

God Pursued Us

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- [0 : 0 0] Do you have your imaginations turned on? If you don't, I would like you to turn them on now. And I want you to imagine that you are on a little boat out in the middle of the ocean. And your little boat lands on an island. And you get out and you go on shore. So what do you see?
- You probably see seagulls first and some sand and some trees and some flowers. And you start walking up into the forest and it's beautiful.
- There's all kinds of trees and all kinds of vines and there are monkeys. I don't know what kind of monkeys you're imagining. I hope you're imagining some nice monkeys. And you can hear them.
- You can hear the parrots. You can see the birds of paradise. And you can see all kinds of finches. And you can see all kinds of birds that you don't even have names for. You can see big birds and little birds.
- [1 : 0 0] And maybe you see some deer. And you see some leopards. And you see some crocodiles. You see all kinds of animals. Big animals. And then you take a bigger, a closer look.
- And you look a little bit harder. And you can see flies. And you can see frogs. And you can see snakes. And you can see turtles. You can see fish in the ponds. You can see the sun in the sky.
- And at night you can see the moon. And you can see the stars. And you can hear the streams bubbling down the mountain, the hillside, as they tumble over those rocks and out into the ocean.
- And you can hear the bird calls. You can hear those big cat calls. You can feel the wind on your face. You can feel the grass under your feet. Now what's missing?
- What's missing? Well, you're missing some people. There's no people there. And so what would you say if you showed up on this island and there were no people?
- [2 : 1 1] You would say, I'm all alone. I'm all alone. Where is everybody at? And you would say that even though you can see all the parrots and the snakes and the turtles and the leopards and the deer and the crocodiles and the fish.
- You could go through it all and you could still say, where is everybody at? I'm all alone. Now why would you say that you're all alone despite the fact that you're surrounded with all of those things?
- Well, you say, because those aren't people. And people are very different. You aren't like those snakes and turtles and parrots and all the rest. You have a soul.
- And that soul makes you want to be with other people. To live with them. So you're meant for these relationships with other people.
- So this island is wonderful in a lot of ways. And you might enjoy it for a little bit. But after a while, you would say, I am lonely.

- [3 : 18] And if there was a volleyball that floated up, you might put your hand on it and call it Wilson. Because you want, you were made to have interactions with other people.
- So God made Adam. And while Adam was all alone, there were lots of animals. There were lots of birds. There were lots of snakes and all of the rest. But there were no people. And I think Adam began to feel that.
- And God said, it's not good for man to be alone. So God made Eve. And now there could be lots of people for Adam and Eve to live with and to be with.
- You see, we're very different. We're very different from all of those animals. We're made in the image of God. And that means we're made to get along and to be with people.
- And it means we were meant to live with God. We were meant to walk with God. We were never meant to be all by ourselves and alone and cut off from him. We were meant for communion with each other and with God.
- [4 : 21] We were made for this close-knit relationship with each other and with God. And that's part of what it means to be in the image of God. So the image of God, we sort of talked about this in Sunday school, but an image is always in relationship to something else.
- So if you see a picture of your mother, there you say, look, Mom, it's you. It's not her. It's a picture of her. But you say, it's you, Mom.
- It's her image. And her image is connected to her. They go together. That's how God made us, to be connected to him, to live with him, to know him, to have a relationship with him.
- He made us because he wanted to connect to some part of his creation in a special way. He wanted a special relationship with a part of his creation.
- So I want you to use your imagination again. And let's go back in time to that sixth day. And the Lord has now created all those snakes and turtles and parrots and leopards and faraway planets and the sun and the moon and the stars and the fish and the birds and all the rest and the lions and the tigers and the bears.
- [5 : 35] Does he have anyone on this earth that are his friends? That he can talk with?
- That he can have a relationship with? No, he doesn't have anyone. So can he go walking in the cool of the evening with them and talk with them?
- No. Can he tell them what he's thinking? And can he listen to what they have to say? No. And so he didn't want to go walking in the cool of the evening by himself.
- So he made a creature in his image like himself, a person, a reflection of himself, connected, related to him, a son.
- Genesis calls Adam the son of God. Or is that Luke? Luke. But it's a creature son, a creaturely son, sort of like his eternal son in heaven.
- [6 : 33] And that's how God made us in his image. Made to go walking with him. Made to live connected with him. He made you to have fellowship with him. Made you to have friendship with him. Made you to have communion with him.
- To know him. To love him. To seek him. And then to also know his love. To know what it's like to be sought. To be loved. To be known.
- And to be sought. And so he made us as sons and daughters. And he's our father. To share life with. To share joy with.
- To live together. To be happy together. And so image of God. How we are made. It means we are made to live with other people. And it also means that we were made to live with God.
- We were met for both. But what happened? Again, we kind of talked about this this morning. We fell. And sin came in.

