

the fallout part 1

I'll take your Bibles this morning, turn with me to Genesis chapter three, to continue to make our way through this portion of scripture. And this morning's message is just challenging. There's no two ways about it.

There's no way to kind of soften the blow. Genesis has been challenging, particularly since we've gotten to chapter three. We started to wrestle with the human condition and why we are the way that we are, to really face off with the divine record that gives us an understanding for the corruption within our hearts and the corruption that exists in the world around us.

And we've kind of experienced the heartache really of seeing God's perfect creation, of seeing man and woman together in the garden in bliss, naked and unashamed, perfect harmony. They didn't have a care or worry in the world. They didn't at that time have an unmet desire or an unmet need.

They didn't know the experience of unbelief. They had not yet been tainted in any way. They never had a desire that had gone astray from the will of God.

It would have been remarkable. I mean, I just think about how nice it is to go on like a nice picnic, right? And how challenging it is to go on a nice picnic and not have it tainted by someone's sin. I mean, we have seven people in our family.

So the odds are someone is going to make this picnic not bliss, right? And I would love to just blame the other six, but oftentimes it's me, I'm the culprit. And so we recognize that it's hard for us to even fathom, to really fathom what this joy-filled experience must have been like to know true communion with God, to know true fellowship with man untainted by sin. And yet, as we've been studying over the last weeks, our first parents fell.

We're estimating that it didn't take very long for Eve to experience temptation at the hands of Satan. And he deceived her by his cunning. She began to kind of wade into evaluating God's instructions and statements and began to think that God was withholding something from her that would be for her benefit.

And so she acted, she ate. The Scriptures teach us that she became a transgressor. We said, this is a very familiar playbook there.

The lust of the eyes, the lust of the flesh, and the boastful pride of life. All three were at work right there in the garden. And then last week we saw, or last time we discussed this, we looked at how in Adam, the human race fell, that it was through one man's disobedience that brought condemnation to all.

It brought death to all. And it's the reason why as beautiful as little babies are when they're born, they have a darkened, sick sin heart that's desperately wicked. And no one can frankly

understand the depths of that wickedness.

And so as we've been studying this, we begin to look this week now at the tragic events that took place after this fall. Genesis chapter three, we read in verse seven, and the eyes of both were opened and they knew that they were naked. And they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loincloths.

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. 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.

And I was afraid because I was naked. And I hid myself. And he said, who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten of the tree of which I commanded you not to eat? The man said, the woman whom you gave me to be with me, she gave me the fruit of the tree and I ate.

And the Lord God said to the woman, what is this that you have done? The woman said, the serpent deceived me and I ate. And so truly the honeymoon is over. Called this morning's message, the fallout part one.

The fallout part one. We're gonna be dealing with now, what were the after effects of this decision to eat of the forbidden fruit. It's hard to imagine what this moment must have been like.

The text just unadorned simply states, then the eyes of both were opened. The indication it would seem was that Eve ate the fruit first her eyes weren't opened immediately. She gave to her husband Adam, he ate.

And then at that moment, both of their eyes suddenly become aware of what it is that they just did. And I just cannot even imagine what that moment must have felt like. I mean, the text is just unadorned, but this had to have surely rocked their world because they suddenly went from innocence to guilt.

It says in this case, it was to some degree as the serpent had predicted. If you remember, he had predicted that they would gain knowledge from eating of that tree. And yet rather than becoming more like God or wise like God, they gained the experiential knowledge of sin now as one who has committed it.

And simply they have lost their innocence. I mean, I just think about the devastation here. You know what it is like to have your conscience stricken with guilt.

And yet all you've ever known is guilt. You've never known a day where in your own right, you were guilt free. And this error here that they made was not merely that they made a mistake or that they had an error in judgment or that they'd kind of forgotten about the details and didn't execute fully.

Rather they crossed the line, they transgressed. And what we see here and what you know to be true is that when you and I transgress, the immediate response of the human heart is to begin to scheme and find a way to fix the problem. Now to say that what I don't mean is necessarily confession.

Confession is a good thing. Or perhaps restitution or repentance. Those are noble responses to sin.

And what I'm talking about is damage control. The instinct to begin to minimize the fallout of our sin. And so here we read that the eyes of both were open.

