

Msg #160 of Scripture Beneath The Surface

“Knowledge Of Good And Evil”

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Hello! Thanks for being with us. Today I'd like to talk about good and evil, and about the nakedness which results from sin. We humans, because of our sin, need a covering which will conceal our nakedness. When Adam and Eve were first placed in the Garden of Eden, they were naked. They didn't have a covering because they had not yet sinned. As soon as Adam and Eve had sinned, they realized that they were naked. Prior to this they were naked but had not been aware of their nakedness. Because of this they attempted to cover themselves. They used leaves. But the covering of leaves could not hide their nakedness. This is an important concept. We know that if you cover your naked body with leaves, other people will not be able to see your naked body. However, the real nakedness Adam and Eve had was not a physical nakedness, but was only symbolic of the real nakedness.

The real nakedness of Adam and Eve was that they were uncovered, and this lack of a covering allowed God to see them in their state of sin. The covering of leaves was inadequate to take away their nakedness in the eyes of God, and because of this God covered Adam and Eve with the skins of animals. And the reason that animal skins had to be used for a covering instead of using cloth is because clothing made from cloth requires no shedding of blood.

Bloodshed is necessary in order to remove sin. When Cain and Abel brought a sacrifice to God, Abel's sacrifice was received but Cain's sacrifice wasn't. That's because Cain's sacrifice was from vegetation, and it did not require the shedding of blood. However, Abel's sacrifice was from the flock. It was an animal that Abel presented to God for a sacrifice, and of course this

meant that Abel had killed the animal and shed its blood. An animal, in order to be presented as a sacrifice, must be killed. The blood is drained from the animal and in this way the animal has no life. The sacrifice which Abel offered symbolizes the eventual sacrifice of Jesus Christ who shed his blood for our sins. All through the Bible we have this concept interwoven in the scriptures. It constantly reaffirms that sin cannot be purged from us unless there is a shedding of blood. It is Hebrews 9:22 which tells us that without the shedding of blood there is no remission of sins. Therefore, Abel's sacrifice was accepted by God, but Cain's sacrifice, which caused no shedding of blood, was not accepted by God.

We can overcome our physical nakedness just by covering ourselves with cloth, but the real nakedness, the spiritual nakedness, can only be hidden when blood is shed. The reason for this is that Adam and Eve's nakedness was not caused by the lack of clothing, but rather, it was brought about by the lack of obedience. Obedience is the key factor here.

As humans, we always attempt to cover our nakedness with whatever material is at hand. But the real problem of nakedness before God is not the visibility of our flesh, but that God sees our disobedience. The covering for physical nakedness only requires clothing made of cloth, but the covering for spiritual nakedness because of the sin of disobedience requires a covering which can only be obtained by the shedding of blood.

You know, it's an interesting bit of fact that even though most of the world rejects the gospel of Jesus Christ, they still wear clothes. There is no acceptance of public nakedness by the world, even though most of the world refuses to believe in God. Even Atheists put on clothes. Even when humans reject the morality of God's word there is still a social morality among humans which causes all people to wear clothes in public.

Isn't it interesting that the very simple basic concept of nakedness is a Biblical concept, yet even people who refuse any religious affiliation at all are still governed by a belief that public nakedness is wrong. Of course, there is more and more nakedness displayed in the world as we progress to the coming day of the Lord, and some people display themselves in certain locations and in movies and television. However, the world, as a whole, maintains the belief that people in public must wear clothes. In fact, even though the world does not accept God's concept of nakedness because of sin, they still accept the concept that humans must be clothed if appearing in public. There are secular laws regarding nakedness, and these laws describe the situations and locations for nakedness, and they also express the common fact that if a person appears in the general public without clothes, they will be arrested.

This is interesting. The world in general has rejected the gospel of Jesus Christ, and the world in general refuses to acknowledge God. However, the world in general is still convicted that public nakedness is morally wrong. This quite simply confirms God's statement that there is no excuse for those who reject God. They cannot claim ignorance. The concepts of what is right and what is wrong exist even outside of the knowledge of God, but the people of the world continue to be ignorant of God's law.

You know, being properly covered in public places, is an everyday concern by all people of the earth. No matter whether they believe God's word or not. Nakedness is a real problem for the whole world. We must cover our nakedness if we ever hope to be acceptable. First, we must cover our nakedness if we want to be accepted by other flesh and blood humans, and secondly, we must cover our nakedness if we want to be accepted by God. However, if we want to be accepted by God, then the covering we use must be a covering which requires the shedding of blood.

