**Honest to God:** Becoming Brutally Honest with a Gracious God

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 08.9-10.14 | Woodmen | Various psgs and Ps. 139 | When you are honest with God it is impossible to stay the same. | 35 Min |

**Prayer and Introduction:**

Attn: **Hide, Seek and Scare**: We live in like God is not there/doesn’t care. Not true.

CS Lewis Quote: **“There comes a moment when the children who have been playing at burglars hush suddenly: was that a real footstep in the hall? There comes a moment when people who have been dabbling in religion (“Man’s search for God!”) suddenly draw back. Suppose that we really found Him? We never meant it to come to *that*! Worse still, supposing He found us?” – *Mircles***

Stuct: we are going to talk about what it means to be Honest with God for sake of TL.

(theme) **Are we Honest with God or do we hide in our lack of honesty?**

* **Honesty Defined:** Free of deceit and untruthfulness. Completely sincere. Simple, unpretentious and unsophisticated. You’ve met this prsn, are you this person?
* **What H is not:** shock, grab attn, expose something that shouldn’t for the sake of
* **What H is:** facing reality, 1st step towrd truth, exposing to God, messy, transforming
* **Honesty [w/ God] is not an end in itself, but a means to our transformation.**

**ROADBOCKS TO BEING HONEST WITH GOD:**

Modern Christianity is not the only generation to struggle with honesty before God…

1. **GUILT:** Shame and guilt build a fortress around our heart that keeps us from experience the love and forgiveness of God.

* **Ex. Adam and Eve –** hid from God in their guilt, we’ve been hiding ever since
  + **Genesis 3:8-10**, **“And they heard the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the *presence of the Lord* God among the trees of the garden. But the Lord God called to the man and said to him, “Where are you?” And he said, “I heard the sound of you in the garden, & I was afraid, b/c I was naked, and I hid myself.”**
* **Guilt is a feeling tied to the past f. Shame is a feeling tied to our present f.**

**Bernard Kenny** – (Video interview with Mom): Like dirty dishes, we stash our sin.

1. **DEPRESSION:** This is real and all encompassing. You can’t lift yourself up off of the ground and getting through a day feels like towing a semi-truck around your life.

* Never thought you’d be here. Broken expectations. Overwhelmed. Out of control.
* **Hannah** (infertility) **–** Hagar was provoking Hannah about her barrenness.
  + **1 Sam. 1:7-10, Therefore Hannah wept and would not eat. [8] And Elkanah, her husband, said to her, “Hannah, why do you weep? And why do you not eat? And why is your heart sad? Am I not more to you than ten sons?” … [10] She was deeply distressed and prayed to the LORD and wept bitterly.”** Some of you are so mad at God b/c he wont give you ur desires

1. **PRIDE:** There is only one God, and you are not it. We know that, but don’t act like it. We go on acting like we are a gift to the world.This is selfish and the root of all sin.

* **King Neb:** Thought he was untouchable by God, even though had been warned
  + Summary of story in Dan 1-4: Humbled by dreams, Fiery furnace, Like and ox
* This is a scary place to be w/ God: He will do whatever it takes OR turn you over
* **ILL: You see this person:** they are king of the world, other are merely a means to an end. They are selfish and narcissistic. The person looms within all of us.

1. **FEAR**: of being hurt, loosing, failing, of failure. This will drive us to do all sorts of selfish things and quickly loose sight of the only one we are to fear.
   * **Apostle Peter:** John 13 JC tells Peter he has to go, but Peter says, “…no, I will not let you… I would lay my life down for you…” but JC continued to tell how he will deny 3x. In John 18, he is accused of knowing JC doesn’t own it. *We’re like this!*
   * **Kid coloring the wall:** fear God or afraid of God. Often afraid of God, fear man
2. **ANGER**: Anger in itself is not necessarily wrong. It is an emotion God has given us, but as with anything He has given us, we must not elevate it higher than Christ.

* **Jonah:** Ran from God, became mad at God b/c God didn’t do it his way
  + **Jonah 4:1-4, “But it displeased Jonah exceedingly, and he was angry… now, O LORD, please take my life from me, for it is better for me to die than to live.” And the LORD said, “Do you do well to be angry?”**
* **Anger is the aircraft carrier on the sea of our emotions.** It stirs up other things

1. **DENIAL**: Comparing your sin to something far worse. Justification and deception.