[7 : 33] And now instead of fellowship. There's distance. There's distance. And suspicion. There's not trust. There's. I'm suspicious of him.

And so we went after our many schemes. We went astray. And so. What did God say would happen when man disobeyed? He said, you will surely die.

And. As soon as. Adam took the fruit of the tree. A part of him. That part of him. That was related to God.

That was connected to God. That had this walking. Talking. Friendship. And fellowship with God. Was cut off. That enjoyed God. That had relationship with God. That part of Adam. Died. And when Adam died.

We all died. We inherited. That separation. That death. And so we come into this world. And we are.

[8 : 30] Unresponsive. To God. When he comes to us. We don't respond. In any sort of loving. Trusting. Movement. Towards him. Instead. The instinct.

Is to run away. To go away. To go astray. And so. We're dead to him. And he calls out. But we don't come. Maybe you've seen that sort of sad situation.

Where. A mom. Mom dog. Loses her puppies. And. She is looking. Everywhere. For her puppies. But they're gone. Or a mommy cat.

Looking for her kittens. And they're dead. And she cries. And they don't come. She wants them near her. But they don't.

They can't respond. They're dead. That is the. That's the Bible's picture. Remember. Jesus saying. I'm. He's wept over Jerusalem. And he uses that sort of mother language.

[9 : 27] He says. Jerusalem. Jerusalem. You who kill the prophets. And stone those sent to you. How often. I have longed to gather your children together. As a hen gathers her chicks under her wings.

And you were not willing. Jesus is saying. I was like a mother hen. Wanting to gather you to myself. To have you close in.

To be nestled in there with. Under my wings. But you were not willing. I've come calling. And no one comes. I come to walk. And no one wants to be with me. No one wants me.

And in fact. Jesus says. You're absolutely hostile to me. Instead of just being merely indifferent. You kill the prophets. And you stone those sent to you.

And so that. That was me. And that was you. Wasn't it?

[10 : 28] He called. The gospel was preached. He yearned for us. But we wanted nothing to do with him. That's what David Vaughn was talking about.

When he said. We're lost to him. And that's Jesus' own amazing picture. The housewife. Is restless. Until she finds her lost coin.

It's lost to her. The shepherd is sleepless. Until he finds his lost sheep. And that poor father. Is looking down the road. I'm sure there were many nights.

When he was up. And out on the porch. Looking down the road. Waiting for his son. To come home. See. We were made to live. In the house. We were made.

To be with. The father. But the image is broken. The relationship. Is set. Severed. And sin. Is separated us. From God. And God. From us. And. That's where our text.

[11 : 29] Comes in tonight. So take your Bibles. And turn to 2nd Corinthians. Chapter 5. The shepherd. Sought.

His sheep. And the father. Sought. His child. Praise the Lord. He sought us. We didn't want anything. To do with him. And yet.

He pursued us. Wanting this relationship. Wanting us. Reconciled. So turn to. 2nd Corinthians 5. In verse 14. And.

Listen. As I read through. Till verse 21. For Christ's love. Compels us. Because we are convinced. That one. Died for all.

And therefore. All died. And he died for all. That those who live. Should no longer live. For themselves. But for him. Who died for them. And was raised again.

[12 : 24] So from now on. We regard no one. From a worldly point of view. Though we once regarded. Christ in this way. We do so no longer. Therefore. If anyone is in Christ.

He is a new creation. The old is gone. The new has come. All this. Is from God. Who reconciled us. To himself. Through Christ.

And gave us. The apostles. Paul. The ministry. The ministry. Of reconciliation. That God. Was reconciling. The world. To himself. In Christ.

Not counting. Men's sins. Against them. And he has committed. To us. The message. Of reconciliation. We are therefore. Christ ambassadors. As though Christ.

Were making his appeal. Through us. We implore you. On Christ's behalf. Be reconciled. To God. God.

[13 : 15] God made him. Who had no sin. To be sin. For us. So that in him. We might become. The righteousness. Of God. Did you hear the.

The. The. So those words. Of. He. God is making. An appeal. It's. It's. Uh. There's some.

He. Implores. We implore you. We. We are appealing. To you. Be reconciled. To God. And. And. And. That's a reflection. Of. Our father's. Heart. He.