Of course, this doesn't mean that we have to wear animal skins. The skins of animals which God used to cover Adam and Eve were only a symbolic representation. This symbolic representation is understood by Christians, but not by the people of the world who reject God. Everyone needs a covering, because everyone has sinned and come short of the glory of God. When we disobey God, we can no longer be considered to be God's children. Adam and Eve were God's children, and they walked with God. They communed daily with God. They were in the presence of God. But in the day that they sinned, they came into the knowledge of sin. The Bible says that they ate of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Up until that time they did not know that there were concepts of good and evil. In their daily existence, they knew God, but did not know that God was good.

Now, this may seem confusing, but think about it. The only way you can understand that something is good, is to compare it with something that is bad. We humans have been created to understand knowledge by comparing things. We always measure things by comparing things to other things. Everything in this physical universe is known by the concept of comparison.

For example. If you think someone is driving fast, you would have to compare it with other examples of fast driving. If the speed limit is 25 miles per hour, and the driver of the car is going 40 miles an hour, then this would be considered as driving fast. Forty miles an hour is fast if you are driving in a 25 mile per hour speed zone. However, if you take this same driver and have him drive 40 miles per hour on the interstate highway where the speed limit is 70 miles per hour, that same driver would be said to be driving too slow.

Everything is measured in our earthly comprehension by comparing other things. And, it is no different when comparing good and evil. You cannot understand the concept of good unless you compare it to the concept of evil. Neither can you understand evil unless you compare it to good. Neither the concept of good nor the concept of evil can exist in our understanding without the other. In my own opinion, for what it's worth, this is why there had to be the concept of evil in heaven. Without the concept of evil, we could never even begin to understand how good God really is. We Christians love God. That's plain and simple. But we love God because we can plainly see that he is completely opposite from evil.

Now, make no mistake, God is good, and God was good even before evil first reared its ugly head in the form of Satan. But even though God has always been good, we humans could never comprehend the goodness of God unless we were able to compare it with evil. And God has

introduced us to these two concepts in order that we humans might have an opportunity to come to the knowledge of God's goodness. And this is because it is only when we come to realize how good God really is that we can begin to love him.

Have you ever thought before that God has always been good, even before Satan rebelled against God? Have you ever thought before that God has always existed, that God has no beginning, but that even though God existed before wickedness was even a concept, that God, even then, was good? God is good, and he always has been and always will be good. But yet, God knew that it was necessary for humans to come to the understanding of evil in order that we might fully understand just how wonderful God really is.

Now, in order for us to come to the understanding of God's goodness, we must also come to understand God's almightiness. Now there's a word for you. Almightiness. God's almightiness is a concept that must also be comprehended by humans if we are ever going to be sons of God. Can you imagine God having sons that remain disobedient to him? Can you imagine God having children that are never chastised or corrected in any way? In order for God to have children, he has to instruct them. If we were never instructed and corrected, then we could never be God's children. We are only God's children if we conform to him.

And here's another concept. If God just made his children good in the first place, and they were always good, and never needed to be corrected, or chastised, or trained up in any way, then we wouldn't really be children of God, we would just be God's robots. Robots are machines which do just exactly as they are programmed. Robots don't make choices on their own, they are just programmed to make proper selections depending on the data that is given to them. Humans are much better than robots because God has made us able to make choices for ourselves. We can even go against God. A robot can't go against God. A robot can only make decisions it is programmed to make by its maker. But we humans have the fantastic attribute of being able to have free choice. Not just making choices which are automatic depending on the data input, but free choices. We are free to choose to obey God, and we are free to choose to disobey God. And the concept which enables us to make free choice is the concept that God is good, but he is only good if compared to evil.

Now, I hope I haven't lost you, but it is important to know that God is good, but only by comparing him to evil. And it is important to know that we have free choice, and that it is the knowledge of good and evil which enables us to make that free choice in the first place. Without the knowledge of good and evil, we are unable to make choices at all because we wouldn't have anything to compare it with.

Now, here's another thing. This may blow your mind, but this is the way I see it. Adam and Eve were first placed in the Garden of Eden without sin. At first they were not sinners. They were naked, but they were not aware of their own nakedness. And, they had no covering because they had no shame. You only need to be covered if you are uncovered, and this state of being uncovered brings shame. Here again is a concept of understanding something by comparison.