* Types of images I (WE) portray: **To Others: Able, Stable, Knowledgeable, fashionable or personable. To God: Grateful, Sorrowful, Useful, Insightful.** This is a wearisome game we play in fear of being found out.
* **Christ didn’t come and die for our image.** So why are we trying so hard to save it? APP: Honesty with God means that you must love God more than self

(transition) **ACCEPTING vs. Acknowledging** Honest is not accepting where you are at and continuing to live that way, but it is acknowledging where you are at, who He is and allowing God to change you!

**THE PSALMISTS MODELED LAMENTING**

* **2/3rds of Psalms are laments**. Not to mention Lamentations, Job, Jeremiah, MP
* **They all start on the basis of trust in God,** even if they don’t voice it anymore than “oh Lord…” before asking for deliverance. There was an underlying trust.
* **The Psalmist model of Honesty:** (1) am honest with God; (2) I remember God’s faithfulness; (3) I praise God for being God. **Psalm 73 exemplifies this: exegete**

**Transformational HONESTY Trusts GOD’S OMNIPOTENCE**

God knows everything before we ask (Matt 6:8), His power exceeds our imagination (Eph 3:20), he knows about the hairs and the sparrows (Matt 10:29-31).

**BING HUNTER STORY**: **What can you tell a God who knows everything? *Nothing?* No! you can tell him anything b/c he knows everything.**

**THE GIFT OF HONESTY WITH GOD YEILDS:**

1. **FREEDOM:** Are stuck in guilt & shame? ask: **Who is bigger, you or God?** (reply). To correctly understand how to get past failure, you must see his BIGGER grace.

* **Gal. 5:1, “ For freedom Christ has set us free; stand firm therefore, and do not submit *again* to a yoke of slavery.”** – this is the law, which breeds guilt.
* **APP:** Take your life and all it’s holes, crevices and cracks and le him fill w/ grace.

1. **JOY: Elijah, Hannah and Paul all had joy through the restoring of their faith in God,** which came after their honesty with Him. **Joy is different than happiness.**

* **Phil 4:4, “Rejoice in the Lord always; again I say, rejoice.”**
* **APP: Depression is not your king**, dethrone him and put the true king in its place. There is sin in this is where you stay, but you need to work past it.
* **ILL: My story of depression in Chicago and at Creekside.** God’s help.

1. **HUMILITY:** quick to say sorry, own shortcomings, never stop learning, soft to HS

* **1 Peter 5:5, “God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.”**
* **King Neb: Dan. 4:37, “Now I, Nebuchadnezzar, praise and extol and honor the King of heaven, for all his works are right and his ways are just; and those who walk in pride he is able to humble.”**
* **APP:** The Bible never says, “Have humility” but it says, “Humble yourself” – We do this by knowing God more and keeping our need for him ever before us.

1. **COMFORT:** When you are in fear, you are never at rest. Be still and know God.

* **Job 42:4-5, “Hear, and I will speak; I will question you, and you make it known to me.’ I had heard of you by the hearing of the ear, but now my eye sees you”** and many times in the psalms, “**you are my refuge.”** Trust this!
* **APP:** Don’t run to people, drugs, vices, vacations or entertainment. Run to him.

1. **PEACE:** A life w/o peace and many enemies binds the stomach and stirs the soul

* **In war time in this country, we long for peace**, the same should be true in life
* **John 16:33, “I have said these things to you, that in me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world.”**
* **APP:** Keep short accounts: ask forgiveness from the Lord and then them.

1. **AUTHENTIC:** we wear this like a badge of honor, b/c it is rare. Those who own what they have done and share it is brokenness and not pride, will find authenticity

* **Prov. 12:22, “Lying lips are an abomination to the Lord, but those who act faithfully are his delight.”**
* **APP:** never want to be an “outrage/disgrace/scandal” to God.