Wants. To be reconciled. He's not content. To have us away. He's not content. For his desire. To have fellowship. And communion. With us. To be forever denied. That yearning.

That longing. Of his heart. To walk. With his. Children. He doesn't want. That forever. Delayed. So. He sends.

[14 : 11] His son. To bring about. Reconciliation. Reconciling him. To us. And us. To him. And so. We all.

Like sheep. Have gone astray. But the. Lord. Has laid on him. The iniquity. Of us all. And so. In Christ. This is. What it says. In love.

Christ took. All of our sin. That. That which. Separated us. That which. Separated. His heart. From our heart. That demanded. Justice. That demanded.

Punishment. That demanded. Our isolation. And us. Over here. And him. Over there. That. Jesus Christ. Took. And he died.

So that we could. Live. And not that we could live. No longer for ourselves. But for him. Who died for them. And who was raised again. He died to take us.

[15 : 05] Out of that. That isolated. Self-centered. Selfish. Godless. Way. Of living. He gave us life again.

With him. And for him. He died. And what did it say? To reconcile us. To himself. Through Christ. Reconciled. Again. The cross was to remove our sin.

To reconcile us to God. And God back to us. To restore what was lost. To create. Fellowship. To create. Communion.

To create peace. That we could. Walk with God. That we could. Talk with God. That we might live with him.

And for him. It says. He wasn't counting men's sins. Against them. Because he was counting those sins. Against his son. He was not counting them.

[16 : 08] Against us. Now. I want you to think. If you are. A Christian. If you are. In Jesus Christ. And this wonderful. Reconciliation. Has taken place. What is this saying. About. You. And about. How secure. You are. It's saying.

He's not counting. Our sins against us. Like we didn't do. Anything. Wrong. He's forgiven it. All. And so there's no. There's no sort of. Hidden baggage.

In. In the closet. No. God is. That. It doesn't have any. Hold over. Grudges. That he's. Keeping you. At a distance. That he's saying. Well.

I can't really. Be close to you. Because of. Of this. There's no. Old wrongs. That are. Unforgiven. He's not. Counting men's sins. Against them. And it's this. Full.

[17 : 02] Reconciliation. This full. Through. Sacrifice. Having. Fellowship. With God. Pastor John. Mentioned. Leviticus. In Leviticus. One of those.

Sacrifices. Was called. The fellowship. Offering. And in that. Fellowship. Offering. A sacrifice. Was made. And then. The sinner. And his family.

Ate. The meal. In. In the temple. With. God. It was a picture. Of. God. And man. That. They're. They're. Reconciled. They have fellowship.

They're eating. Together. And that was. What the cross. Was for. That was what. That meal. Pictured. What the cross. Was about. Not counting. Men's sins. Against them. So now.

That we can be. Standing. In the presence. Of God. Enjoying. The presence. Of God. Walking. With God. Having. Communion. With God. That we might.

[17 : 57] Become. The righteousness. Of God. So he. Became. Sin. All of our. Sinfulness. He. Became. That. The enemy.

The separated. That. And he. Was punished. On our. In our. Place. That we. Might. Become. This righteousness. Of God. So we.

Sang it. Last week. In the song. In his. Roves. From mine. Christ. God's. Beloved. God's. Beloved. Condemned. As though. His foe. His enemy. And he. As though. I. Accursed. And left. Alone. And I. As though. He. Embraced. And welcomed. Home. That's what the cross.

[18 : 53] Is about. Adam. It's about. The prodigal. Coming home. And being. Welcomed. And embraced. It's about. Adam. Being pulled.

Out of the. Out of the. The trees. And being. Forgiven. And all of us. In Adam. Who were hiding. And who.

Were dead. And we didn't want. Anything to do with him. To be brought back. Into the. To the family. Into the household. Into his grace. Is. It's about.

Going back. To the beginning. It's about. God. Giving us. Back. What we lost. We lost him. We lost. Our father.

We lost. Our place. In the father's house. We lost. Our good standing. We lost. Our good name. We lost everything. And it's. About God. Giving us. All of that. Back. In Christ. And it's about.

[19 : 46] God. Getting back. What he lost. Too. He lost. Us. He made us. For himself. To know us. To love us. To be known by us.

He made us. To seek him. And so now. David is. In the psalm. Saying. Earnestly. Lord. I seek your face. Now. That is an amazing. Change. That we would.

Want. To be with God. That we would. Want. To be close. And brothers. And sisters. I think. If your heart. Is anything like mine. And I know it is. Because the same spirit. Is in you. That is in me.