They began to understand their nakedness. They saw their shame. And the text says they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loincloths.

I mean, this is just comical in a way. Now it's absolutely fascinating. Here it is that they've sinned and Adam thinks that he can now cover the consequences of eating of the forbidden tree by manufacturing a pair of boxer shorts with fig leaves.

I mean, it is just absolutely foolish. And yet what we see here is the instinct of the human heart to immediately respond to our sin by self-atonement. I mean, that is what we want.

I want to now solve and fix the problem in my own right and maintain my dignity. In fact, when someone self-atonement, we actually call it that. We say they're sewing together fig leaves.

It is a knee-jerk reaction. My assumption is that it was fig leaves because that was probably the nearest tree. Just grab something and begin to cover.

And yet Adam and Eve here are not dealing with their guilt problem in a holy way or a humbling way, but rather a way to attempt to save face. Okay, a way to deal with the issue not by actually resolving it, but by sweeping it under the rug, wanting to conceal rather than to reveal. That's the human instinct when we sin.

I mean, no one has taught Adam and Eve yet what to do when you sin. There's no playbook. They don't have a Bible yet.

They don't have any history to go off of. This is raw. This is what happens to the human heart.

When we transgress, we desire to immediately cover up, self-atone. One of the classes I took in my undergraduate education on studying business was communications and in particular on how to handle crises. And so the thought is that a corporation needs to prepare hand for crises.

When they come, you have a crisis management plan, you have a communication plan. And what's rule number one? It's when you blow it as a corporation, your instinct is going to be to circle the wagons, to cover it up. But the best thing you can do is actually to immediately come forward and shine a light on it.

Why do you have to learn that in a class? Because the instinct of the human heart is to cover sin. Can we agree on that? The instinct of the human heart is to cover sin. And in fact, if you were to look at our society today, there's a tremendous amount of energy and money and time spent trying to deal with guilt.

Trying to help bad people who feel bad about the bad things they have done feel better. And it's fig leaves. We have therapists and chemicals and substances.

People throw themselves into achievement and work and religion and relationships trying to assuage the feeling that I'm a bad person who does bad things. But I don't like that feeling. And so I need to find a way to feel better.

One author says, the anxiety and depression which keeps the world of psychotherapy and counseling so fully occupied is the loss of the sense of self-esteem. I can no longer feel good about who I am. He goes on and writes, people dislike themselves and they perceive that others dislike them too.

And so they want to make aprons to cover themselves and hide behind the trees of the garden to escape. They're not comfortable being just them. They are ashamed.

You're seeing here, Adam and Eve find themselves having sin with the knowledge of their sin and instant awareness of their nakedness. Not just that they're not wearing clothes, but that they are immoral. And they desperately want to fix the problem.

Thinking I can handle this, I can provide a solution. I can keep things under control. I can manage this and manage it in such a way as to maintain my own personal dignity.

That's what they really are after. This is the conscience. The conscience here is awakened and they must have been distressed.

And the Proverbs are clear. Proverbs 28 verse one, the wicked flee when no one pursues. I mean, the conscience pursues us, does it not? When you have the knowledge of guilt on your conscience.

And the Proverbs say, nobody even has to be chasing you for you to feel compelled to run away. Isaiah 57 verse 21 says there is no peace for the wicked. So the knowledge of sin brings a lack of peace.

It brings the fear, the desire to run and hide. And that's exactly what they do next. Verse eight, 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 in the presence of the Lord God among the trees of the garden. You understand previously the sound of the Lord God was a comfort to Adam and Eve. Let me just think.

Think about the, maybe a great season of your life where you experienced relational nearness

to God. Perhaps you're first understanding the perfections of God. They're just coming alive to you.

Maybe the Lord had granted you an awareness of sin in a bunch of areas and you began to repent of them and you experienced the joy of communion and fellowship with God. Adam and Eve had experienced fellowship in a way that's unimaginable for us, untainted by sin. And yet now they hear the sound of the Lord God walking in verse eight and they run away and they hide.

Word order in the original starts out, they hid themselves. Immediately went into hiding from the presence of God, from His face is the idea. They did not want the face of God to gaze upon them.

And so we see here that when we are guilty, we don't want to be close to God. I mean, this is unlearned. This is the natural response that happens when we sin.

