

# Fig Leaves and Other Coverings

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Audio Transcripts of Sunday Sermons

Smashwords Edition

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## Fig Leaves and Other Coverings (4 sermons)

*The church of Jesus' day had the Bible, had the promises, had all kinds of things; but they did not have the heart of God for broken, damaged people.*

*Jesus told the story of the Good Samaritan to actually confront what the church of His day was like. It was not connecting to those who were wounded, and desperately in need of healing.*

*Why is it we need to learn how to move in the spirit, and prophecy, and operate in the gifts of the spirit? So when we engage people in need, we have something to give to them. Why do you need to get trained, to flow in the gifts of the spirit, and the anointing of the Holy Ghost? So you have something to pour into people God is sending you to.*

*God is sending every believer, every believer, God sends us somewhere into this community to influence people; and to do it, you have to enter their world.*

*So what about these religious people? They had too many hang ups, and things in their life, and so they did not catch the heart of God. They actually hid away from being involved with the broken. They disconnected from the broken.*

[Fig Leaves and Other Christian Coverings \(1 of 4\)](#) We're going to look at some stuff that stops us actually being authentic and moving forward. Your personal testimony of what God has done, and is doing, is going to impact the people around you. That's why it has to be fresh. You can't live out of something from yesterday. We have to be current with God. So if I asked you what has God done, or has been doing, you should be able to tell me something reasonably recently, and if you're going back three or four years, then it's time you got near to God again, and believe to see good things happening in your life

[Fig Leaves and Other Christian Coverings \(2 of 4\)](#) Weird things we do in church, that make us hard to relate to. If you're going to love anyone, you have to connect meaningfully with them. With God we grow and mature to have power and impact the community. We can all make a difference in someone's world.

[Fig Leaves and Other Christian Coverings \(3 of 4\)](#) God sees the heart that responds and work with it. Holy Spirit speaks to an open heart. We won't go forward if we don't grow. Be able to receive grace, don't beat yourself up. Ask God to help, guide, show you, and enable you to get up – have a heart good to God. Ask forgiveness, help – grace and goodness will come to the humble. You will then be able to show grace and minister to others, to enter other people's lives. We need to take responsibility to grow and change otherwise we don't have anything to give to other people. Authenticity with God is to be passionate and willing to grow. Don't stay where you are, step forward, move on, step up.

[Fig Leaves and Other Christian Coverings \(4 of 4\)](#) You're consumed with trying to control your world. To slow down means you have to say this: God is control, and I don't need to be in control of the world. It was here before I came. It'll be here after I leave, and I am not God, I don't have to be in charge - so I can stop. I can let God take care of the world, while I just connect with God.

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## Fig Leaves and Other Christian Coverings (1 of 4)

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*We're going to look at some stuff that stops us actually being authentic and moving forward. Your personal testimony of what God has done, and is doing, is going to impact the people around you. That's why it has to be fresh. You can't live out of something from yesterday. We have to be current with God. So if I asked you what has God done, or has been doing, you should be able to tell me something reasonably recently, and if you're going back three or four years, then it's time you got near to God again, and believe to see good things happening in your life*

I want you to just open your Bibles with me in Luke, Chapter 10. I want to just talk over a couple of Sundays on Fig Leaves and Other Coverings, particularly Christian coverings. You can put the word 'Christian' if you like on the title, but we're going to look at some stuff that stops us actually being authentic and moving forward. Its ways that people carry on in church - you're aware that so often in the church, the condition of marriages is not a lot better than it is out in the world. There's something really wrong there, wouldn't you say?

So often people are struggling with the same message people in the world are struggling with, can't seem to get a breakthrough. That's not very helpful in terms of our witness, and so we want to look at two levels; firstly, where God wants to take us. We want to look also at removing some of the obstacles, and we're going to share a few things on that. Here's an interesting scripture in Luke Chapter 8, where Jesus had delivered this man who was totally demonised. His life was totally a mess. The man wanted to follow Him, and Jesus said this to him. He said: go to your home and testify the good things God has done for you. In other words, He said: the first thing I want you to do is, I want you to go into your home environment, and into that area where people know the kind of person you were, and let them know about how good God is, and let them see how your life has changed. Let them know it.

The Bible says that that region there was so oppressed by demonic powers, it implies it through the scriptures there, and the people so filled with fear, they actually asked Jesus to leave. Then when this man got testifying, it was so changed when Jesus came back, everyone wanted to hear him. One man - he's a Christian for one day, and his ministry overflows and impacts a whole region, and everyone turns around. How did he do it? It wasn't because of all his Bible knowledge. It wasn't because of a lot of things. It was because he had a testimony of a life experience with the Lord, that no one could challenge, and that became the weapon God opened up a whole area. So your personal testimony of what God has done, and is doing, is going to impact the people around you. That's why it has to be fresh. You can't live out of something from yesterday. We have to be current with God. So if I asked you what has God done, or has been doing, you should be able to tell me something reasonably recently, and if you're going back three or four years, then it's time you got near to God again, and believe to see good things happening in your life. Amen.

A couple of weeks ago we shared our own testimony, and shared on two key principles in our own testimony: the principle of honour; the principle of humility. When we shared just what God had done in our lives, there was hardly anyone that wasn't affected, because testimony has power to change you. We didn't share about all our successes. We just shared about where we were broken, and Jesus helped us. Not how good or how great or what giftings, or how much anointing or what experience. What we did was share about the goodness of God in people who've failed and broken lives. That is what touches hearts. It gives hope something could be different, so we're going to look in this parable. It's the parable of the Good Samaritan, and we'll get to the fig leaves part hopefully. This gives you the overall setting of where I believe God wants us to move, and why we need to address the things in our lives that stop us carrying the life of God, and the enthusiasm, the joy, and the passion of the Holy Ghost.

Let's have a look in Luke, Chapter 10. You know the story, and a lawyer had spoken to Jesus. He said to Him: well teacher, what should I do to inherit eternal life? He asked him: what's in the law, what do you read? He said: you shall - now look at this - love the Lord your God with just your mind? No, he says: love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, all your strength, all your mind, everything; and your neighbour as yourself! He said: you've done right, do this and live.

Now notice what Jesus identified was the primary thing above all things. Number one, this one, if you're doing this, you're doing okay. He says: love the Lord fervently, every part of you. Your mind has got to learn how to love the Lord. Your emotions, love the Lord with your emotions; love the Lord with your body; love the Lord with your spirit; every part of us. We tend to re-read it. We read it like this: love the Lord with your spirit on Sunday. But that's not what it says. It tells us that the commandment is, the one commandment that sums the whole Bible up is: passionate love, wholehearted love, your heart, that's your emotions, your mind, your thoughts, your feelings, your body, your strength - passionately loving God. You can understand then, if there's no passionate expression in a service where God's people are gathered, there is something wrong! It's not fulfilling what Jesus said is the number one thing to do - to love Him.

We love Him because He first loved us, so we need to begin to experience His love, and as we experience His love, we allow His love to bring healing, restoration, change in life; and we express something. We must express something, and it's not just - notice Jesus didn't say it was all about God word. He said: it's also about touching people. Listen, loving people is the number one indicator of how you're doing with God. Now how mature you are, how really you've caught the heart of God, it must come into our interactions with people. Spirituality, without engaging people, does become totally disconnected, and irrelevant, and part of the problem. God calls us to engage Him, to have encounters and experiences with Him, and then to overflow with what we have to people, who desperately have need. Jesus made it very, very clear: God loves us passionately!

Now God is not some person up there who's heavy, and serious and grim, who's got a big stick, and He's looking at you. He's not like that. The Bible says: He rejoices over you with joy and rejoicing! God is passionate. We are made in His image and likeness. Jesus was a passionate person. You say: oh that's not me - well you're messed up. There's something wrong. You're missing out on life. You're missing out on something, because Jesus, we're designed by God to reflect what He's like. If you look at the life of Jesus, He was an amazing person. He represents fully what God is like, and He was very passionate. He rejoiced. That means He laughed, and celebrated, and rejoiced. He wept openly over the grief of His friends. He prayed, He prayed with strong crying, that's passionate, and with tears - that's emotion.

When He was facing oppression, and a struggle, and the greatest challenge of His life; going into the garden, knowing tomorrow He's going to die, He wanted friends to be with Him - and He was sad that they wouldn't stick with Him. Before He came into this experience, He wanted them to come with Him; He wanted friendship. We just don't see sometimes, how full of expression Jesus was. Kids loved Him. Kids like smiley faces. Anyone who knows kids - they like smiley faces. You've got a serious face, they don't respond. They just see - the body is saying it all - heavy face, keep away. Adults are pretty much the same aren't we? See, so God is full of expression. Look at the expression and everywhere you look, there's expression, so God wants us to have expression, learn to be able to do that.

