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Mirror, Mirror
Genesis 3:1-8
January 4, 2009
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If you're new, we've been preaching through the book of Genesis. And we left off before Christmas, to do a bunch of Christmassy things. I tell you that, because the book of Genesis is incredibly deep. So as we preach tonight, if you get confused, and even if you don't... even if you understand everything perfectly, go back and listen to the other sermons on the website. That will help you out. Let's pray now, though, that will help you out the most:

Father, the story that you are writing with our lives and in this world is so deep and so good. And Lord God, I look into Scripture and sometimes I just begin to despair, not because it's bad, but because it's so good. And I'm so small, and don't know how to say everything so that people might get it... so that I might get it. So we need your Spirit to implant your Word deep in the broken soil of our heart. We need your Spirit because you are doing more than just touching our minds, you are transforming us into your image... or revealing that you have already transformed us into your image if we would only see. So, Lord God, help us to see, help us to know... not a set of propositions, but you... in the depths of our being. For Lord Jesus, you are good. It's in your name that we pray. Amen.

Snow White Movie Clip:

Queen:

SLAVE IN THE MAGIC MIRROR,
COME FROM THE FARTHEST SPACE,
THROUGH WIND AND DARKNESS
I SUMMON THEE.

[Wind Howling]

SPEAK !

[Thunderclap]

LET ME SEE THY FACE.

Mirror:

WHAT WOULDST THOU KNOW, MY QUEEN?

Queen:

MAGIC MIRROR ON THE WALL,

WHO IS THE FAIREST ONE OF ALL?

Mirror:

FAMED IS THY BEAUTY, MAJESTY.
BUT HOLD, A LOVELY MAID I SEE.
RAGS CANNOT HIDE HER GENTLE GRACE.
ALAS, SHE IS MORE FAIR THAN THEE.

Queen:

ALAS FOR HER! REVEAL HER NAME.

Mirror:

LIPS RED AS THE ROSE.
HAIR BLACK AS EBONY.
SKIN WHITE AS SNOW.

Queen:

SNOW WHITE!

--

So that's the Queen, in the medieval fairytale Snow White. The Queen had a mirror that gave her knowledge. She called it her slave, but to it, she was enslaved. "Mirror, mirror, on the wall, who is the fairest of them all?" The mirror gave her knowledge of beauty and ugliness. The Hebrew words for good and evil (tob & ra), can also be translated "beauty" and "ugliness" – fair and not fair; right and wrong. The mirror gave her the power to judge – herself and others. To judge is to separate.

In C.S. Lewis's science fiction novel *Perelandra*, a man named Ransom travels to the planet Venus soon after God made the first man and woman there. Unfortunately, Satan has also traveled to the planet as well, in the body of a scientist named Weston. As Satan takes over Weston's body, Ransom refers to him as the "Un-man." At one point, the "Un-man" tries to tempt the innocent, naked, beautiful, green Queen of Venus to disobey. He does it by offering her a robe and a mirror. Lewis writes:

He handed it to the Green Lady. She turned it over in her hands.

"What is it? What am I to do with it?" she said?

"Look in it," said the Un-man.

"How?"

"Look!" he said. Then taking it from her, he held it up to her face. She stared for quite an appreciable time without apparently making anything of it. Then she started back with a cry and covered her face.

"Oh – oh," she cried, "What is it? I saw a face."

"Only your own face, beautiful one," said the Un-man.

"I know," said the Lady, still averting her eyes from the mirror. "My face – out there – looking at me. What is it?" She glanced from one of them to the other. The mysteries had all vanished from her face. It was as easy to read as that of a man in a shelter when a bomb is coming.

"What is it?" she repeated.

"It is called Fear," said Weston's mouth. Then the creature turned its face full on Ransom and grinned.

"That thing," (she pointed at the mirror), "is me and not me."
"But if you do not look you will never know how beautiful you are."
"It comes into my mind, Stranger," she answered, "that a fruit does not eat itself, and a man cannot be together with himself."

Then Lewis writes:

The external and, as it were, dramatic conception of the self was the enemy's true aim. He was making her mind a theatre in which that phantom self should hold the stage. He had already written the play.

You see, he was inviting her to judge herself with herself; judge herself and justify herself.

Well, the Green Lady in Perelandra resists the temptation, but the evil Queen in Snow White does not. She judges herself and then tries to justify herself. That is – make herself most beautiful, by taking beauty. So she attempts to take beauty from Snow White. She commands her huntsmen to kill Snow White, cut out her heart and bring it to her in a box. But it doesn't work: the huntsman brings her a pig's heart, and the mirror reveals it. So in a rage she makes herself ugly in order to ambush Snow White in the woods.

