

ULC Sermon Study Resource

Fear // Fear of Intimacy

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Prayer: Pause for a few moments to go to the Lord in prayer. Ask that He would draw near to you in this time, and open your heart and mind to hear His Word.

Icebreaker: What's your most irrational fear?

Reading: Genesis 3:1-13

Outline:

- I. The Root v. 1-6
 - a. The fear of intimacy comes from its absence; that we won't have it if we reveal our bad sides. The reality is we can't live without it since we were made to have it with God
 - b. Adam and Eve experienced true intimacy with God and each other, but lost it when Satan made them question the adequacy of being made in God's image and His limits
Q: How do we still doubt whether or not God's not enough?
- II. The Result v. 7-8
 - a. As soon as Adam and Eve chose limitlessness over God's image, they felt fear and shame where intimacy once was with each other and God
 - b. Limitless living produces loneliness instead of intimacy. Since there's no limits safeguarding us, we're vulnerable and control what we can to safeguard ourselves
Q: In what ways do we rely on control instead of God to give us peace?
- III. True Intimacy v. 9
 - a. Here God doesn't ask where Adam and Eve are to find them, but rather to point out that they're no longer in His presence, no longer in communion with Him.
 - b. Regaining intimacy with God means surrendering control, adhering to limits, and trusting that our value comes from His pursuit of us. That it's by his wounds that we are healed
Q: Why can it be hard to accept where our value comes from?

Reflection/Application Questions:

- 1) How can community help us overcome the root of fearing intimacy?
- 2) Why is loneliness such a pressing issue in America?
- 3) What can make it easy to forget where our value comes from?
- 4) How do the limits we put on marriage reflect true intimacy?
- 5) How can scripture provide us with the intimacy we crave?

Suggestions for further study:

- Mark 5:3-5 **Q: Where did this man end up with limitless abilities?**
- John 20:27-28 **Q: What was Thomas' response to Jesus' vulnerability here?**
- 2 Corinthians 12:9-10 **Q: How does this verse remind us of the path to true intimacy?**

Closing Prayer:

Lord God, we give you thanks that you're a God who pursues us even in our hiddenness, our masks and our armor. You cry out to us, you seek us out. So much so that you sent your son Jesus to the cross to bear our sins. That we might be restored back to that relationship. So God, teach us not to hide from you, not to put on masks in front of you, but to know you deeply and intimately. Then Lord, may that extend into our relationships with others. Amen.