Now as we read the story here, you're going to see where Jesus is now illustrating, what He's talking about. Now of course when we read this parable of the Good Samaritan, you're going to put yourself somewhere in that story you know. Even as I read it out, you're going to mentally put yourself somewhere. Now maybe you're the guy on the road beaten up and dying; I'm bleeding to death, someone help me or even notice me. Maybe you're thinking: oh, I'm a bit like the Good Samaritan you know? Every now and then I help people out, you know? But almost no one will say that they're the priest, or the Pharisee, or the Levite. We don't want to be that, yet more often than not we are. That's why He told the story; it's to talk about what loving God passionately, and loving your neighbour as yourself really looks like, okay? It's more than just being in a service, and being excited on Sunday.

He said a certain man - Verse 30 - went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves, who stripped him of his clothing, wounded him and departed, leaving him half dead. Now by chance a certain priest came down the road, and when he saw him, well he passed by on the other side. He's got to get to a prayer meeting you know. Likewise a Levite, when he arrived at the same place, he came and he looked - so they both looked, they both saw him, you see. And he passed by on the other side. He crossed over the other road, so he wouldn't have to go there; listen, I'm busy mate, I've got a meeting, I've got a Bible study to do, I've got my home group to get to. You just don't understand how busy I am, I've got to get to things! I'm sorry, you know? But a certain Samaritan - now Jesus is using the Samaritan. It illustrates, of course, Him. Samaritans were despised. The priest and the Levite were spiritual people supposedly.

And he went to him, and he bandaged his wounds, pouring on the oil and the wine; he set him on his own animal, took him to an inn and took care of him.

The next day, when he departed, he took out some money, gave it to the innkeeper, and said to him: take care of him; whatever more you spend, when I come again, I will repay you. Who do you think was the neighbour, to the one who fell among thieves? And he said: the one who showed mercy; and Jesus said: well go and do likewise. Remember the original question is: well who's my neighbour? Jesus reverses it, and said: listen, that commandment's not about finding who's your neighbour. That commandment is about BECOMING a neighbour! Turn to someone and say: howdy neighbour! [Laughter] Okay, now you notice in the story here he talks about, he's trying to explain or bring a message out, to a certain kind of people. He's talking to church people here, not talking to the unsaved. He's talking to church people, about what true, mature spirituality looks like - and so there's a priest.

The priest was one who actually ministered in the presence of God; and you and I are all called to be priests to God. He was a Levite, a Levite served in the house of God; so a Levite was also a special person, set apart. You could say that the priest and the Levite could easily be us, because we're all called to be priests, and to minister to God, to worship Him, praise Him, be in His presence, experience Him, love Him. And the Levite, the Levite represents a person who was serving, or involved in serving. So no matter how spiritual you are, it fits almost everyone who is a believer here today; we're in the house of God, we're serving, we're worshipping, we're doing something today. Now it says there's certain things that they did. It says - you notice the things that they did. They looked, and they saw the guy, and they actually would not engage in helping him. This is the point Jesus is making.

Now if you have a look at those people, automatically in our heart we say: well I wouldn't be those people; I'm not like that. You know this is the kinds of things they did, let's tick them off: one, they knew the Bible and read the Bible, okay. Number two, they went to church regularly. They were actually really committed people, probably more committed than some here today; and third, they fasted - they fasted every week - more fasting than some people here do; so they were pretty good people weren't they? And what else did they do? Well they tithed. They tithed of everything, very diligent about their tithing, probably more diligent than some of us are, and so they did these things, and they actually had really good behaviour, so if you looked at them, well, they're all really well behaved church-going people, see?

Now here's the problem. Their spirituality didn't go into the heart, and didn't change the way they lived their life. In other words, they had their experiences, and their programs, and their things that they did on Sunday and through the week; but it never overflowed to what God intended. You've got to understand that when God created us, He had an intention. The first intention is that we be an ambassador, a child of God, one of His representatives, His family to represent Him in the earth. The second is, that out of that position, or relationship of friendship, sonship with God, we would then bring His life into the earth, and change the environment. Now what He's showing here is, here's some people who are caught up in church world, but there is no overflow to any person who's in need, no overflow! They are preoccupied and busy with church, and there is no overflow from their life to a genuine person in need, and this is what Jesus is really looking at.

Now what they did was their focus was spiritual matters; oh I need to pray; need to go to church, got a meeting to take; got a lot of things to do. They were absorbed in their own world, their religious world, their world of spiritual things, their world of church activities. Now it's great to be involved in church activities. I'm all in for building the house of God, but Jesus is trying to point something that's missing. He's not saying any of those things were wrong; the problem is, they didn't actually understand what the heart of God was. Notice, that in all of their spirituality, they avoided people in need. Notice both of them saw him, and one actually crossed the other side of the road, to avoid him. Now the last couple of weeks of course, we've been having a simple exercise just getting people to be friendly. What I've been watching is to see who avoids who. Come on - to see if people are actually avoiding talking to people; and if we are, we need to realise we're missing something.

We've come to church. We're all in the right environment, but something is missing at the core of understanding of the heart of God, and that reflects a change we need to address in our lives. Now you see on a Sunday, there'll be people come who are part of the family of God; you're regular here, you come in and you enjoy what God is doing. There's others who come, and they're visitors, they're enquiring, they're new people. My concern firstly, is for every new person, the stranger in our midst; and then I look and I see: is this in your heart to stretch across to them; and smile and say: hello, it's great to see you. Now we actually do extremely well as a church. I reports continually of how friendly we are, but when I look around I see there are numbers of people, who for whatever reason, you've chosen are not stepping up to engage people. This is the lesson Jesus is talking about. People are in need.

This guy here had started out on a journey. He represents anyone in life, and on the way the thieves, that's a picture of demonic powers, came and wounded him and stole what he had. So this is a picture of any person, who has started out in life and ended up in turmoil, pain, conflict, hurt, wounded, broken, and they're bleeding, and they're in need of someone to represent God and come to them. This is what we are called to do. We're called to first of all be in relationship with our Father; and as sons, represent His heart. That's why Jesus is bringing this parable out. The religious people proposed that they represented what God was on about, but in their activities, actually didn't carry His heart. That's what He's trying to show up, what loving God passionately, and loving your neighbour as yourself, is about. It's not saying: don't pray, don't read your Bible, don't come to church, don't tithe. It's not saying any of those things.

Jesus actually reinforced all of those things, but He said: they need to lead to carrying the life of God to people who are broken; and there's not one of us doesn't meet people like that. You cannot go through a week, without meeting someone who is on the side of the road broken, wounded, bleeding; and if you know what to look for, you can see it easily. It's everywhere, and you and I, are we so busy with our life that we can't engage these people; or have we got something of the heart of God, and we're just looking for the ones God has called us to minister to? That's where we're going to move in the coming year. We'll be actually equipping, and stirring, and mobilising the church, to begin to become aware of its responsibility in the community, its responsibility to bring the life of God to people.

I've just been so thrilled too just at the works of Celia and Sargin and others have done, just going out into - even just out into the show grounds and moving prophetically. They've actually brought God to people, and they wept when they felt God, but every one of us can do that. Every one of us can do it, in all kinds of different ways - so you notice that they were disconnected from people and opportunity. They actually didn't even see opportunity when it came. I mean there's the guy right there, lying there on the road, and they were disconnected from people, disconnected from opportunity, disconnected from the heart and the purpose of God. Not only that, it just revealed that they were broken people themselves. The biggest reason that we don't engage and get involved with people, is because we're afraid that we won't be able to cope with their problems, and cope with them; which means there are issues in our own life we need to sort through, so we can enter the world of another, and not be overwhelmed by their needs, and just be able to just say: no, that's yours. This is how much I help.

You see the principles of this beautifully in the story of the Good Samaritan. It's absolutely amazing how it's done, but the thing is these guys had missed their purpose. They'd missed the divine design, and that's the issue that God is speaking to the church about, worldwide at the moment, in different ways. You'll hear it in all kinds of different ways, different language, different terminology; but in the end, it's the same thing. It's the church arising, and beginning to enter and engage the community, with the power and the presence of God; and to do that we've got to get honest about where we're really at, in terms of our equipping to do it, relationally and spiritually. Notice what this man did, the Samaritan. I love this guy here. Now these guys were religious people, but this guy here demonstrated really what the heart of God is, so we'll look at this, here it is. Notice the first thing he said: a certain Samaritan. Now a certain Samaritan came where he was, and he saw him, and he had compassion. He felt something, when he saw a person in need.

Now if you lack compassion, ask the Lord to give it to you, ask the Lord. Begin to pray: God, give me compassion, help me to feel the struggles of people, and equip me to be able to minister to them. I can't deliver every demon out of the people in this city - you've got to do it. Think about it. The next thing he did - so the first thing was, a feeling thing. Notice the other guys had no feeling at all. They looked, and they saw, and said: it's not my issue, keep out of my life. Now that's actually a culture that's come through the western world: don't get involved. We've got to change that. That's not - we're not called to represent that culture. We're called to bring the culture of God. The culture of God is get engaged, get involved where He leads you - not everything, you can't meet every need. You've got to know your limits, and that's part of what we'll talk about as well.