Snow White Movie Clip #2:

Queen:

SNOW WHITE LIES DEAD IN THE FOREST.

THE HUNTSMAN HAS BROUGHT ME PROOF.
BEHOLD, HER HEART.

Mirror:

SNOW WHITE STILL LIVES,
THE FAIREST IN THE LAND.

'TIS THE HEART OF A PIG
YOU HOLD IN YOUR HAND.

Queen:

THE HEART OF A PIG!
THEN I'VE BEEN TRICKED!

BEGIN THY MAGIC SPELL.

[Glass Shattering]

[Gasping]

LOOK ! MY HANDS !

MY VOICE !
MY VOICE !

[Cackling]

A PERFECT DISGUISE.

[Cackling]

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Looking in the mirror and asking “Who’s most fair?” she becomes least fair, and with a pig’s heart.

I spend an awful lot of time looking in the mirror. Not a physical mirror (which may be painfully obvious to some), but a spiritual mirror. I spend a lot of time asking, “Am I good enough?” “Am I wise enough?” “How do I measure up?” “Am I the fairest in the land?” I want to know... about ME. But the more I want to know about ME, the uglier I get. For instance, I look in the mirror and see that lust is ugly, and that I lust. So I say “Don’t think about naked women, naked women, naked women.” And then I think about... naked women. It’s like sin finds opportunity in the mirror. It comes alive and kills me.

I see that anxiety is ugly (it’s the opposite of faith, and faith is good); I look in the mirror and see my anxiety, and it really makes me anxious. Honestly, I worry about my anxiety a lot, and that’s not good. So I worry about worrying about my anxiety. And when I see that in the mirror, I worry a little bit more.

I see that love is good (love is losing ME for another); I look in the mirror and see my lack of love, and worry about ME. So the more I worry about ME being a loving person, the less I love, because I’m stuck in ME. The more I worry about ME being selfless, the more selfish I am. The more I try to lose myself, with myself, the more self I find. It’s like an addiction to ME. I try to ease the pain of ME with more ME made by ME, like an alcoholic tries to ease the pain of alcoholism with alcohol.

So the harder I try to love, the less I do.

The harder I try to make myself good, the more I make myself bad.

The harder I try to make myself beautiful, the more ugly I become, for I AM the problem.

“Oh wretched man that I am, who will deliver me from this body of sin and death?” Not the mirror, for the more I look at this body of sin and death, the worse I become. In theological terms, the mirror increases the trespass. The mirror makes us ugly.

Little children aren’t ugly; they’re cute to the core. And that’s not because they never do anything wrong, it’s that they don’t know they do anything wrong. I mean they’re not self-conscious.

Richard Rohr writes:

Psychologists now say there is no such thing as an infant. There’s only an infant/mother; in the first few years they are one, especially from the infant’s point of view. Infants see themselves entirely mirrored in their parents’ eyes, especially the mother’s. What her eyes tells us about ourselves, we believe and become.

Little children don’t judge themselves. They don’t really care that they’re naked – they’re not self-conscious, and they’re certainly not concerned with privacy – being alone.

One day, my mom was dressing my son Coleman when he was 5 years old, and he insisted that his sisters leave the room. My mom said “Oh, come on, Coleman!” And he said, “But they’ll see my private parts!” Elizabeth responded, “Well Coleman, when you were little we’d change your diaper, and we saw your private parts a lot.” Coleman fired back, “Yeah, but that was different... that was before I knew I had ‘em.”

It was paradise before Adam and Eve “knew they had ‘em.” Not the parts... I’m sure they knew that... not the parts, but the *private*. It was paradise before they became all self-conscious and ugly. There was a point when each of my kids lost that beautiful innocence (or maybe they covered it up). I think it was when they become self-conscious. They stopped being so cute, because they began to evaluate their cuteness. They stopped being so cute, when they tried to be cute. I think the Old Testament refers to that as the time we come to have “the knowledge of good and evil.” And so knowing “cuteness,” we stop “being cute.” The mirror makes us ugly, and the mirror is work... a lot of work.

One day when my daughter Becky was growing up, she said “Hey Daddy, let’s play a game: you be the daddy, and I’ll be the little girl.” I said “ok” and went on about my day. Later in the day, driving to the mailbox with Becky, she turned to me and said, “Daddy, can we stop playing this game? I’m really tired of it.” It took me a moment to figure out what Becky was talking about, and then I realized: all afternoon, she had been self-consciously impersonating herself - her image of herself. And now she was exhausted. And I’m glad she quit, because I like Becky more than Becky’s impersonation of Becky.