Practical things you can do this week:

1. **Read Psalm 51, 5 times** this week
2. **Write your Honest to God thoughts** to God almighty and leave it at the cross
3. **I commit to spend time in silence and solitude this week for at least 15 minutes a day,** speaking honesty and listening for him to speak (like job)
4. **Seek help:** your Pastoral Care department is here to help you and will sit and lead you through biblical wisdom on how to find true and lasting Change with Honesty with God.

**CLOSING: Crown handler**

**- Can you imagine if we lived like this:** we would have these things in our life. These things come from a life lived close (and honest) with God being made holy by his presence in our lives. Be honest with God. Let’s pray.

* **Elijah** (enemy) **–** Jezebel threatening his life,so went to die under a broom tree
  + **1 King 19:4-5, “he asked that he might die, saying, “It is enough; now, O Lord, take away my life, for I am no better than my fathers.” 5And he lay down and slept under a broom tree. And behold, an angel touched him and said to him, “Arise and eat.”** Lord lead back to faith
* **Paul** (circumstance) **–** All motives are right, but your opportunities aren’t open.
  + **2 Cor 1:8-10, “For we do not want you to be unaware, brothers, of the affliction we experienced in Asia. For we were so utterly burdened beyond our strength that we despaired of life itself. Indeed, we felt that we had received the sentence of death. But that was to make us rely not on ourselves but on God who raises the dead. He delivered us from such a deadly peril, and he will deliver us. On him we have set our hope that he will deliver us again.”** circumstances and sovereignty that are out of our cntl
* **Ex. King David –** a man after God’s own heart let his lust get the bet of him that in 2 sam. 13 slept with another man’s wife, fell into a trap of manipulation and murder

**Psalm 51:3-4**, **“For I know my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me. Against you, you only, have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight, so that you may be justified in your words and blameless in your judgment.”**

**PS 139 Summarized**: vv 1-6: **You know me inside and out! |** vv. 7-12: **There is no where I can go to get away from your presence |** vv. 17-18: **Your thoughts are too vast to comprehend |** vv. 19-22: **Pls slay the wicked |** vv. 23-24: **Search me oh God**

(relv) **THE diagnosis: “SPIRITUAL SCHIZOPHRENIA”**

**Schizophrenia defined** “A mentality or disorder that is characterized by inconsistent or contradictory actions between thoughts or emotions and behavior.”

***Spiritual* schizophrenia defined:**

**2 Timothy 3:5, “…having the appearance of godliness, but deny its power. Avoid such people.”** And for all intents and purposes, “Avoid *being* such people.”

* **If you really think about what this passage is saying, your mind should be wandering and your heart racing** as you think of those that have the “appearance” of Christ followers but are “denying its power” because they live in sin.
* **“Denying the power” is not a public fault, but a private failure**. This will first be evident on the inside before it is evident on the outside. Integrity deals w/ the internal
* Leads to bondage of image keeping/sin hiding. **My journey to HTG:** found transf.

**Spiritual Schizophrenia leads to spiritual death**

* **Spiritual Schizophrenia leads to spiritual death because** you’ll soon find you’re only living to keep up the image an image that is different then what you believe.

**WHAT HAPPENED WHEN WE PRETENDING TO BE SPIRITUAL?**

1. The nature of the Christian church today is that people are pretending to be spiritual and have a hollow form of godliness: POLISHED PRETENDERS. We’ve turned the church into a Christian Country Club when come looking our best, acting our best, say and pray our best and never allowing for anyone to know our true selves.
2. **OR we are too honest and spew our brokenness** for the sake of getting it off of our chest without every seeing a lasting change. We’re honest ppl but too often under the banner of acceptance rather than change. God accepts you, wants to change you.

* **Symptoms of Spiritual Schizophrenia**: **(see A-2)** Is this you? Be honest.