So here's what he did. He felt something, and then he initiated connection. Now people don't turn up. I don't sit in an office waiting for people to come to me. I've got more people who want to come to me than you could ever imagine, but they can't all come to me. Usually I've initiated contact in some way. The majority of people I get to minister to, I initiate the contact with. You've got to learn to be an initiator, to actually: here I am Lord; now I can't meet every need. I'm not even going to try to meet every need, but there's something I can do today to help someone, and I'm going to do it - it may even just be a smile, whole heaps of ways we can do it. We need to learn some of those ways, and whatever level we're at, we can all get engaged, you can all initiate connection with someone who is hurt. Now that means - it may just mean getting up out of your seat, going to someone who's sitting on their own, say: hi, how you doing? Can I just talk - can I buy you a cup of coffee afterwards? That is what this is about, initiating connection.

Here's the next thing he did, he went to him, and then he identified where he was broken. Now that takes a bit more skill. We need to learn some skills how to do that, but he basically - he had to go there, and he had to look at the guy, and find out where he was bleeding. Now he didn't sort of stand away - ooh, I wonder where he's bleeding. He actually went there, and inspected him and checked him out, and found out where he was hurting and in pain. Now you have to do that by being able to be a good listener, and a good talker, and you can grow in that area, but most people if you listen to them, will open up and tell you where they're hurt, if you really care about them. Then the next thing - I love this bit - he said: he poured in the oil and the wine. Now the oil and the wine always in the Bible speak of the ministry of the Holy Ghost. Now remember this is what true love is about. It's not just doing practical things to help people; it's actually carrying the anointing of God, and having something supernatural to put in someone's life.

To have that oil and wine, he must have brought it. He must have paid a price, to have the anointing of the Holy Ghost at work in his life; so when he went to people, when he found out the needs, when he saw what the problem was, he had something he could put in. He had that anointing of the Holy Ghost, a word of comfort, a word of encouragement, deliverance, healing, ministry of some kind. Every one of us, you've got the Holy Ghost to do that work, and if you don't know what to do, commit in the coming year - get trained. Get trained! Learn how to bring God to people, and also be willing to face what stops you going to people and engaging them. That's an internal thing. The other's easy to learn, and it's a part of a lifestyle. This is what Jesus talked about, this is it, this is the thing see? Notice here, poured in the oil and wine. Now I love that part, because that's all the apostolic commission. That is all about the apostolic commission: go into the world, as a sent person, sent by God.

If you start to think: where I live, where I work, where I go to school - that is where God sent me. I am apostolically commissioned to go there, and to discover those that God called me to minister to; and then to engage them, by initiating the connection, find out where the needs are, and bring something of God to them. Every believer is called to do that. You cannot hide in a prayer meeting, and fulfil the call of God. The prayer meeting, we engage God, we build with Him, we draw from Him, we experience Him. Then we fulfil the great commission, by going and touching people with what we've experienced. We've got to learn how to do that - so that's the apostolic commission. Now the second part, is in here as well, is the area of pastoral care and discipleship. Now here's the thing that's interesting. The guy knew his limits. He knew he could not do it all himself; and one of the great skills you've got to learn, is where your limits are. You can't do it all yourself, and neither does God expect you to. We've got at times learn to draw lines, and say: no more; even if people want more.

There's others can carry it on, so what he did was the next thing you see, the pastoral care and discipleship. He took him to the Inn. The inn, in the Bible here, is a picture of the local church, a community of believers. He took him to a place, and connected him with other people who could help him. You don't have to have all the answers, you've just got to be willing to have a good feeling for people, and when you see them in need, go to them, and do what you can. Then attract them to where someone else can carry on the job. Notice the next thing he did; he provided resources to ensure that the man's recovery took place; and then he checked up, and followed him up, to see how it was. Now Jesus said that's what loving God with all your heart, and loving your neighbour as yourself, is all about. It actually is revealed, not in the Bible school, not in the worship service, not in any of these things. It is revealed in the way you connect with, and touch the lives, of people.

Now it doesn't mean that the others aren't important. They are vitally important. Is it important to pray? Yes. Is it important to worship? Yes. Is it important to engage God? Of course, this is where the source is. But if you access the source, and never fulfil the purpose, you've frustrated the plan of God. He said in Acts 1 verse 8: you shall receive glorious power from on high; visions, dreams, revelations, prophecies, all kinds of wonderful things! And you can just wallow in them, enjoy them like a pig in a hollow. [Laughter] He didn't say that, did He? He said: no, you get them; and He said: then that's what equips you, to go to Jerusalem, the local town where you live, Judea, all around us in the Bay and in Samaria and beyond, everywhere. He said: that is the purpose of the Holy Ghost! It's given to you, to get you out there, so you can be a representative of God, and minister God to people! That's what it's about.

It's not about meetings. Meetings are about encouragement, engaging God, being built up, but actually our life call is about engaging God, allowing Him to shape us, so we can represent Him in the community; and you know what He is like? He even left heaven, and came to a grubby, dirty, sinful world, and engaged it. Does that cost you something? It sure does. Does that hurt you a bit? Ooh ooh, just look at the nail prints! Do people like you for it? Not always! Is it messy? Incredibly! Do you have times when people let you down? Just believe that! That's why the Holy Ghost is given to you, so you can be healed of your hurts, and carry on with the fire of God, and minister to people.

That's what Jesus said this is about. That is the church He's building. That's what He had in mind, a spirit filled, Holy Ghost, blood clean, people who are passionate for God, expressive of God, and not ashamed to tell God they love Him, and encounter Him, and spend time in His presence! But then when they get out of the meeting, they're in the

mission field, and they're ambassadors. They're apostolic company of people, anointed by the Holy Ghost, and they've got some changing to do around them, got a mandate to shift something. The trouble is, years ago the church got into a rapture doctrine, and most Christians are waiting for Jesus to come, and hoist them out of it. It's all a lie. He's called you to get into it, and mess in with it, get rolling around in it; and do you get hurt? Yeah, you'll get a bit hurt! Have a look around, it's the history of the church, gets hurt - doesn't it? Have a look how it started. Have a look at the founder - but that's what we're called to do.

We're called to carry a glorious mission, to live out a great cause, that our community would change, that the people around us would be impacted by Jesus Christ, that God's power from heaven would come into the earth, passivity would be overcome, that negativity would be overcome, apathy overcome, sickness overcome, oppression overcome. Something changing, because God's people woke up to why He put them on the earth! [Applause] And said: yes Lord, I will be like the Good Samaritan. I'll pay the price for the wine and the oil. I'll pay the price, to get my life touched and experience You, and then look out world! I'm just waiting for someone to pour the oil and the wine into! That's the shift God is making worldwide. It's always been what He intended, it's just sometimes we get caught up in all kinds of other stuff. Let's keep the main thing, the main thing: engaging God, and bringing God to people, and seeing their lives changed.

Will you be part of that? You better believe it. That's where we're going, that's where God is leading His church, worldwide. It's not just what we're doing here; it's where God is leading His church world wide! World wide! This gospel, this great news of Jesus Christ, and the kingdom of God and the power of God; it must, it MUST be proclaimed, to all the ends of the earth! It must be! Will you be part of that? Will you prepare yourself? Will you break out of whatever restricts you? If you can't go to people, ask God: what is wrong with me, help me to break out of it. Get into some course and get delivered or healed; learn some relationship skills; learn how to get the anointing of God to flow through you; and then go for it and make a difference! Go for it and make a difference!

Oh I tell you something, there's no limits to the person that says: I am here for a purpose, to reach the world for Christ, to make disciples of Jesus Christ, and advance the kingdom of our glorious God and Saviour. Can you say Amen to that? Let's stand and give the Lord a great clap. Come on, let's stand and give Him a great clap [applause] halleluia! This is our destiny! This is what we are called to do! This is the church of the living God! Sons and daughters, carrying the heart of God, and the capacity to minister the life of God to people. My goodness, come on church, let's clap, let's rise and shake the dust off us. Stand up on the inside, begin to believe I can make a difference! My life will make a difference! I no longer live in that place down there. I'll stand and fulfil my destiny!