But that’s what we all do, and that’s what the mirror does. We become actors impersonating ourselves, but the Father loves us – not our impersonation of us. He loves me, not my phantom self that takes the stage. He loves you, and not your projection of you.

On Judgment Day, many will say “Did we not do many mighty works in your name?” And He will say “Depart from me; I never knew you.” Perhaps it wasn’t them that did the works, but their image of themselves, in which case their works were lies, and they were white-washed tombs with pig’s hearts. That’s not good; that’s ugly... that’s dead.

In Genesis 1, God makes everything good in 6 days. He tells the man and woman to be “fruitful.” Fruit is babies, and even more: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, gentleness, faithfulness, and self control. By Genesis chapter 2, we’re back to day 6, because God is making humanity in His image, and it’s not yet good, for Adam (mankind) is alone. God makes Adam male and female, and yet humanity is still somehow alone – not complete. As we’ve seen, mankind is not yet finished in the image of God – the image of God is good, and definitely not alone.

Genesis 3:1 *Now the serpent was more crafty than any other beast of the field that the Lord God had made.*

Now the woman Eve is a picture of all of us, who become the Bride of Christ, who is the Ultimate Adam.

The Serpent said to the woman, “Did God actually say, ‘You shall not eat of any tree in the garden’?”

This is the first place in Scripture where God is spoken of objectively, as a thing to be comprehended, rather than a person to be known; spoken of as if he wasn’t there.

And the woman said to the serpent, “We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden, but God said, ‘You shall not eat of the fruit of the tree that is in the midst of the garden, neither shall you touch it, lest you die.’”

The Serpent raises doubt and adds to God’s command. Eve has done the same thing, so God doesn’t seem good.

But the serpent said to the woman, “You will not surely die. For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.”

To be like God is good. God is making humanity in His likeness and that’s good. To know good and evil is good. Wisdom is good. But why we want it, and how we acquire it can be the very heart of evil. Doubting that God is good, and afraid that she’s not good, Eve wants knowledge of the good.

So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise...

Wise: Jesus is wisdom, the Logos, the Meaning. Jesus is wisdom, and He’s a person to be known, not a quality to be taken.

...she took of its fruit and ate...

She took wisdom, which is the heart of God, from the bosom of the Father. Wanting to be like God, she tried to take His heart.

... she took of its fruit and ate and she also gave some to her husband who was with her, and he ate. Then they eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked.

As we’ve seen, “the knowledge of good and evil” is the law. And the law is a mirror. Eve looked into the law in order to judge herself. And Adam and Eve saw that they were ugly, for they had destroyed the beauty they longed to possess. In other words, they had crucified the good.

And they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loincloths.

Because they are fig leaves and because of some things Jesus said, I think the tree of knowledge was a fig tree. They didn’t have apple trees in Palestine. So they judge themselves with this tree, and then cover themselves with the leaves from the same tree. They judge themselves with the law, and then justify themselves with the law, in the power of the flesh.

Verse 8: *And they heard the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden, in the cool of the day.*

More literally, this reads: And they heard the Voice (like the Word, of the Lord). This is the voice through whom all things are created. The voice of the Lord God walking in literally “the ruach” – the wind of the day. This is the Spirit of God that blows on the waters of chaos in judgment and creation, making a way where there is no way. WIND, GOD and WORD. The Trinity goes walking. God, who is judge and whose judgment is GRACE, goes walking. Adam and Eve need grace. Grace is the good.

And they heard the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day...

It's evening – the day is almost over. The 6th day. God wants to say “It is finished.”

And they heard the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day and the man and his wife hid themselves, from the presence of the Lord God... (Literally “from the face of the Lord”) among the trees of the garden.

They hid themselves from His eyes, for they are like mirrors – His judgment. They hid their true selves from each other and from God in the trees – the law.

Goodness goes waking, but they hide from goodness with their knowledge of the good. They hide from wisdom with their knowledge of wisdom. They hide from judgment with their own judgment. They justify themselves; they cover themselves. They use the law to hide their naked selves under an impersonation of themselves. They hide their dying, naked, incomplete selves from the Word, the breath. In other words, they use the law to hide themselves from Grace. Grace convicts us, kills us, but then fills us and sets us free. In other words, Adam and Eve get religion – human religion.