**My Journey to Honest with God**

* Read some postcards

1. **MOSES –** Kind of person: ***Guilty and shame*** (Murdered and ran). Guilt inhibits honesty w/ God

* **In Exodus 3** Moses’ encounters God (sum), while on his face before the almighty God he ask, “Why Me!?” Honesty w/ God points out where we need God
* **Spoke to God face-to-face** (ex 33:11) and was honest [integrity] in all his dealings

1. **JOB – Read Job 42:4 -** Kind of person: ***Broken***. Spritually Schiz. b/c of what he knew and how he questioned. Yet he trusted in God’s purpose and things too wnderfl
2. **JEREMIAH –** Kind of person: ***Depressed.*** And lacked self-confident **(tissues)** Depression is not your king, dethrone him and put the true king in its place. There is sin in this f you stay there, but you need to work past it.
3. **PAUL – (My Picture of Paul) –** Kind of Person: ***Pride***

* **Rom 7:14-20 (17-19) –** So now it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells within me. 18 For I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh. For I have the desire to do what is right, but not the ability to carry it out. 19 For I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I keep on doing. 20 Now if I do what I do not want, it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells within me.
* **APP**: Because all of us are under sin, we all can be diagnosed with being tow-faced, deceitful, dishonest and psycho w/o Christ. Kayla’s cocoon. We need the Gospel!

1. **PETER – (Picture of Peter and Jesus)** Kind of person: ***People-pleaser.***  **Fear:**
2. **ASAPH –** Kind of person: ***Jealous.***

* **(A modern-day Chris Tomlin) He was young and nominated to be one of the main temple leaders of his day**. Choir even named after him – “Asaphites”
* **He wrote 12 of the Psalms**, including Psalm 73. **EXEGETE structure of Ps 73**
  + **Point out “The oracle of Salvation” and explain.**  This was where they were changed by the acknowledgement of who God is and what he can do.

**ANGER**

**DENIAL :**

**WE ARE NOT HONEST TO (1) OURSELVES, (2) OTHERS AND (3) GOD**

This striving to save an image leaves us in a place of lying to ourselves, others and God. We end up being three different people: The person we want others to see, the person we want to be, and the person we know God desires us to be.

**Christ did not die for our image…**

**so why are WE trying so hard to save it?**

* **Laments/Psalmists didn’t hid behind an image** but stood bare before the Lord.

**HONESTY REQUIRES VULNERABILITY AND REPENTANCE**

* **Intimacy demands vulnerability.**
* **Repentance is heartfelt sorrow for sin and willful desire to change.**
* **Both of these men (peter and paul) fought for greater authenticity in order to retain greater intimacy**. This demanded their true repentance and complete openness to God

1. **DAVID –** Kind of person: ***Fallen to Temptation.***

* **Didn’t hide his sin from God**, but went before God almighty and confessed with complete sorrow – far beyond “I’m sorry…but it was worth it…” true repentance
* **EXEGETE the structure of Psalm 51.**
* **He was a man after God’s own heart** because there was nothing between them.

In our last few moments together, let’s look at **PSALM 139**

**vv 1-6: You know me inside and out!**

* **“Oh Lord**” – YHWH – is both the recipient of the Psalm and the subject of it.”
* v 1 states the subject of the psalm, “**Search me & know me**” – intimate invitation
* v 2-4 is the extent of His knowledge of **ME**: outward actions and inward intentions
* v 6 praises God for how **Wondrous his thoughts** are – this is a right view

**vv. 7-12: There is no where I can go to get away from your presence**

* **convicting** if you are living in sin or ever **comforting** if you are living righteously.
* Two pairs of opposites: **Heaven** and **Sheol**, east (**wings of morning**) and west (**seas**)
* God is ever present: he will **Hold and Lead** the ME

**vv. 13-16: You knew me before I was even formed in my mother’s womb**

* He knows you better than you know yourself because he crated you.
* **“Wonderfully made.”** This is not something to be prideful of; awe! Chandler & #2

**vv. 17-18: Your thoughts are too vast to comprehend**

* This is the prescription for the fear of God – complete Awe!

**vv. 19-22: Please slay the wicked!**

* **A prayer against people pleasing**. We foolishly make man bigger than God.

**vv. 23-24: Search me oh God!**

* What are you afraid of? Rejection, or intimacy? Are you holding on to sin too tight?
* APP: get honest with God =Journal honest, Pray Honest, Listen Honest, Act Honest
* **“The ancient path” Jer 6:16, “The Eternal way”** is the way of wisdom

**Imagine a generation of people that lived psalmaic lives -** People that were absolutely honest with God, themselves and everyone else. Perhaps we could abolish hypocrisy once and for all and be real people being changed by a real God. **(Read A-2)**

**IS GOD LIKE THAT?**

Perhaps many of us have trouble being honest with God because we have the wrong view of God… and the wrong view of ourselves. Honesty with God is not an end in itself, but a means to our own transformation.