## Summary Notes

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### 1. Introduction:

- Luke 10 – The region was oppressed by demonic powers, they asked Jesus to leave.
- One man, a Christian for one day, testified of the life experience with God and how this impacted the people of that region.
- Draw near to God to see good things for testimony. Testimony has the power to change us, to share about the goodness of God. It gives hope to something that is different.
- Luke 8:39-40 – “Return to your house (home) and tell (testify) what great things God has done for you!”
- The Power of Testimony – Telling others of your experience of the Goodness of God.
- A whole city was impacted – not by preaching but by the testimony of a changed life.
- Our Personal Testimony:
  - i) Humility – openness about our failures, struggles, pain, freed others to admit them.
  - ii) Honor – acknowledging the Goodness of God brought hope to others.
- Sin always has consequences – bad choices have bad consequences.
- Forgiveness removes the guilt and establishes the connection with God but a person will still experience the consequences.
- Christians have the tendency to cover their struggles and remain broken and alone.

### 2. The Great Commandment - Fervent love:

- Luke 10:27 – “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength and with all your mind and your neighbor as yourself”.
- The priority of fervent loving relationships is declared by Jesus.
- We are human beings created to reflect and carry the image of God.
- God loves passionately – He is expressive.
- How we express something in connecting/loving people is the number one indicator of how our relationship with God is.
- Spirituality without God = disconnected with people.
- He rejoices over you, He is a passionate God.
- We are designed by God to reflect what He is like – He is full of expression.
- Jesus is full of expression e.g. prayed in the garden, strong tears flowed and He wanted friendship.

a) The Religious Spirit is devoid of Compassion:

- The parable of the Good Samaritan – verse 30 – 37.
- The wounded man represents any person in life.
- Priests and Levites represent religious people.

Priest = we're all called to be priests, to minister, to praise, experience and love.

Levites = served in the house of God as we serve in the house of God.

=> They knew the Bible, fasted, go to church, they tithe, have good behaviour. Good behaved spiritual church people – but it never overflowed to what God intended - it didn't flow through their hearts. They are so caught up in church flow that there is no overflow to other people in need, they cross to the other side of the road. Don't want to get involved. In their activities they didn't represent God.

- Religious People – supposed to be Godly representatives:
- Focused on spiritual matters.
- Self absorbed in their own life.
- Avoided people in need.
- Disconnected from people and opportunity.
- Revealed their own brokenness covered in spiritual fig leaves.
- Had no concept of Divine Design to be God's ambassadors.
- 1 John 3:14-18
- Becoming a neighbor is not just to love a neighbor.
- Samaritans were despised by people.
- Carry the life of God to people who needs it. Are we too busy to see those people? It is our responsibility to bring the heart of God to people.
- The Priest and Levite missed an opportunity. They missed what God wanted to do. They have issues in their own lives they have to deal with. They missed their divine design.

b) True religion/Spirituality is revealed by Relationships with People:

- The Good Samaritans' actions revealed his spiritual maturity.
- Compassion, ask God for it.
- Feeling, Initiated connection. Apostolic Commission
- Identified the man's brokenness, he (Reaching out to the Lost) went there and inspected. Good listener and good talker.
- Poured in oil and wine, carried anointing of God, something supernatural given to others, anointing of the Holy Spirit. Pastoral care/Discipleship
- Took him to an Inn. (Healing and Restoration)
- Provided for his ongoing healing.
- Recognized healing is a process.
- Embraced the need for others to help.
- It's for the Church to arise and enter to engage the community to equip and connect relationally.
- Go into the world as a sent person - wherever you go. Every believer is called to do this.
- So often people are part of a Church body but are unable to heal others because their own lives are broken and they won't admit it.
- So often there is a gap between beliefs and experience (how to live life)
- Pastoral care and discipleship, he knew his limits. (Can't do it all yourself). He took him to an Inn, (Church) – where someone else can do the job. He also provided resources.
- To access the source and never give out leads to frustration.
- Acts 1:8
- Engage God, allow Him to shape us and give back to others. It comes at a cost.
- The Holy Spirit is given to us and heals us when things go wrong. We will get hurt, won't be liked, it won't always be fun, it will get messy, it comes at a cost like the oil and wine came at a cost to the Samaritan.
- We are called to carry a Glorious Mission, people around us impacted by Jesus and to see how their lives change.
- It must be proclaimed in the entire world. Will you be part of it?
- Learn and build yourself – go for it and make a difference.

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## Fig Leaves and Other Christian Coverings (2 of 4)

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*Weird things we do in church, that make us hard to relate to. If you're going to love anyone, you have to connect meaningfully with them. With God we grow and mature to have power and impact the community. We can all make a difference in someone's world.*

I want you to open your bible with me in Luke 10, and I started a message, didn't get very far on it, but we'll see if we can do a bit better today, and we're looking at Fig Leaves and Other Christian Coverings. Weird things we do in church, that make us hard to relate to. We're just going to read in Luke Chapter 10, and Jesus has been asked a question: what shall I do to inherit eternal life? He said: well what do you reckon the Bible says? He said: you shall love the Lord your God - Verse 27 - with all your heart, all your soul, all your strength, and all your mind; and your neighbour as yourself - and Jesus said: you've got it, you've got it. You shall love the Lord with all your heart, all your mind, all your soul, all your strength. In other words, that is a passionate, expressive, dynamic relationship with God;



and He says: it doesn't finish there. You love your neighbour as yourself. It's one big package. Its one big package; loving God fervently, passionately, and then overflowing to express that, and represent what God is like to people.

This is the core of it. Now listen, notice this, that if you're going to love anyone, you have to connect meaningfully with them, so if we're going to love God passionately we must establish a connection, a vital connection with Him, a prayer life, an act of faith, believing, reaching up to Him, talking to Him, listening to Him. If we're going to love our neighbour as ourselves, we need to actually connect with what's going on in our life. A lot of people are unable to love, and express love well to people, and help people and enter their life, because they themselves have got too much junk, too much unresolved stuff, and God is wanting us to get cleaned up, not just so we can be better people, but so we can have greater impact in the lives of others. He said: love your neighbour - you can't love your neighbour unless you connect with them, by entering their world. If we're going to fulfil what Jesus said is the great command, where everything in the Bible is summed up, and we're going to love Him passionately and then begin to love people, we have to learn how to connect into their world, how to reach out to them.

That's why Jesus told the story, to illustrate what He meant. You know the story of the Good Samaritan, I'm not going to go through it all. I just want to pick up one verse in it. I think its Verse 27. It says: because the religious man, the priest, had gone by; saw the man in need, desperately wounded, desperately broken. He looked, and he was aware there was a problem, but he would not get involved. The Levite, he also went by, came over and looked at the man, saw him, crossed the other side and would not get involved. Now Jesus is trying to speak to the church of His day, in the same way He's trying to speak to the church of today; that not getting involved is not an option. You notice what He says, He talks then about the Good Samaritan. The Samaritans were despised. He's painting a picture of himself, as the one who was despised. He was despised, because he connected with people, connected with sinners, connected with tax collectors, connected with prostitutes, he connected with broken people, and his critic's main criticism was: he hangs out with the wrong kinds of people.

For most Christians, it won't be said of you that that was true. It's true, because once you've been in church for a little while, you begin to forget the lost, begin to forget the people who God has sent us to reach out to. Jesus then talked about this man, and it says this. I won't take it any further than this, then I want to go into Genesis 3 - and notice what the man did. It says: he saw him, his heart was touched and moved. Here is a man who has the heart of God. The heart of God is for people. God loves people, He loves the world, He loves Hastings, loves Napier. There may be many things wrong, but God still loves the people that live here; and this man was moved by the plight of the man, went to him, and entered his world, found out what was wrong, and did what he could to minister to him. Listen, Jesus told this, to illustrate that this is what the heart of God is like. This is what spiritual maturity looks like.

Spiritual maturity looks like: going to people, and bringing the love, and the compassion, and the anointing of the Holy Ghost; and pouring it into their lives. That's what spiritual maturity looks like. It doesn't look like: you prophecy well. It doesn't look like: you do all kinds of church things well, that's family business, but it looks like: you go to people, and you help people who desperately need help. That's what spiritual maturity looks like. That's what the heart of God looks like. That's why Jesus told this story. I just kind of feel to hang out in this story of the Good Samaritan, I'm just getting so much from it. So what about these two - the priest and the Levite? Well they were the church of the day, and the church of the day walked past the broken, the needy and the wounded; and would not cross over, and be engaged in being part of the solution.

The church of Jesus' day had the Bible, had the promises, had all kinds of things; but they did not have the heart of God for broken, damaged people; and so Jesus told the story, to actually confront what the church of His day was like. It was not connecting to those who were wounded, and desperately in need of healing. Why is it we need to learn how to move in the spirit, and prophecy, and operate in the gifts of the spirit? So when we engage people in need, we have something to give to them. Why do you need to get trained, to flow in the gifts of the spirit, and the anointing of the Holy Ghost? So you have something to pour into people God is sending you to. God is sending every believer, every believer, God sends us somewhere into this community to influence people; and to do it, you have to enter their world. So what about these religious people? They had too many hang ups, and things in their life, and so they did not catch the heart of God.