Most people think that's what this is. And most people think that's what I AM, that tree, and so they come to church to get the “knowledge of good and evil.” They come to church to judge themselves, and then judge others. Saying “Preacher, preacher in the hall, who's the fairest of them all?” They want me to hold up a mirror and say something like:

It's beautiful to “Love the Lord your God with all your heart, mind, soul and strength.” But look at you! Look at you. How bad are you? How self-centered are you? You better work on you. You better get your act together. So next week, everyone tries to look more loving, even though they feel less loving.

And now because God's law is rather ethereal and because we want to know, people will want me to make the law practical, applicable and doable... to hold up the mirror and say:

If you love the Lord God with all your heart, it means you do the following:

1. You'll have a 15 minute quiet time. How are your quiet times?
2. You'll give 10% to the church. How's your giving?
3. You won't say these four potty words except on camping trips. How's your speech?

Now judge yourself and judge others. Are you good?

We want me to hold up the mirror (in fact it's easiest just to hold up the mirror) and say “God wants fruit: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, gentleness, faithfulness and self-control.” Now judge yourselves. Are you fruitful? God says, “Be fruitful, Eve. Bear fruit.” So we all try harder and come back next week with fake fruit, because nobody can bear fruit simply by looking in a mirror and trying. No bride can get pregnant by simply looking in the mirror. So we fake the fruit and hide the dirt... from the seed. We create a monster, a white-washed tomb, a walking lie. It looks alive, but look closely, and it's dead – the walking dead. It's the beast – the beast from the land in the book of Revelation. Human religion.

Remember a few sermons ago when I said I'd show you a video of my honeymoon night: our first attempt at bearing fruit in the image of God? And what I showed you was a clip from Young Frankenstein? Dr. Frankenstein trying to make life in the image of God... and all he could make was a monster. You see, when I try to make myself with myself in the image of God, all I produce is a monster. In Jesus' words,

“Twice as much a child of Hell.” A hypocrite... a Pharisee. The law is to show us we’re dead, not to help us fake that we’re not. The law is descriptive, but not prescriptive. I mean, it tells me that I’m not good, but it doesn’t give me the power to be good. So when I try to be good, I’m trying to be good with the very thing that’s gone bad, which makes me twice as bad.

In prayer and a vision, my friend was covered with filth. I watched as she frantically tried to wipe it off her face, but it only made her more filthy, for her hands were filthy. Jesus stopped her, had her look in His eyes, and said “When you clean yourself, you only make yourself more dirty. I must clean you.”

When the Queen stared in the mirror, she became a monster. When I try to justify myself, according to the law, in the power of my flesh, I just feed the monster. I produce the beast. I think that’s what Eve did, and Adam with her. I think that’s what all human religion does (Christians or otherwise). I think that’s what Israel did – that’s what Jerusalem did, and so she became hideous and fruitless. Do you remember when Jesus entered Old Jerusalem – the location of Old Eden? The very day he entered Jerusalem, He cried out before the crowds *“Now is the judgment of this world!”* In the morning, He found a fig tree, and the fig tree was barren. The knowledge of good and evil had produced no fruit. He cursed it and then prophesied the destruction of Jerusalem (the old system under the law, powered by flesh – human religion). Perhaps that’s why He said “Judge not, lest you not be judged.” Perhaps in some way He wants us to curse that old fig tree.

In I Corinthians 4:3, Paul writes *“It’s a small thing that I’m judged by you. I don’t even judge myself.”*

Galatians 3:11 *“No one will be justified before God by the law. The righteous will live by faith.”*

Galatians 5:4 *“You who would be justified by law have fallen away from grace.”*

Referring to all of his accomplishments under the law, Paul says, *“I count them all as krap skubula”* (Philippians 3:8) *“I count it all as loss for the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord that I may be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from law, but that which comes through the faith of Christ.”*

Romans 3:20 *“By works of the law no human being will be justified... since through the law comes knowledge of sin...”* In fact, Paul writes *“Law came in to increase the trespass.”* (Rom. 5:20)

But that doesn’t mean the law is bad; the law has a purpose. The tree in the middle of the garden has a purpose: it reveals something -- it reveals someone.

Jesus entered Jerusalem, Old Eden, and before the crowds, he said *“Now is the judgment of this world.”* In the morning, He cursed that fig tree, and at the end of the week, the tree cursed Him. Jesus was crucified on a tree in a garden at Jerusalem. On the tree of law – the tree of the knowledge of good and evil - it’s the judgment of this world. It’s God’s judgment revealed on the tree of law. Jesus came to fulfill the law (all the law). He fully fills the law, like He fully fills that tree. He fulfills the moral law – He perfectly obeys it. And He reveals its substance: unquenchable love – the heart of God. Body broken and blood shed... Mercy. He fulfills the moral law and the ceremonial law. He is the sacrifice, the payment for all sins. He fulfills the law and He is the new law, that’s not a law... what James calls the perfect law – the law of freedom.