When we incur guilt, it is to run and to hide. Because sin automatically brings shame. It brings the knowledge of guilt.

And so fight or flight, Adam and Eve choose here to run away from the perceived danger. They run away physically. Obviously you and I can't physically run away from God.

We don't have the physical presence with God in the same way that they did. And so how we would run from God is in our hearts to be far from Him. David described it after he sinned with Bathsheba in Psalm 32, when I kept silent, my bones wasted away through my groaning all day long.

When I kept silent. In those months between King David's sin with Bathsheba and eventually Uriah and Nathan's confrontation, was David utterly silent? No, he was still talking about God. He was still talking to God.

He was still leading the nation. What was he silent about? He was silent about the guilt of his sin. He was silent about his sin.

He was walking in hypocrisy. He would have appeared to those around him as still being the King of Israel and even a spiritual leader of one to whom people were to look. And yet inwardly he knew my heart is distant from the Lord and he's unwilling to confess his sin to God.

See, accountability is scary for sinners. Because accountability forces us to get out of the delusion of our own righteousness. And accountability forces us to face the reality about ourselves in an upfront way.

I mean, even human accountability, we just tend to not like it. We tend to resist it. Even when we fail, we tend to blame human sources of accountability.

And so Adam and Eve here sense God in the garden and immediately it just brings

accountability and they run and hide. Now I would say, in fact, it's the same today. I talked to people who have departed from Christianity.

They once had a confession, a profession of faith in Christ, and then they leave the faith. And typically they have a list of reasons. Maybe there was something in the Bible that they decided they didn't really believe, or maybe somebody hurt them as part of a church relationship and they're kind of carrying a wound and a bitterness.

But I would say when I get down to the bottom line issue in those conversations, what I find most consistently as a human being who says, I don't like the notion of a God who's gonna come and bring accountability into my life. Who's gonna define for me righteousness. Who's going to call me a transgressor and a lawbreaker.

I don't like that kind of accountability. And so Adam and Eve hear God, the one with whom they've enjoyed fellowship, and they hide themselves from his presence among the trees of the garden. Pretty good plan, except God, of course, being those omnis, right? Things like omnipresent and omniscient means that he is everywhere present and he sees all things.

And so the Lord obviously sees right through the trees, right through the loincloths, he sees Adam and Eve. And he says in verse nine, he calls out to the man, where are you? Now does God need Adam to identify his location so he can figure out where he is? Of course not. Now God is bringing accountability here.

And I want you to see the manner in which God is coming, that even as he comes to Adam right now, he's coming mercifully. He's coming mercifully to begin with a question. I mean, do you understand how God does not come into the garden shouting, ready or not, here I come, come out you little punks.

And we just ask Adam, where are you? It's an invitation. I mean, you think about how we respond when we're offended. They just ate from God's tree that he said not to eat from.

They rebelled, they failed. What's the natural inclination when someone wrongs you? You pull back, you pull away, close off, cut off communication, hang on to some kind of a bitterness. Maybe you're someone who resorts more to punishing or retaliating or attacking back.

God gets personally wronged and violated here. It was a personal offense when they ate of the tree. And yet he is the one who comes and pursues.

And when he pursues, he starts with a question, an invitation, Adam, where are you? So God starts out here by seeking sinners. I just love this. Adam did not initiate.

Adam is hiding in a bush, but God initiates. And he comes in the cool of the day and he comes calling. He's giving Adam an opportunity to repent.

I mean, I see this and I just praise God that he seeks sinners. Praise God that Jesus did not

come to call the righteous, but he came to call sinners. Praise God that the son of man came to seek and to save that which was lost, to find the lost, to even pull the hiding out of their hiding.

I mean, if you're in Christ, we could make it personal this morning. Where would you be right now? If Jesus had not sought you out, you'd still be hiding in a tree somewhere. And so Adam responds and obviously just doesn't go well.

Kind of feel bad for the guy, definitely relate to him. He says in verse 10, I heard the sound of you in the garden and I was afraid because I was naked and I hid myself. It seems here in the best rendering that it was likely the voice of God that Adam heard.

He heard the voice of God, he ran and hid from it. And yet the word order is significant here in the original because it's front loaded with your voice. So that means God is asking Adam, Adam, where are you? The answer should be, I'm right here.