They actually hid away from being involved with the broken. They disconnected from the broken, and I want to just touch on that for a couple of weeks; and we're going to go into Genesis, Chapter 3, and pick up this whole theme of fig leaves. I want you to see something about the fall; Genesis, Chapter 3, Verse 7. After Adam and Eve had sinned - before they sinned, they were able to relate freely one to another; then the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and so they did something. They sewed fig leaves together, and covered themselves up. They became conscious of something. They became conscious of themselves. There was no self-consciousness before then, no shyness before then, no bad relationships before then. They covered themselves with fig leaves, then

they heard the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden, in the cool of the day, and they hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God.

Now I want you to see two things in there; number one is, they put on fig leaves. In other words, they covered up what they were truly like. They covered themselves, and withdrew from intimate connection, or heart connection, one with another. A consequence of the fall, is a struggle we have in being genuine and authentic, and connecting with people just as we are. We tend to want to cover ourselves up, put on a good front, an image - but God is not interested in image. He's not interested in fig leaves. He is wanting you to be authentic. He has a provision for you, where you don't have to cover up your life, you can live an authentic life, and authentic people are able to connect with others. People who are covered up, and all of their life is damaged, broken and they're living with most of their life covered, cannot enter into close relationships. Notice the second thing they did, they hid. They avoided connecting. When God came, they avoided connecting, so what they did was, they constructed a world in which they could control their connections.

They began to control how closely they got to one another. They began to control how closely they got to God. They tried to control their world, and avoid getting near to anyone. Now here's the problem: when we cover ourselves up, and draw back from intimately connecting, to save ourself and control our world from being hurt any further, this is what happens - you become lonely! Church is full of lonely people, and if you're lonely, the problem's right within you, and the answer's right within you too. It's not about anyone organising something for you. The problem lies within us, because of what we have put to cover ourselves from living authentic relationships. The fig leaves, I'm going to try and identify some things that we do. We do some stuff in church. Every church does it. You'll probably recognise some of these, you might like to tick a bit off, and then you can actually say: well Lord, perhaps I can abandon my fig leaf, because the problem - you see God wants to make a provision for you.

God is a Jehovah Jireh, the Lord our provider. God makes provision for our lives to be restored, and made whole. There's only one uncomfortable hitch, that is you've got to take off the fig leaf first. Ooh, is there any other way? No. Oh anything but that! Anything but letting people know, or letting God know, what I'm really like, see? But God wants us to be authentic. He's not worried about mistakes, failures, things you've done wrong, anything that's going wrong. He's not worried about bad attitudes. He's not worried about any of that kind of stuff to tell the truth. The devil just leaps on your back and accuses you, and makes you think God's upset with you - He isn't. He loves you. He loves you, and while you're a sinner, He sent Jesus to die on the cross. How much more, when anything you need now, He'll provide; but you see Adam believed a lie. He thought God was going to hurt him, so he hid from God. Now how can we actually invade the world, if we're hiding from God, and hiding from one another? How can you fulfil your mandate in the world, if you're life is covered/concealed, you're hiding your life, and you're not free on the inside? How can you do it?

Well you'll try to do something, but it won't ring authentic, and people are looking for authentic. People need to see authentic. Authentic doesn't mean perfect. Authentic means: you blow it once in a while, but you know what to do when you blow it, you know how to be upfront and talk about it and put it right, say: I'm sorry. That's a good word: I am sorry. They're hard words to say those ones. You'd be surprised how hard it is to get it out of people, they choke rather than say it, but it actually helps. It's very helpful. Okay then, so they became isolated, alright. So now notice the difference now with the Good Samaritan. The religious people wouldn't engage the man's world, the Good Samaritan did; and this is what Jesus is pointing out, that when we become connected to Him, He begins to grow us and change us and help us mature, and the evidence of maturity is our capacity to enter the world of those who are lost and broken, to help them and love them.

Will that hurt? Too right it'll hurt. Will you get knocked back? Too right you'll get knocked back. Will people misunderstand - oh yes, they will, but aren't we called to follow Jesus Christ, not the Pharisees? We're called to be like the Good Samaritan, not like the ones who crossed the road. How many have crossed the road, come on? Yeah, we've all done it some time, crossed the road. Sometimes I've crossed the road when I saw some Christians. [Laughter] They were that bad. I'd prefer not to talk to them, because they were so weird. [Laughter] They were. You don't know how weird it was, when they first arrived here man, there was some shocking stuff going on downtown - weirdness plus. I can remember someone standing up preaching the gospel, and I thought that's great, I'll go and talk to him. He didn't want to talk to me. What kind of weirdness is that?

Then some others were there, blowing trumpets, doing some weird stuff, and I crossed the road. They were an embarrassment to everyone, caused most of the preaching of the gospel out in the street to stop - it was such an offence. That's not how you win the world - to win people, you've got to be wise. To win people, you've got to be wise. You've got to allow God to work in your life, and develop authenticity, so that you can enter the world of others; and

not put them off by religion, not put them off by weirdness, but actually engage them, so they see you have something they really want.

So we've got some amazing things we do in the church, so let me just throw a few things out, because if we're going to become whole, it helps if we actually see what it is we do that covers up our life. A lot of Christians, we substitute activities, we substitute activities for authentic relationship. We just get busy doing stuff, and so we do church stuff, and now we feel real good, because we're doing stuff for God. Well it's right to serve the Lord, it's right to do things for God, but God wants an authentic relationship first. He puts relationship over doing.

Doing flows out of relationship, so some people do stuff, and in church we've got a whole range of weirdness of our own. You can't believe it. When you hear some people talk, you haven't got a clue what they're talking about. It's very spiritual. [Laughter] Too spiritual for me, I can't understand. Neither can anyone else, so how does that help anyone? It doesn't, it's just a fig leaf, over someone who's broken on the inside. It doesn't help, and so church is full of these kinds of things that we do. We get very, very busy, and serve, serve, serve, serve, served and help and that's right to do serving and helping, but we don't neglect our relationship with the Lord. Other times we have, kind of like, God talk, you know? After you've done the God talk stuff, people think: whoa, I don't know much, I don't know anything. So think about that; if people walk away from your God talk, and they feel that they actually don't know anything, or nothing much, you're projecting pride and ego, and they're feeling put down. This is not good. This is not the way to win the world! This is the way to weirdness.

It actually totally removes you from the heart of God; so we have to look, and guard, that how we talk, how we connect, how we communicate, what we do with one another, actually genuinely and authentically connects with people. Ooh, you know it's the other one beside you isn't it aye? Of course exaggerating what we've had - now experiences in God are necessary. We can only share with people what we have experienced. We have to have revelation of God. We must have experience of God, but our experience of God is to lead us to represent Him, not to make us look important. It's so very, very modest - and then of course the other thing we do in church is, we just apply bits of the Bible we like, so we don't do the other stuff. Now I'm really going to hammer this one on the Good Samaritan, because I know this is one people don't like. See, we like to go to church, and do the ministry, but actually ministry is about serving people. It's kind of like this: what can I do to help you?

It's not complicated. You don't have to be rocket scientists to help people, but you do actually have to be authentic, and have some skills to enter their world. If we're broken, and we don't have the skills, our impact is limited; so why do you need to grow as a Christian? Why do you need to develop? Why do you need to grow? Here's the reason why: so you can enter into deeper relationship with the Lord, and you can represent Him better to people, and have greater impact with people. So if your life is broken, and the only people you can connect with are Christians, you should do something about it, because you're sidelined and irrelevant, irrelevant to what God is up to. Come on, think about it. That's what the Pharisees and religious world were like in Jesus' day, irrelevant to the nation of their day, and Jesus showed what a man full of the Holy Ghost does. He gets involved with people that people don't like, and get upset about, and He ministers to them, and upsets them as well, all kinds of stuff.

Here's another little thing we do in church. We divide our life up into natural and spiritual. How we've got an amazing ability to do that; this is this compartment, that's the God bit, so Sunday's the God bit. The rest of the week, well I've got to go out there - so we come in on Sunday, and we say: oh, oh! Thank You Lord for Your wonderful love! And on the way home we're cursing someone who cut us off. [Laughter] What's all that about? When we come in, oh praise the Lord! All I have, I surrender all! Then during the week we're trying to rip everyone off, and we're just as sharky in business as anyone else - no difference, see? Or we come and we say: oh Lord, I love You, and then we go home and berate the husband for his weakness, [laughter] and we're convinced we're doing God a favour. It doesn't work. It doesn't work, and so that's dividing your life up.

Listen, God wants to come to every part of our life. You say: well listen, if you're going to survive in the business world, you've got to be tough. Is that right? How are you doing then? You see, one thing that's happening in the world now, is the world's getting a great lesson on how greed and corruption actually doesn't work, inherently doesn't work! But integrity, and service, it does. Think about that. See the principles of God work. The problem is, we've got to learn how to live in a world culture, and be able to represent God's values in there, without being religious; and one of the values of the kingdom is service, excellent service, see? Think about this, so when we divide our life up, and we keep God for Sunday, but the rest of the week it's kind of we've just got to get on as usual; listen, that's one of the clever coverings we make for the fact to hide, we are not authentic, and we are irrelevant.

