



Who Am I?

"I Am Accepted"

Genesis 29:1-30:24

Sunday | November 22nd, 2015 | Pastor Patrick Bowler

CONSULT THE SCRIPTURES

Read Genesis 29:1-30:24 (Primary text)

(See also Gen. 3:1-24, Isaiah 53:1-3, Rev. 21:9-14, 21:22-27, 22:1-5)

CONSULT THE SCHOLARS

[J. D. Greear] "The first sensation Adam and Eve had after the thrill of eating the forbidden fruit was a sense of their own nakedness. Were they naked before eating the fruit? Yes. But only after they had eaten the fruit did their nakedness bother them.

What had changed?

The early church fathers (guys like Gregory of Nazianzus and Athanasius) explained that prior to their sin Adam and Eve had been 'clothed' in the love and acceptance of God, so their nakedness did not bother them. Now having stripped themselves of God's love and acceptance, they were left with a sense of exposure, fear, guilt, and shame.

So what did Adam and Eve do about that sense of nakedness? The same thing any of us do when we fell naked—they looked for something to put on! If you have a problem sleepwalking and suddenly woke up on night standing in a Super Wal-Mart, buck naked, you probably wouldn't use that opportunity to pick up a few odds and ends you needed for the house. Instead, you'd immediately look for the clothing section and find something to cover yourself. And pray that no one you know has seen you.

Adam and Eve did essentially the same thing. They made themselves 'coverings of fig leaves' and hid from God. Their clothes made them feel more acceptable.

We have all been on the same quest ever since. We try to cover the shame of our nakedness by establishing our worthiness in some way. We find something that sets us apart from others: we're smarter; we've got into a certain kind of school; we have a good job and make lots of money; we're a good parent; we're

more faithful in our religion than others. We'll use just about anything to establish out worth...

For most of us, life is like on big 'Survivor' episode where we are trying to convince God and everyone else why we are not the ones who should be thrown off the island."¹

DISCUSS

1. Pastor Patrick opened his sermon by asking, "Is God Creator because He creates, or does He create because He is Creator?" How would you answer this question? What was Patrick's point in asking the question?²
2. Being created in the image of God, how does the above question relate to us and our identity?
3. As a group, discuss the importance of acceptance for humanity. In what ways do you struggle with the fear of rejection? How have we clothed ourselves with 'fig leaves' in order to make ourselves more acceptable?
4. Read Genesis 29:1-30:24. Can you spot the fear of rejection? Where does it show up in this particular story? Can you relate in any ways?
5. Consider the following statement: "You are as loved and accepted by God as Jesus is."³ Is that a biblically accurate statement? Do you believe it?
6. What does the above statement tell us about who God is? What does it tell us about who we are?
7. In what ways do our actions deny the Gospel? How would believing more fully change things? What would change?
8. What immediate applications can be made in light of this text?

¹J. D. Greear, *Gospel* (Nashville, TN: B&H Publishing Group, 2011), p. 29, 30.

²Patrick was making the point that God IS before He DOES. Identity precedes activity.

³The statement appeared in a tweet several years ago by Pastor Darrin Patrick (*The Journey*).