And his answer is to begin to subtly indict the Lord as if it was God's voice that caused the fear rather than his own sin. People blame God for their sin all the time. The subtle implication here is God, you made me afraid with your voice.

And this is not the godly kind of fear of God. That certainly fears him and his awesomeness and his holiness and reveres him. And this is the sinful slavish fear of, I'm afraid of punishment.

So God says to him, who told you? Who told you that you were naked? I mean, think about it this way, who told Adam to be afraid of God? No one. He just knew instantly, instinctively to fear judgment. And we have polygraphs, which are the test to indicate whether or not someone is telling the truth or not, 100% reliable.

If you're a psychopath, you don't really have a conscience, so that would be possible. You could train yourself to lie well, to mask the symptoms. But a polygraph is a way to recognize that generally speaking, human beings share common physical traits when we're lying.

We're covering up our sin, blood pressure goes up. We begin to get sweaty, heart rate changes, breathing changes, saliva changes, pupils fidgeting. And so people are actually trained.

People are trained to be able to ask questions and identify this person is lying right now. And what is that? How can we measure someone lying about their sin? Because the acknowledgement of sin and covering it produces fear in the human heart. It produces fear.

Adam is afraid, Eve is afraid. They don't even know why yet. They know I ate the fruit.

Suddenly I'm ashamed, I feel guilty. Now I hear God and I'm afraid and I'm running away. Didn't understand all the inner workings yet, but this is the human heart.

And if you're paying attention, you're thinking, well, like Adam, if the loincloth thing worked out so well, if that was such a good plan, like why do you have to hide in a bush? And so instantly we see right through the fig leaves. And see Adam here has this concern and it's the wrong kind

of concern. He's still not relating rightly to God.

Martin Lloyd-Jones would say this about Adam's view of God that's distorted because Adam does not know God. He's believed to lie about him. And he's altogether wrong with respect to him because he does not realize that the very God against whom he has rebelled and into whose face he has spat is the only one who can save him and that he is prepared to do so.

He goes on to say, this is the tragedy of the world. Men and women in their misery, in their sin, try everything except what God says to them. See Adam and Eve have a sin problem and yet they're running away from God rather than to God to solve it.

And so sin always produces guilt and guilt always produces fear. Okay, sin always produces guilt and guilt produces fear. Fear of discovery, fear of getting caught, fear of being known, fear of humiliation, fear of consequences, fear of judgment, fear of other people knowing the truth about who you really are.

And fear always interferes with fellowship. Fear breaks human fellowship and it breaks fellowship with God. Say this, when someone begins to distance themselves from the Lord, distance themselves from fellowship with others, you know that most likely there is a factor of fear behind that and oftentimes related to guilt.

It's undealt with sin. And so God asks Adam now who's getting trapped in his words, who told you that you were naked? The implication there is obvious. What should Adam's response have been now at this moment? I ate of the tree, please have mercy on it.

And Adam's response is so, so classic. Man said, verse 12, the woman whom you gave to be with me, she gave me fruit of the tree and I ate. I mean, that is so well translated.

Those are the first words out of his mouth, the woman. Unless you think it sounds pejorative, she wasn't named Eve yet. So it's not like she's named Eve and then he's saying the woman, that's just what she's called, it's the man and the woman.

You gave her to me, you gave her to me, she gave me the fruit. See, it's interesting because he's acknowledging that he ate and yet it's only because he's been caught dead to rights. He's already admitted that he's in hiding because he knows that he's naked.

God asks him how he knows he's naked. He understands like, I cannot deny any longer that I've sinned, that I've committed this iniquity, so I have to admit it now. I've been caught dead to rights.

And yet rather than own it and take responsibility, God, I'm gonna blame you and I'm gonna blame her. This is what the natural man is inclined to do. Man, I just asked you this morning, are you somebody who takes ownership of your sin? I mean, are you faithful that when you transgress, you own it? To not just acknowledge like Adam did that he ate, but then he frames it in such a way as to not really indict himself as being the primary responsible party in the eating.

That's what this shows is that Adam right now is still trying to save face. He's still trying to save face. And we know this, I mean, we do this, we call it blame shifting.