For the church to have impact, it must actually break through these mentalities, put off these coverings, and find ways to actually connect into and touch the community we live in. That's what the Good Samaritan did. He had the oil and

the wine, yeah you can have the oil and the wine, but if you can't talk to people, they're not going to want your oil and wine. You've got to find ways to bridge into their world, and enter their world, find ways of serving them and help them. Man, I was impressed this last week. They had these t-shirts - you ever seen that thing iPhone and it's got an 'i' with a big dot on it, phone afterwards or they've got 'i' and it's information. They had 'i' serve. Well that's good, wasn't it aye? In case you didn't understand what that meant, on the back they had 'can I help you?' [Laughter] Okay, because we don't always get it, do we aye?

Okay, here's another thing people do in churches - we hide our emotions, hide our emotions. I get really excited, I cry in church, I cry when I'm in the presence of the Lord, I get excited when I'm in the presence of Lord, want to dance when I'm in the presence of the Lord! [Laughter] And if I can't dance, I feel a bit - that wasn't a very good service, didn't sort of get happy and expressive. So part of the problem is, we don't understand that our emotions and feelings, they are part of how God has designed you. He's made you to be a feeling person, made you to be an emotional person. You were created in the image of God, who has feelings. He gets angry, He is loving, He has compassion, He has mercy, He has joy, He dances, He's got all of these emotions, and He gives them to us as well. So we need to know what to do with the emotions, how can you love the Lord with all your soul, if you don't include your emotions?

You try and love your wife passionately: I love you. [Laughs] There's something wrong with that picture. The words sound okay, but it's more should be like the Italians: ooh I looove you! You know? Now that's more like it, now we've got the expression, and the warmth, and the hands, and whoa! Yay! Now that looks more real! So emotions are part of what God has given to us. In John 11:35, Jesus wept. He openly expressed His emotions, He cried, He rejoiced, He was angry, He was stirred, He was grieved, He had all kinds of emotions. He was lonely. [Laughs] He was burdened. He had many emotional experiences, and we have them too. If you're a human being, you will have all of those things. You will have sadness and happiness, you will have times when you're puzzled, disturbed, lost, don't seem to know where to go, feel heavy, struggling. This is being a human! But sometimes we think when we get into church that all that will just change, and so we get into a church culture and then, well we're not authentic anymore, because now we're trying... Well praise the Lord brother, praise the Lord, ra-ra-ra! All going well - and you know that life's falling apart, absolute mess.

We just bury all the grief, bury all the feelings, and try and control the emotions. Well when you do that, you dishonour yourself, because God gave these things to you. Now we're not to be controlled by our emotions, or led by our emotions; we're to be led by the spirit of God. But to be authentic in your relationship with God, you must identify what you feel, because it tells what's going on in your heart, and if you're going to talk with God, you've got to talk from your heart; I feel Lord, I'm struggling with this, Lord I'm afraid. Lord, I just am so sad, I feel overwhelmed by this thing. We've got to learn to be authentic with God, authentic with Him. David was like that, poured his soul out; when I remember these things, I pour out my soul, and there was a weeping as he talked about the reality of his life, and he just expressed it passionately to the Lord. After he's expressed his emotions, he was then able to stir faith; but if you don't express your emotions, it's very hard to access what's going on inside your life.

So often in church, people control emotions, shut things down; oh, you shouldn't feel like that! Oh, shouldn't I? I guess not. Inside, I feel very angry - well you shouldn't feel angry! Well the Bible doesn't say that; the Bible says: be angry, but don't sin; but it's translated: you shouldn't feel like that. Well I'm sorry, but I do, I feel really ticked off, and I don't mind telling you. You understand? Now that's more authentic than saying: oh praise the Lord brother! [Laughter] Going home, you know, like cats when you annoy them. [hiss] Like that. That's what some people are like on the inside, a lot of the time, because they don't know what to do with their emotions. Can I tell you I'm angry? Can I tell you I'm really depressed? I'm not sure, so I'll hide it. Can you understand? So it requires an environment where it's okay to be human, it's okay to be human, human being, not a human doing, a human being, have feelings.

So you see me up here, so it's like praise the Lord, ra-ra. You don't see me other days! But there's emotions and feelings, and things that are poured out to God, and struggles, and trying to work out what to do, trying to listen for the voice of God, when there's so many other voices. This is reality of life, so if we're going to be authentic it doesn't mean you're a perfect parent, it doesn't mean you're a perfect husband. In fact I've known people who were attracted to the faith in a Christian couple, because they saw them have an argument, and they saw them make it up. They said I want some of that, because that, that is accessible to me. But being a perfect little Christian, that's just - ooh you're weird, I can't relate to that at all. You understand? That was the problem with the Pharisees.

They were sort of perfect, dressed right, went to the right places, spoke right, paid tithes, prayed, did blah blah blah blah blah, but Jesus said: oh you're like a painted tomb, there's bones on the inside, corrupt all the way right through to the core! Nothing authentic, see? So God wants you to be authentic. To be authentic, well there are some days: WHERE IS GOD! Some days you're struggling. Some days you're doing well - that's actually what the Christian life is

like; but in the middle of it, we can express our feelings, our struggles, our concerns to God. We hear the voice of our heart. We begin to understand our beliefs and what's happening. We can begin to receive encouragement from the Lord. He desires truth in the inner parts, so it's not you let your emotions all hang out everywhere, [make sobbing sounds] all over the place, no. There's appropriate places, but in worship, we should be able to express our joy, our freedom, our - Calinda was amazing. Calinda had a back condition, really in pain, didn't even want to come to church, came to church then got dancing and got healed as she danced! Now that's what faith will do, do you understand?

It doesn't mean you ignore your pain; it means you actually, in the midst of it, do you express faith in God? Okay, another thing that goes a bit like that is, you notice what Adam said: I was afraid, and so I hid; so the other thing we do is we tend to hide our weaknesses. Now this is a funny thing hiding weaknesses. The interesting thing is that a person is very, very difficult to relate to if they're a perfect person. I don't find perfect people easy to relate to. You become conscious you seem to be leaving a mess on their floor. [Laughter] You've been into some houses like that, and it almost feels the moment you walk in, you've started to bring a mess with you. You know if you eat anything, and no crumbs are going to get on the floor, you just know you're going to spill the cup - there's tension all the time you're there. You get out and you're exhausted, just trying to behave right. [Laughter] It's hard to relate to people like that. Real people make mistakes, and they make them almost almost every day of their lives. That's what real people are like - including me.

I have a great message of grace. The reason I've got a great message of grace is I've made so many mistakes - I desperately needed God to help me - and the grace I've got comes out of being so grateful God forgave me. I've got a very big heart to forgive people, because I've been forgiven much. You understand, it's like God doesn't call us to be perfect in our behaviours. He calls us to have a heart that's right, a perfect heart towards Him, responsive to Him. Now you see this thing of trying to look good, act good, perform good, and be a goody-goody-two-shoes Christian, and then try and make your children the same - well that doesn't go down well at all. One, they'll either rebel against you, in which case you've got a battle on your hands all the way; or two, they are compliant, but inside they're rebelling. They're saying yes on the outside, but inside they're standing up; and one day it breaks out! Oh! Where did that come from? How did that happen? Well you've just shut them down all your life.

See, we've got to watch that we give grace and space for our children to actually be normal people, who make mistakes, and funnily enough in some families some kids are really nice, and really easy, real easy. Some kids are really soft, really easy to train. Others are like - where did this monster come from? [Laughter] How - what did I do in my last life to deserve this? [Laughter] And the rest of the church, oh tut-tut-tut-tut-tut, there must be something wrong, yeah, must be something wrong with your parenting. They've got no idea what struggle's going on there, with the strong-willed child; and while you're raising them, and trying to deal with them, you're aware everyone's looking. [Laughter] Looking at you, looking at the goody goody kids, whoa! Like that - and while you're struggling with that child, you remember that you were just like that when you were growing up. [Laughter] The full circle of life has come around, and you are reaping what you've sown! [Laughter] Everyone can see it now! [Laughs]

I can remember one of my grandchildren, I looked into her eyes when she was very little, and I said ooh! You are going to have some fun with this one! [Laughter] She is just like you - and I'm thinking oh oh, it goes round! [Laughter] But this is all part of life you know, there's no perfect families, no perfect people, no perfect world. It's a messy beat up world, with all kinds of sin and problems, and grace is what changes it, so we have to receive grace for ourselves if we're going to give it to anyone else. Getting the idea? We'll give you a couple more, then we'll just wind it up - getting the idea? [Laughs] So concealing, covering up.