You want. To be close. To God. You want. To walk. With him. You want. To be like. Enoch. Walking with him. Every day. You want. To be close. And that's what the cross.

Is about. God lost us. And now. He's found us. He has us again. We lost him. And now. We found him. And that's what this communion meal is about.

[20 : 47] This communion meal. Is. Is a message. Of grace. To you. Dear believer. And what. John Calvin. Used to call the ordinances.

Visible. Words. If you can make. Gracious. Good. Gospel. Words. Come to life. And take on a picture. He's saying.

It would look like. Baptism. And it would. Look like. The Lord's Supper. That's what. This meal. Is a message of grace. To you. Dear believer. And what. Is.

The Lord. Saying. In this. He is saying. Believer. You are welcomed. You are home. God invites you.

To his table. He invites you. Again. To eat. And live. And enjoy. Life with him. Now you. You eat. With the people. That you love.

[21 : 43] You have these. Feast. Holiday meals. With the people. That you love. With your friends. And what. God is saying. Is. Eat with me. My friends. Have fellowship.

With me. You're welcomed. Because of Jesus Christ. And that's exactly. How. We have this fellowship. How are we bound.

Together with him. How are we. Reconciled. It's. This full. Reconciliation. Is through. Christ's body. And his blood. It's not about. Our feelings.

It's not about. God's feelings. It's resting. On Christ's. Sacrifice. Because he. Took our sin. And he was.

Punished. In our place. The sin. Was blotted. Out. And God's. Wrath. Was. Appeased. Was. Propitiated. And he was. So his.

[22 : 39] Sacrifice. Propitiated. It. Appeased. God's wrath. Well. How did it do that? Well. It blotted out. The guilt. Of it. The stain.

Of it. judgment. Bush. And so now there's no more stain, and so there's no more wrath. And so Romans 8, 1, therefore there's now no condemnation.

There is peace. There is friendship. And Christian, you are a welcomed member of God's family through Jesus Christ.

You're welcomed into his heart, into his friendship through Jesus Christ. You're reconciled through him, and it is a fact. It is a truth. And this is so important.

One thing that this meal is saying is know that that's true. Know it's true. Know that because of Jesus Christ's sacrifice, the breaking of his body, the shedding of his blood, you are welcomed.

[23 : 43] God wants you near. So don't doubt. Don't doubt that love. Don't fear. Instead, rejoice in your father's love.

Instead, rejoice in your father's heart. He wants you close. He wants you walking with him. He wants that daily communion and fellowship with him.

And so after we're done here tonight, the word is remain in that love. Remain there. You are in his love.

And Jesus says, remain in his love. Walk in it. He made you for this. This is what he made you for. This is how he made you. And now Jesus died to make you a new creation.

A fresh start. And so after we're done tonight. Go out and walk with him. Live with him. Have dealings with him.

[24 : 44] Talk to him. Praise him. Listen. Pray. Have fellowship with him. Don't let any sin keep you away. Don't let any guilty conscience keep you away from him.

John says there is no need to stay away. And he says if we walk in the light as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another. And the blood of Jesus, his son, purifies us from all sin.

But you say, but I have sin. I have sin. I have daily sin. And yes, you do. I do. But if we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.

Forgiveness. What John is saying is because of this sacrifice, you have no reason to stay away.

Come confess your sins and receive the forgiveness. God doesn't want you to stay away. You've been gone long enough.

[25 : 53] However many years you walked in your sin, it was long enough. He lost you for long enough of a time. And so come in.

Just think of Jesus' words again. We should be like those little chicks nestling in to Jesus. When we're afraid, nestle in.

When you're, when you feel guilty and your conscience is afflicting you, that's, you nestle in. You hide under his wings. When you're happy, you nestle in.

And so enjoy tonight. Enjoy hearing, again, by faith, your father saying, you are a welcomed Christian. You're a welcomed child. And then walk with him.

Stay in his love and talk with him. Live in this wonderful love that he has for you. That's what God wants. That's what he wants.

[26 : 57] That's what he wants for you. That's what he yearns for. That's the whole reason Jesus Christ died. Was to bring us to this place where we could have fellowship with him.

That you might have everyday communion with the father again. And so that's why we have to do this again and again, this meal. Because we need to hear that word again.

That welcoming word. We need to hear it again. And we need to enjoy it now. And then we need to go out of here and remain in that love.

Enjoy that welcome here. And stay in that welcome as we're walking through our lives. And when we pick up sin and our feet get dirty, we go to Jesus and be washed and sit down again for the meal.

So, enjoy tonight and remain in his love afterwards. Okay.