Blame shifting, that is we start to feel indicted and we look for somewhere else to deflect. I heard one pastor say there's some of us who have like a deflector shield on all the time. And anytime the knowledge of our own sin comes, we immediately project it back on whoever brought it to our attention.

That's what Adam is doing here. See, to admit that you are in fact a sinner and not just from the general idea, the general concept that you're a sinner, but to actually accept responsibility for the indictment of sin and its implications in your life and the fallout and the consequences that you're the one who caused it. Man, the flesh hates that.

I mean, to take responsibility for your sin without excuse is always a work of the spirit and it always requires killing the flesh. I mean, I mentioned this a few weeks ago. I would love to say that after this many years in Christ, by God's grace, growing in humility, it's easy to indict yourself.

Guess what? It's still always hard for me. My flesh has not grown comfortable with it. My pride is not used to it.

It always requires that death. My friends, this is unlearned. It is instinctive.

Adam has never seen anyone blame shift before. It's just what immediately comes out of his heart. It's the knee-jerk reaction.

I was thinking about this. I mean, I relate to this a lot. As a little kid, I can remember getting in trouble a lot at church.

Wasn't just at church, of course, but we're at church and I just tend to get in trouble a lot. So I'd get in trouble a lot at church. But I can see these very seeds, even from an early age.

As a little guy, I remember planning out, okay, I wanna go to church and threaten all the little girls who are my age. I'm gonna threaten to stab them. What I'm gonna do is I'm gonna take fingernail clippers with me, I'm gonna pull out the little file.

That way, when I threaten them and they inevitably tell their parents, predictably, I'll just put the file back in the fingernail clippers and then, I don't have a blade, I just have these fingernail clippers. Just as a little kid, planning iniquity, planning the deception. And I remember, Dad was a deacon, so he would close up the church late and I remember sneaking into the classrooms to steal sugar cubes.

Those little cubes, pull them out, begin to eat them and put them in my pockets and hide them. And then, I remember one year, it was snowy and snow in the valley is unusual here and generally, I would get in trouble when it snowed. You're kind of seeing a pattern here.

I was in trouble a lot. But I threw a snowball and I hit this kid right in the face, who's younger than me and on the way out of church, his mother pulled up next to me and said, hey, why'd you hit my kid in the face of the snowball? And I said, I don't know what you're talking about. And I would find out later that as they drove out of the parking lot, the little boy said, Mommy, why would that boy lie like that? And for years, for years, that sin would plague my conscience.

For years, that guilt was on my conscience. And so eventually, I mustered up the courage to go to my mom and explain to her that, Mom, I told a lie and here's what happened. I was, it's all a misunderstanding.

I was running with this armful of snow. I happened to run by that kid and I think some of the snow fluffed off on him. I was mistaken for a snowball, but it's on my conscience and I need to go confess.

And so I met with the lady. I set an appointment with the kid's mom and I confessed my pseudo lie. What was I doing? Well, I didn't understand the human heart at that age.

I didn't know what was going on, but what was going on was I was miserable in my sin. I was miserable in my guilt. My parents had taught me the law of God, so I knew I was a transgressor and I was distressed by it.

And so I wanted relief, but at the same time, I was still proud. I still loved my reputation. I wanted other people to think I was righteous.

And so I was trying to find a way to just split the difference. And so the Lord, in his kindness, even a couple years later at a camp, under the preaching of the word, brought me under full conviction. So I went home and my parents had learned to kind of gear up that when I came back from camp, I was probably gonna start confessing stuff and they kind of wanted to rejoice and kind of wanted to wring my neck.

But eventually I did go to that woman who I think was pretty bewildered at that point, that it had been so much rigmarole, but to confess and indict. Why do I share that story? Well, as I read of our first parents here, this is the testimony of our lives, is it not? And I would love to say that that was just as a young child. And then I dealt with all of those issues and I don't deal with them anymore.

I would tell stories when I was a teenager, in my 20s and in my 30s and now in my 40s, that this is the human heart. And yet if you want to see the mercy of God in your life, what it will require is for you to stop blame shifting and stop minimizing and stop covering and stop hiding and to come to God for mercy. You understand that if God did not come and seek Adam, you would have just kept hiding.

