righteousness it was her fig leaves it was her way of covering up her nakedness well after she became a Christian it was she was still driven by these things and she went to a counselor who said well now you see this is modern times a woman should not take her identity from a man no you should go get a career for yourself and I

talked to her that day I remember that day I talked to her and I said listen my dear sister I am a man I want you to know it doesn't help any instead of having men drive your life you're gonna have your career drive your life it's just as tiring and we talked about the gospel about two months later I met up with her and I said she looked different she says my life has changed because I found Colossians 3 verse 1 2 & 3 I said

what is that and she read it to me she says set your mind on things which are above where Christ is seated at the right hand of God the Father for your life is hid with God in Christ and when Christ who is your life returns then you will appear with him in glory and she says whenever I see a man who's interested in me and that little voice says boy you better deal

with that guy because you're nobody less somebody loves you I look at him and I say you're not my life Christ is my life you're not my covering Christ is my covering under her breath of course and she was free and I hope that some of you will see that the reason you're unhappy today whether you're a Christian or not whether you know you're a Christian whether you know you're not a Christian whether you're not sure what the heck you are your problems come because you're not letting God cover you daddy you're the only one that can do it he is the only one that can do it I tell you this if you get to the last day if you get to judgment day and you don't have Christ covering you all the other coverings will fall into pieces it'll be midnight Cinderella what are you gonna do the most terrible

verse in the Bible might be Luke chapter 23 Jesus is the one who says that he says listen he says on that day they will say to the mountains fall on us and to the hills cover us and hide us from the face of him who sits upon the throne every one of us wants to be known we want to be known and loved we want to be naked and not ashamed but because of our sin we're sure that the only way we can possibly be loved is if we cover up and let not anyone see what's wrong with us we don't want to repent we don't want to admit anything and if you get to the last day like that all the things that you've hidden behind are gonna fall down and you'll still need a covering and you'll ask the mountains to do it and you'll ask the hills to do it you'll say to the mountains fall on us into the hills cover

us and hide us from the face of the only one that can save us but if you come to God in Christ then you have the benediction what's the benediction the Lord bless you and keep you the Lord make his face to shine upon you and be gracious to you the Lord lift up the light of his countenance upon you and give you peace come out from behind that tree drop your pitiful fig leaves he will not hurt you if you finally admit who you are if you if you're naked before him if you say nothing in my hands I bring even to that cross I cling if you say all the things that I've done I've trusted in only Jesus Christ can save me I tell you if you say that it's the most frightening thing for human being to do because you drop it all you're naked before him and he will clothe you he will wrap you in a robe

of righteousness his righteousness come out from behind that tree let's pray father would you give us all here in this room the ability to finally admit and see that we are naked and we're ashamed of it help us to see what happened to us help us to answer this question who told you were naked where did this shame come from help us to admit where it comes from we blame it on people we blame it on our complexes we blame it on our life but father didn't have any parents and they had it didn't have a bad life and they got it you show us here in the word of God that our shame and all of our need to hide comes because we are afraid of being naked before you father I pray for the Christians in this room I pray for those of us who are supposed to be letting you cover us one of the reasons why

we're so touchy and irritable anyways because we tend to go back to those old coverings in the old righteousness is which will never help us I pray father for all of us that we'll see that only as we rely on Jesus as our righteousness will we become undefensive and great of heart and and will become loving and will become the kind of people that can provide cover for others

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/22/SID22516.mp3>

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