James writes that the man who is unfruitful (who doesn't do the law) is like a man who looks in the mirror and sees his own face. But the fruitful one looks into "the perfect law of liberty and perseverance." What does he see? Listen.

The tree is the law, and the law is a mirror, but now...

We look to the tree and there is a man hanging there.

We look to the law and there's a face staring back.

We look in the mirror and see Jesus.

The wicked Queen has a mirror and in it, she saw herself, and dreamed of herself. Snow White also had a mirror, and in it, she saw herself, but dreamed of another. Her mirror was a wishing well.

Snow White Movie Clip #3:

Snow White (Sung):

I'M WISHING

[Echoing]

I'M WISHING

FOR THE ONE I LOVE

TO FIND ME

[Echoing]

TO FIND ME

TODAY

Prince (Sung):

TODAY

[End Singing]

Snow White:

OH !

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Jesus wants us to look in the mirror and see Him. Jesus was nailed to our mirror, so we would see Him. Jesus is God's judgment on us, and God's justification for us.

Paul writes "*God has made Him our wisdom, our righteousness, our sanctification and our redemption. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me.*" You see, Paul, that murdering Pharisee, looked in the mirror and saw Jesus staring back. Jesus is the Father's opinion of you.

On the cross, Jesus takes our death and gives us His life. Jesus turns the tree of knowledge into the tree of life. His body and blood is the fruit of that tree. So the tree of law is a stage for the exhibition of love. God is love, and God is my father. It's not my judgments, it's not my justifications that tell me who I am.

It's the eyes of my Father... He tells me who I AM. His eyes are my mirror. And I see those eyes, in the face of Christ, crucified for me. They tell me, "Peter, you are mine. I gave everything for you. I love you as you are, and I won't leave you as you are. I take your death and I give you my life. So this is my judgment. You are my image. It is finished. Peter – it is I, God, who justifies. Who are you to condemn?"

There are two mirrors: one is law, and one is grace. One is our judgment and the other is God's judgment. One brings death and the other is life, a tree of eternal life. One is law, and the other is my father's eyes.

One day when Becky was very little, I looked at her, and I said, "Becky, why are you so wonderful?" Her eyes beamed as they drilled into mine. Not a moment's hesitation, "Becky, why are you so wonderful?" "Because I'm your girl."

On judgment day, if the Father asks you, "Why are you so good?" Don't shrink back, don't cower in fear. Beam with delight as you stare in those eyes: "Because I'm your boy.... I'm your girl."

We're out of time, and I'm only half through. We spoke of how the law kills, and just began to speak of how grace gives life... how we look in the old mirror... lose ourselves, and find Jesus. So we'll talk more about this next week. But before we end... I need to tell you about Snow White.

We saw how Snow White looked in the mirror and dreamed of her prince, yet when he appeared (well, in the next scene), she runs and hides in shame. There's still a lot of herself in her mirror. Finally, the witch finds Snow White and tempts her to seize her dream, to take her prince with the aid of a magic apple. In fear, she eats, and the day she eats, she dies. She tries to take his love by force and dies. But when she's powerless, he gives his love by grace.

Snow White Movie Clip #4:

[Prince kisses Snow White as she sleeps. The dwarves and animals bow in sorrow. Snow White awakes and the Prince embraces her.]

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After all that, he gives her a kiss. And his kiss raises her from the dead. She looks him in the eyes and His eyes become her mirror.

Well, bride of Christ, this is your kiss, and this is your mirror.

On the night He was betrayed, He took bread and He broke it, saying "This is my body given to you. Take and eat. Do this in remembrance of me." And in the same way after supper, and having given thanks, He took the cup, and He said "This is my blood of the covenant, poured out for the forgiveness of sins. Drink of it, all of you. As often as you drink of the cup, do it in remembrance of me."

"Mirror, mirror, in the hall, who's the fairest one of all?"

Jesus. And He gives Himself to you, so you'd look in the mirror and see Him. In Jesus name, believe the Gospel every moment of every day.

Communion

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Benediction:

Snow White Movie Clip #5:

[We see the castle in the clouds]

And they lived happily ever after...

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Isaiah 1:18 – *Come, let us reason together. Though your sins be like scarlet, they shall be white as snow.*

You see, that prophecy was fulfilled, on the tree. And the new Jerusalem comes down. The new Eden comes down. We don't build it. It's a gift. In Jesus name, believe Him. Look in His eyes. Amen.