Okay, another thing which is related to it, which people tend to do, in Luke 9:23, you've heard the scripture; Whoever wants to be my disciple, he must deny himself. Whoa! Lyn, you would have had that scripture, take up the cross! Ooh - and so what happens is, you already had a low esteem, and now it just got worse, now I'm a nothing, a nobody, and you're struggling, never good enough. The problem is, we often give up the wrong things in church, [laughs] give up the wrong things, and what happens is we bury the gifts of God. Now listen, God put in you desires. Desires in you can be very evil, desires can be very good. The desires God gives are very good. He puts desires in your heart. He puts dreams in your heart. He puts gifts in your heart, so don't bury the gifts, don't bury the dreams, desires, longings, yearnings, the goals. Don't bury them all down, don't bury your life. Don't bury the things that God says: these are valuable. I find, I look in the church, I see so many people, the goodness in them is all buried, because they're so burdened over all the things that are wrong.

Listen, the things you put aside, and the things you bring to the cross, are pride and arrogance and independence, all that kind of stuff. But listen, the dreams, desires, longings, gifts, this is part of who you are. You have to call them forth, and connect with people that'll help, say: boy you'd be good at that; otherwise we have a covering over our life, and no one sees what we really are, or what we could be. Church is to be a family, where sons and daughters are

encouraged to step out and do stuff, try stuff, and if you make a mistake, well good on you, you had a go. You can't exist in a culture where you can't have a go. Just have a go. I've had a go for years. You know almost everything I've learnt, I went somewhere, and I had a go, tried it out. All the things I learnt pretty well in the supernatural I've developed in, I went somewhere else, and I practiced and had a go. I thought I can leave and go home and then [laughs] and took risks, took terrible risks, but it's helped me grow see?

So here's another couple of things, and then we'll just finish them, I'll just finish. Here's a couple of goodies that Christians cover up, and one is, we cover up our background, and won't admit that our background is affecting how we live our life today - cover up our background. Now listen, if you think about your background, your background is about how you were raised, it's the values you got, how you thought about money, how you thought about family, how you thought about conflict, how you thought about emotions, how you thought about anger and handling anger, how you thought about handling disappointments, how you handled success in life. Most of the values you have, they were formed as you grew up in your family, and of course if we grow up in broken families, we need to face the reality that a lot of our thinking is wrong, and needs to change.

The only way you can do that, is being willing to let the Holy Ghost help you resolve your past, and to bring revelation truth about how you live your life and become effective. So I need to be willing to face - I've had to face things, I'm still facing stuff. It'll never stop, it's just a journey of walking with God, and layer by layer He opens our life, we face things that are painful, we talk with Him. He shows us the truth, and we begin to move on with our life. It's a journey. It's okay to be on that journey, but don't just pretend that your family was perfect. Don't sort of say something like I heard someone say when I was counselling: well I've moved on. That's my past, all behind me, it's at the cross. I said: well you seem to have brought a lot with you. [Laughter] It looks to me like it's all just happening, just like it was in your family. It helps you to have a think about how you saw things in your own family, and how they're happening in your family right now. Chances are they're the same - unless you've actually been healed in that area, and allowed the Lord to bring truth to you.

The last one is the issue of conflict. One of the big issues, that is a problem for us, is the issue of conflict, handling conflict; and either spiritualising it away, or hiding it away, or putting it under a carpet hoping it'll die; but it's usually like cancer. It just spreads, it doesn't get any better, and one of the areas that Christians have to learn to do, is how to engage one another when there are differences, and learn how to enter into places where there are conflicts. It's not easy to do that, and we're going to share a session just related to that at some point, on how Jesus, interestingly enough, stirred up conflict wherever He went. What He did was He demolished the false peace, by exposing what was really happening, and when He did that it made room for change to take place. In some places, He actually said things that provoked out to the open, and created a huge conflict. So life has got lots of conflicts in it, and in church, we're not good at that.

I know for me growing up, conflict was a thing of tremendous emotional pain. It was an evil - you don't have it if you can avoid it, but actually you can't avoid it. You need to engage it. That's the truth, but sometimes we need to be healed in order to do that. If we're going to go out and have effect in the community, in a greater level than we have now, there will be conflict; and if you're unwilling to get enter into it, you'll be at a great disadvantage. You'll be beaten up, spat out, and you'll say: evangelism's not for me. I think I'll just carry on down to the church, and I'll cross by the other side of the road, and I won't be bothered about getting involved with those people. It just hurts too much. So God is calling us to grow up emotionally, spiritually, become mature, so that we are empowered to have greater impact in the community - so one and the other go hand in hand.

As you go to the community, as you touch the lives of people, you become aware of what's in your life, and you grow. As you grow, you do it again, and try different things. Listen, we're living in a great hour worldwide. We were just at a conference, 20,000 people, and I looked and I saw every province in China was represented there. I realised I had personally trained every one of those people in how to move in the power of God, and bring God to people. Even though at times it's been very difficult, you see what impact you can have. Thousands can be impacted, or just a few, or just one or two; whatever it is, we can all make a difference in someone's world. But let's not have a look, tut-tut-tut, and cross to the other side, and go to another church meeting. Let's make a decision: God, I want to grow in my maturity, emotionally and spiritually, and I want to be engaged in reaching people that need You. I present myself to You to do that.

## Summary Notes

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## 1. Introduction:

· Luke 10:27 - "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength and with all your mind and your neighbor as yourself".

· God's plan is for each of us to grow, mature and fulfill the calling of God.

· Most people are unable to love and connect there is too much junk/stuff in their lives. The problem is that the Priest and the Levite, who represent the church, didn't want to get involved. To not want to get involved is not an option. They walked past the man; they didn't have the heart of God for broken damaged people.

· Love

= passion, energy, wholehearted, fully engaged.

= connect meaningfully with God and people/neighbors.

1) Connect with God – who He really is – not our image of Him.

2) Connect with Self – who we are – what is really happening within us, our strengths, weaknesses, desires, pain.

3) Connect with People – able to enter their world and serve them.

· Verse 33 - The Good Samaritan entered the world of the broken man, he did what he could. He was moved with compassion, he entered the broken man's world to find out what was wrong and ministered to him.

· This is what spiritual maturity looks like, it brings love and compassion into people's lives, it helps people who need help. This is the heart of God.

· Religious people avoided, hid from people in need, from the true calling of God.

· Samaritans were despised by religious people as they hang out with the wrong kind of people.

· We engage the Holy Spirit; we get trained so that we have something to pour into people. To be able to do this, we have to enter into their world.

· The Church today is disconnected from broken people. We have to be authentic, authentic people are able to connect to others.

## 2. Adam, Eve and Fig leaves:

· Genesis 3:7-10 - Behavior of Adam and Eve – spiritual and emotionally damaged.

· Fig leaves = covering who I am, identity – presenting an image.

· Hid in trees – avoiding connection from the presence of God.

· Adam and Eve constructed coverings and avoiding behaviors to conceal the true condition of their world = causes pain.

· To cover up, draw back and control will cause people to become lonely. The answer is within you. It is covered because of drawback, control and not being authentic.

· The fig leaves must come off for a person to be authentic. Adam believed a lie, how can a person fulfill God's mandate in life if they cover up and hide?

· Walls we build to control our world – hinder us fulfilling our purpose.

1) Become lonely – isolated, fearful.

2) Cannot enjoy relationships.

3) Cannot fulfill purpose – enter world and be an ambassador for Christ.

· Fig leaves are works and activities and behaviors that conceal who we really are so we do not have to face pain and need for change.

· Authentic = you blow it once in a while but you know how to correct it e.g. apologizing.

· Good Samaritan

= engaged the world of broken people and changed it.

= demonstrated what maturity looks like.

· What are the 'Christian Fig leaves?'

## 3. Fig Leaves and other Christian Coverings:

1) Substituting Christian activities for Authentic Relationships:

· Luke 10:38 - Martha buried herself into working for the Lord.

· People bury self in spiritual activities but ignore areas of life that are difficult and God wants to change those areas.

· People hide behind 'God talk' creating an illusion that is spiritual but unwilling to face personal flaws (defensive).

· Exaggerating spiritual experiences to appear important before others.

· Applying the Bible selectively – ignore truth requiring changes in attitudes, personalities and relationship e.g. workaholic or spiritual flake.

2) Dividing Life into Natural and Spiritual (dualism):

· John 10:10 - "I have come that you may have life – abundantly".

· The life of Jesus is for every aspect and area of our life.

· People divide up life: (1) Christian activity (2) Natural – rest of week

· Church sings about love – curse drivers on their way home.

· Business men worship God – dishonest during the week.

· Christian trust God – won't pay bills.

· Christians focus on spiritual – but won't face the natural (carnal).

· God calls us to represent Him in every area of life. Represent God without being religious, with excellent service and integrity.