You don't look for a covering if you don't realize that you are uncovered, and you don't attempt to cover yourself if you are unashamed. Even though Adam and Eve were naked, the Bible tells us that they only realized it after they sinned.

So, what was it that made them realize they were naked? Of course, the answer is that they ate of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. When they ate that fruit, their eyes were opened and they came into the knowledge of good and evil. So, what was the good and what was the evil that they suddenly understood? It was that to obey God is good and to disobey him is evil. It was by disobedience that Adam and Eve came into the knowledge of evil, and by understanding their own disobedience they also became aware of the concept of obedience. Up until this time Adam and Eve had obeyed the voice of God. But this had not been by conscious decision as a good thing to do. In fact, until they ate of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil they had no knowledge of either goodness or evilness. They lived and acted prior to this, but they didn't know the concepts of good and evil existed.

It was when they became aware of the concepts of good and evil that they realized they were naked. Of course, as I said before, physical nakedness is one thing, and spiritual nakedness is another. What Adam and Eve did was to make a free choice which went against God, and by making the free choice to go against God, they became aware of the two concepts of obedience and disobedience. And automatically, when you realize the two concepts of obedience and disobedience, you will also at that time come into the realization that to obey God is either good or bad.

At this time they were ashamed of themselves. Their nakedness brought shame. In fact, it's interesting that nakedness of itself is not harmful. Nakedness of itself will not cause you hurt. Babies are naked and they don't mind it at all. It is only the shame of nakedness that will hurt you, and you are hurt because of the rejection you feel. If you've ever experienced shame, and everyone has from time to time in their lives, then you realize that the feelings of shame are not a good feeling. To feel shame is always accompanied with emotional hurt. When we are ashamed of ourselves, we hurt emotionally. Adam and Eve felt the emotional pain of being shut out from the acceptance of God. They felt the emotional pain of God's disapproval and of God's rejection. They then attempted to do something so that God would no longer reject them, but they didn't know what really had to be done. This is because that even though they had just come to the knowledge of good and evil, they had not yet understood what it was that would deliver them from the shame which accompanied their disobedience.

Christians realize that when we make the free choice to disobey God, God will no longer allow us to come into his presence. We realize that we are naked. In other words, in a symbolic sense, we realize that we are aligned with the children of sin instead of being aligned with the children of God. The nakedness of Adam and Eve, in a spiritual sense, was that they were not children of God, but children of disobedience, and in this sense they were conforming to the image of Satan rather than conforming to the image of God. Children of God are spiritual children. God is a

spirit. The Bible clearly tells us this. And it also tells us that in order to become children of God we must be born again in spirit. But just as Adam and Eve were flesh and blood creatures, we are also flesh and blood creatures. And the problem with flesh and blood creatures is that they can disobey God. This is because they are fleshly creatures and not spirit creatures. The Bible tells us in 1 Corinthians 15:50 that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God. Those who disobey God have disobeyed God because they have chosen to follow the ways of the flesh rather than to follow the ways of the spirit. The ways of the flesh are contrary to the spirit. And the only way we can become sons of God is to be born again in spirit. So therefore, we must crucify our flesh and blood man and become alive in the spirit. And, because it is blood which is the life of the flesh and it is the spirit which is life in those who are born again in Christ, then we must make sure that our blood is poured out on the ground so that our old fleshly man will die, and then we must pursue a life with Christ in the Spirit. Without the death of our fleshly man, our spirit man can never live.

The bottom line is this. If we want to live forever in Christ, then we must come into the presence of God. As sinners, we must be covered in order that God can look upon us as his children. If he looks upon us and sees sin, he will look away and we will not be able to come into his presence. However, if we accept the blood of Jesus Christ for the remission of our sins, then our sins are covered over and God can then look upon us. We can enter into his presence because the sins of our flesh are no longer seen by God. And, most importantly, by acknowledging the need for Jesus Christ to die for us, shedding his blood, then we also acknowledge that our flesh and blood is also not acceptable to him and we willingly give up our own life blood in the flesh in order that we might have life anew in the spirit. When we receive the covering of Jesus' blood, we no longer have to experience the emotional pain which comes from the shame of nakedness. We are no longer ashamed because we have now become a life form which is acceptable in the eyes of God. And, as everyone knows, when we are accepted by everyone, including God, we never feel the emotion of shame. Shame only exists when we feel rejected. But when we put on the covering of God through Jesus Christ, we no longer have to feel shame and therefore no longer suffer the emotional pain of rejection.