**Closing Application:**

* **Some of you have been churched for a long time, and you have all the head knowledge and know the right things to say**, but you haven’t taken heart plunge to say the hard things, the messy things, the necessary things.
* **Some of you are not honest b/c you walk the hallways of life waiting for God to jump out.** You’re afraid of God more than fear him, holding disappoint & guilt
* **Some of you have no relationship with God,** b/c you think he’ll reject you as you are, so you put on your straight jacket and have accepted apathy over change.

Don’t! Allow him to snatch what he needs to out of your life and change it for His glory!

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **TO OTHERS:**   * **ABLE** (at work) * ST**ABLE** financially (to father in-law) * KNOWLEDGE**ABLE** (education) * FASHION**ABLE** (appearance) * PERSON**ABLE** (to my friends) | **TO GOD:**   * **Grateful:** Thank you for this food…” * **Sorrowful:** sorry but not fully repentant * **Useful:** “Look at my skills, O God!” * **Insightful:** “Look what I found in Bible” |

* **Laments were always offered in the presence of God** not meant for others (except communal laments), but meant for God.
* **God is always more glorified than the honest person** (the lamenter or Psalmist).
  1. **Admit you are hiding**
  2. **Answer God when he calls (ref. Adam and Eve)**
  3. **Acknowledge your sin**
  4. **Accept the gift of Grace**
  5. **Abandon your defenses**

**Pray.**

APPENDIX:

(A-1) Symptoms of Spiritual Schizophrenia:

* **…You get anxious around spiritual authority.** The more spiritual power a person is perceived to have, they less candor in communication
* **…You have Pretense in prayer.** Pray only about “safe” subjects and use spiritual language – or simply avoid prayer all together.
* **… You are fragmented as a person.** You “say the right things and pray the right things” to keep up the spiritual image but you are dying on the inside.
* **… You have loss of spiritual power.** You are easily giving into temptation, sin, deception and division – the Bible tells us that this ‘Grieves and quenches the Holy Spirit.’
* **… You become timid in leadership.** You avoid risks, energy is divided, feel wearisome because you are trying to maintain an image AND meet your own goals.
* **… You fear authentic relationships.** You are not willing to risk self-disclosure that is needed to have true intimacy. You fear accountability.
* **… You are afraid of God instead of fearing God…**

(A-2) Outcomes of a life lived Honest to God:

* **You won’t be rejected by God and told to ‘Go away and come back when you’ve cleaned up your act**.” The **transformation** happened in God’s presence when you are honest with him.
* **You will begin to feel joy because you are a unified person** and you don’t have to “pretend” or have “pretenses.”
* **You will find freedom in your service to God** because you are not realizing that you are not trying to please anyone but God. You will act in faith in God rather than in fear of man.
* **You will grow in your ability love others** because you are able to act in authentic relationships.
* **You will recognize your need for accountability** and will seek instruction, discipline and correction from other believers.

**retreat.**

(A-2) Symptoms of Spiritual Schizophrenia:

* **…You get anxious around spiritual authority.** The more spiritual power a person is perceived to have, they less candor in communication
* **…You have Pretense in prayer.** Pray only about “safe” subjects and use spiritual language – or simply avoid prayer all together.
* **… You are fragmented as a person.** You “say the right things and pray the right things” to keep up the spiritual image but you are dying on the inside.
* **… You have loss of spiritual power.** You are easily giving into temptation, sin, deception and division – the Bible tells us that this ‘Grieves and quenches the Holy Spirit.’
* **… You become timid in leadership.** You avoid risks, energy is divided, feel wearisome because you are trying to maintain an image AND meet your own goals.
* **… You fear authentic relationships.** You are not willing to risk self-disclosure that is needed to have true intimacy. You fear accountability.
* **… You are afraid of God instead of fearing God…**