· We connect to Jesus, He grows (raise to maturity) us so that we can impact the world around us. We are called to be the Good Samaritan.

· Wisdom = win people, not religion or weirdness.

3) Burying Painful Emotions:

· We are created in the image of God with emotions and we have them too.

· John 11:35 - Jesus wept.

· Feeling and emotions are part of being human, in image of God.

· If unable to express emotions – dishonor yourself. Be authentic with God; pour out your soul to Him. Express passionately and then stir faith.

· People express anger, pain, loss, grief, fear, sadness. It is ok to human. You can't be a perfect Christian. He desires truth in the inner parts.

· Christians seem to bury and conceal the emotion or sin.

· Listening to the voice of the emotion enables us to understand our inner world.

4) Concealing Weaknesses and Failures:

· Genesis 3:10 - "I was afraid – hid"

· Grace changes; if you receive grace for yourself it will be easier to give grace to others.

· God doesn't call us to be perfect in behavior, but to have relationship with Him.

· People feel pressure to present their image as strong and together.

- Bible is full of broken people David, Noah, Moses, Peter, Jonah, Jacob.
- They all had faults, when these faults were out in the open they have experienced the grace of God.

#### 5) Burying the Gifts of God:

- Luke 9:23 - Disciple = "deny self take up the cross and follow Me".
- People, who have been rejected, low esteem, misinterpret.
- We are not called to bury desires, gifts, dreams, passions, laughter, music, art, beauty, recreation – these are gifts of God.
- Every person is designed uniquely – to represent God.
- Need to discover what God has put in you, not for you to kill it.
- Die to self = put to death defenses, arrogance and judging others.

#### 6) Denying the Impact of their Past:

- 2 Corinthians 5:17 - "Behold, all things have become new".
- Past life continues to impact how the church relates to each other – we must change.
- People try to 'move on' = pretend their past never happened.
- Check out how the family handled life! E.g. money, conflict, sex, grief, expresses anger, family, relationships, feelings and emotions.
- Past patterns continue until revelation of New Culture – Family of God.

#### 7) Spiritualizing and Avoiding Conflict/differences:

- No one like conflict but conflict is everywhere.
- John 4:16-18 - Jesus' life was filled with conflict, He created it! He disrupted 'false peace' -refused to minimize.
- People see conflict as bad, something to fix or avoid.
- Result = blame, attachments, dishonest, silent, give in, avoid, with-draw.

With God we grow and mature to have power and impact the community.  
We can all make a difference in someone's world.

## Fig Leaves and Other Christian Coverings (3 of 4)

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*God sees the heart that responds and work with it. Holy Spirit speaks to an open heart. We won't go forward if we don't grow. Be able to receive grace, don't beat yourself up. Ask God to help, guide, show you, and enable you to get up – have a heart good to God. Ask forgiveness, help – grace and goodness will come to the humble. You will then be able to show grace and minister to others, to enter other people's lives. We need to take responsibility to grow and change otherwise we don't have anything to give to other people. Authenticity with God is to be passionate and willing to grow. Don't stay where you are, step forward, move on, step up.*

I want you to open your Bible with me in Luke, Chapter 10. We've been looking at fig leaves, or how people cover up, and stop being authentic and real, and being a great pretence. There's a heap of people are - you could probably call them this: The Great Pretender. [Laughter] God doesn't want the church to be full of great pretenders. You know at Christmas we celebrate that God sent His Son into the earth to represent Him, and so now when Jesus left He said: as the Father sent Me, now I send you; and He doesn't send a heap of pretenders. He sends a heap of real people to represent what God is really like, to be authentic.

Last week we were looking about how Jesus had described what it means to love, and to be a mature believer, it means there's a spiritual dimension, emotional dimension, physical dimension. Every part of our life is engaged in passionately loving God, and it always overflows to those around us, so we can see how authentic, how mature we are in the way we deal with the people around us. Well unfortunately many aren't doing too good there and Christmas time is a great time for people not to treat one another too well. They get busy all year, bury all their problems, get together at Christmas and they're all on holiday, then they start to get upset with one another. It shouldn't be like that should it really? It doesn't need to be either.

Notice here there's a man who's been beaten up in life and been wounded and it says of the Good Samaritan - Verse 34 - he went to him, bandaged up his wounds - that's the word trauma. He went to him, he initiated action to go to the man who had been traumatically impacted by what had happened to him, pouring on oil and wine; set him on his horse, took him to an inn and took care of him. So this man entered the world of someone who was traumatised, found out what was wrong in his life and then brought the life anointing of the Holy Spirit to impart, to heal and to bring restoration to him. All of us believers are called into this ministry. Jesus said the spirit of the Lord is upon Me.



He's anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor - that's to bring people into an encounter with the living God, become saved - but God's got much more for us than that.

He's anointed Me to heal the broken hearted. That means God wants to heal brokenness in our lives so we can enter into meaningful relationships, because without relationships you don't have a life. It's true isn't it? Without relationships you don't have a life. People who've got no relationships, you know you kind of - he hasn't got a life has he really? Got no friends, got no - you're just buried in something and many times we substitute - I know people that substitute model trains for relationships. Watching it go round - wonderful hobby I suppose but not my thing. But usually it's a substitute for having genuine relationships. Some have a pet instead of a relationship, have a relationship with a pet. Well that's a strange thing really. Nice to have pets, they're wonderful, part of God's creation - but we're made to relate to people, made to relate to God so we've got to learn to have a relationship with God.

So the anointing on Jesus is to heal those who are broken hearted and many times we saw people cover over what they're really like, so in this story here we saw genuine love, the love of God. What God is wanting to do with us is to put into us a love and to grow us so mature that we can actually enter into the world of others and help them. Now the trouble is how can you enter the world of other people very successfully if you won't even enter your own world? How can you be authentic to other people if you're covering up who you really are and what's really going on? The biggest complaint against church, although it's often unfounded but there's some truth in it, is they're hypocrites. They play. They're nice on Sunday but the rest of the week you want to see what they're like pastor. I don't know whether I do - rather be in denial and look at all these happy faces and say aren't they all wonderful. The reality's a little bit different though isn't it?

The reality is that many people, their walk daily is actually inconsistent with what we believe and so God wants us to grow and mature, to grow up. Growing up isn't easy. It's got some challenges with it and I want to share with you today some keys to help you grow. In Genesis 3:7 we saw that Adam and Eve sewed fig leaves together, made themselves coverings. In Verse 10 he said I was afraid because I was naked and I hid myself, so Adam and Eve as a consequence of the fall hid themselves from painful reality. To actually come into the presence of God meant to face what was really happening in their life and Adam said I was afraid. That means he had deep feelings, bad feelings, bad vibes and he said because I was naked and so I ran away and hid.

We saw how Adam and Eve as a consequence of the fall concealed their identity, covered themselves up and then hid and we see here a pattern; their behaviour of hiding came about as a result of them feeling fear and believing God was going to punish them. So when we look at people's lives you see the outward part which is like the tip of an iceberg on the surface, but below that outward part is where people really live. So if I'm going to grow as a believer and grow in my relationship with God and ability to represent Him, I've got to change on the inside. I've got to explore my inner world and discover what is in there. Now you don't have to become introspective, looking into yourself all the time, but the Holy Spirit is given and He dwells inside you and His job is to bring to your awareness where you need to grow up.

[The Bible said Jesus said 00.06.01] in John 14, I won't leave you orphans. I won't leave you without a Father, so if you've been without a father in your life or been under poor - perhaps your parents weren't able to function, your father wasn't able to function as God intended to, nevertheless the spirit that God puts into you, the Holy Spirit of God is a fathering spirit. It is to speak into your heart direction, correction and to bring about maturity so you discover who you are and how to relate and live your life and how to fulfil a purpose. That's the role of a father, one of the major roles of a father - so Jesus said I will pour My spirit into you and the Holy Spirit I put inside you will be a witness you belong - that God is your Father, but also that spirit, the Holy Spirit in you is to bring you to face realities, to face truth. If we keep covered up and hiding our life and don't want to go there or pretend we've moved on when we haven't moved on, or minimise what's happening in our life, we miss out on the opportunity to grow and fulfil what God called us to do.

It's very difficult to enter into anyone else's life very deeply if you're very shallow yourself. Can God use you? Of course He can. You can encourage someone, you can show an act of kindness to someone, you could visit them, you could ring them, you can connect with them, give to them. You can do all sorts of things, but there's a dimension of reaching into lives to really authentically help people which won't be yours unless you're willing to grow. So God wants us on a journey. Now how does God get us to grow when many times we don't want to face the areas which are damaged, nor address them? We want to just to push them under and get going. Well God's got a great strategy and that strategy's called pain. Pain - you notice if you hit your thumb and you're in pain the one thing you notice is your thumb. You notice nothing else. Your whole world is filled with THUMB! Isn't that right?

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