



WESTMINSTER  
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

April 26, 2020

**Questions on the  
Mind of God:  
Where Are You?**  
Dr. Bruce Lancaster

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Printed in the United States of America

First Printing: April 20, 2020

## Questions on the Mind of God: Where Are You?

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### *Genesis 3:1-13, 20-24*

For the next few Sundays we're going to be looking at what I call "Questions on the Mind of God."

I know that we have a lot of questions right now, some serious questions about ourselves, our world; and for us as Christians, we have some questions about our faith, our God.

What I'm thinking is that if we hear these questions from God, and answer them honestly, answer them faithfully, we might be able to come up with some answers to our own questions.

The first question comes in the book of Genesis in Chapter 3.

(Read Genesis 3:1-13, 20-24)

God comes looking for Adam and Eve, asking the question, "Where are you?"

Is this a trick question? Can you really play 'hide and seek' with God?

Apparently, Adam thinks so, because he answers, "I was hiding...I was afraid."

Of course they were afraid. Their world had gone to hell in an apple basket. They had made a very bad choice.

When this story was first told, the Hebrews were coming to terms with their mortality and the broken world in which they

lived and the broken choices they had made and how they understood all of that as God's people.

And this is the picture they paint of God... walking through the garden at the time of the evening breeze, looking for them, "Where are you?"

I think this is one of the most beautiful pictures of God that Scripture gives us... Close your eyes and listen for the "sound of the Lord God

walking in the garden at the time of the evening breeze", calling out, "Where are you?"

I know there are a lot of people who don't see it that way. Many see an angry God coming after them, tearing through the underbrush like a marauding bear about to devour its victim.

For others, God isn't looking, God doesn't care, or just that there is no God to be looking for us.

Just look at all the problems human choices have made: Hitler, Kim Jong-un, terrorists, school shootings, racism, the things we do to each other, the things we allow to happen to each other.

If there is a God, why is there so much injustice in the world? Why is there so much tragedy? Why is there so much evil in the world?

Choices have consequences, so should we be hiding, too? If there is a God, some say, God is looking for us because God is out to get us.

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Or the things we name as “Acts of God”: Hurricanes, floods, earthquakes, tornadoes, tsunamis, why do all these things happen...all these natural events that destroy lives as if God is looking to kick us out of whatever good world we have.

Kick us out into a world that lives by the survival of the fittest. Like the wolves chasing the buffaloes, find the old and feeble and cull them from the herd; they’re going to die soon anyway.

Is that why God wants to know where we are? So many do hear an angry God and keep running ...a lifelong hide and seek with God, very afraid to be found.

The fact that God comes looking for Adam and Eve points to the fact that we were made on purpose, not just for one another, but for a relationship that will never break, a relationship with a God whose passion for you and me is truly ‘Amazing Grace’.

God is hurt, to be sure, but the evening breeze carries a note of healing in God’s searching, “*Where are you?*”

Adam’s answer to the question is a picture of fear and shame and guilt; God’s answer is a measure of God’s goodness, God who comes to us from beyond and enters our world, though God does not have to, and touches our lives for good, forever.

From the beginning here in Genesis we are told that God is always present in a particular place, especially present with God’s creation and God’s creatures even in a broken world amid the broken choices we have made.

Look at the rest of the story: Adam and Eve had fashioned some clothes out of fig leaves. I’m not up on fashions, but I

believe that fig leaves are not the most comfortable of clothing, probably more like ‘medium grade sandpaper.’

But note that after they were banished from the garden, God clothed Adam and Eve with clothes made of the skins of animals

From fig leaves to fur coats, do you see what’s happening? Do you get the picture?

I believe this story is the foundation of Psalm 139: *Where can I go from your spirit?*

*Or where can I flee from your presence?*

*If I ascend to heaven, you are there;*

*if I make my bed in Sheol, you are there.*

*If I take the wings of the morning*

*and settle at the farthest limits of the sea,*

*even there your hand shall lead me,*

*and your right hand shall hold me fast.*

*If I say, “Surely the darkness shall cover me,*

*and the light around me become night,”*

*even the darkness is not dark to you;*

*the night is as bright as the day,*

*for darkness is as light to you.*

God’s Spirit is the bright light of hope that keeps us from despair because like Adam and Eve, when God asks “Where are you”; if we answer honestly and faithfully, “I am here, in the presence of the eternal God who is love.”

In the sudden shock of a world turned upside down we answer God’s question of where we are when we have felt a presence not our own, when we have felt the touch of a comforter beyond our understanding.

## **Questions on the Mind of God: Where Are You?**

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God is near, very near, and God's question of where we are is a reminder that God does not forget us or forsake us in our unease and fear, our loneliness as if we are hidden away from the world.

Our God is a God of people. From the beginning stories, God is pictured in the Bible as talking to people, carrying on conversations.

We don't direct our prayers to a God far away, but to our God who is near, who looks for us and finds us.

I'm not hiding, I'm at home. God can easily find me.

What I hear in God's question to Adam and Eve, "Where are you?" is the answer to my question, "Where is God in all of this?"

Because God's question assures me that God is ever near me, wanting me to hear the sound of God looking for me in the evening breeze or with the early morning cup of coffee or the afternoon FaceTime with family or simply sitting alone knowing that God cares enough about me to look for me, to talk with me, to listen to me, to clothe me with faith and hope and love for the living of the days ahead.

**TO GOD BE THE GLORY.**

No matter where you go or what you do,  
God is already there,  
surrounding you with mercy  
and guiding you with love.  
So, live with joy and confidence,  
knowing that God is with you  
this day and always. Amen.





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