In other words, the presence of the Lord coming to Adam to lead him in repentance that brought about him leaving behind his rebellion. Adam is still in rebellion here in this place. Lord is gonna graciously deal with Adam's sin.

Eve, of course, does the same thing. Verse 13, the Lord God said to the woman, what is this that you have done? And the woman said, not I ate, but the serpent deceived me and I ate. She has to qualify it.

Can I just encourage you to make it a practice to not qualify your confessions. Don't qualify your sin in a way that minimizes or blame shifts, but accept responsibility. I mean, in our house, when I indict one of my children, and rather than start off with, well, and then, right, there was a lack of clarity in the instruction or my sibling was involved in such a situation or whatever the case may be.

When the response is, you're right, I'm guilty. You know what I do? I mean, right there, I go, yes, woo, hallelujah. It's exactly what we're looking for.

Because we all know theologically that we're sinners and yet we have a hard time still admitting I personally sinned, here it is. And yet that is what is required for proper atonement. See, self-atonement, fig leaves, never produce genuine freedom because they don't absolve guilt.

Isaiah would say, seek the Lord while he may be found, call upon him while he is near. Let the wicked forsake his way and the unrighteous man his thoughts. Let him return to the Lord that he may have compassion on him and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.

He will abundantly pardon. I could plead with you this morning. It would be to bring your sin into the light.

I mean, if you're convicted by this message this morning, if there's sin on your conscience that remains hidden in darkness, I would plead with you to bring it into the light. I mean, the thing that you fear most is the one remedy to your problem. Because God is the only one who can atone for sins.

But his atonement comes through the means of confession. And if I could just encourage you, I can tell you testimony of people in this very room who have seen God's grace in overcoming life-dominating sins. People who can testify of being in bondage and enslaved to their desires, now walking in newness of life.

And I mean, when I say freedom, I mean freedom. I mean, obedience, new life in Christ. Enduring obedience.

Very radical change and lasting change. And yet in every one of those testimonies, it began with coming clean. It began with bringing sin into the light.

It began with returning to the Lord and no longer saying, I wanna return to the Lord, but I also wanna hang on to my fig leaves. I still wanna hang on to a little bit of my own dignity. And in fact, in that coming into the light, it was the removal of pride, which was keeping them enslaved.

See, there's no way to receive the atoning work of Jesus Christ apart from our personal humiliation. Do you understand that? The Apostle Paul would say it this way. I wanna be found in Christ, having a righteousness that is not my own, but one that comes from God on the basis of faith.

I just asked you this morning, if there's fig leaves that you need to take off, if there's hiding that you need to come out of, to do that and to understand the mercy of Christ. And that as a church, we would be eager in pursuing holiness alongside one another, starting with individual and personal willingness to confess and forsake sin. I wanna close this morning by reading the familiar words of 1 John 1, in light of what we've just reflected on.

This is the message we have heard from him and proclaim to you, that God is light. And in him is no darkness at all. If we say we have fellowship with him while we walk in the darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth.

But if we walk in the light as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another and get this, the blood of Jesus, his son cleanses us from all sin. If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

You know what our first parents should have done? When they saw that they were naked and when they were ashamed, they should have said, Lord, we're in our nakedness, we've rebelled. Would you come and cover us? Would you come and have mercy on us? Would you come and atone for the mess that we just made that we cannot address ourselves? And of course, God is going to be merciful here. He's going to clothe Adam and Eve.

He will atone for their sins. They certainly didn't go the easy route, did they? They went the route that we so often are familiar with. Lord, I pray right now that you would give us as your people courage to face off with things that we do not want to face off with.

Lord, to admit things that we do not want to admit or to confess things that we do not want to confess. Lord, I pray that you would teach us that our instincts would even become sanctified, that we would realize that oftentimes what we fear most is in fact the remedy to freedom. And Lord, I thank you that you are a God who pardons abundantly.

Lord, even though Adam and Eve did not make a good first or second or third decision there in the garden as they were blame shifting, you still provided for them. And so Lord, I thank you for your mercy to us and your grace. Lord, I pray that as a people, we would be modeling before one another, encouraging in our families, Lord, that we are not self-atoners, but rather those who trust in the finished work of Jesus Christ and we put it on display every time we own our sin.

Lord, we love you, we praise you. Amen.