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## **Adam and the Bubble Boy**

**Genesis 2:18; 3:6-13**

**February 08, 2009**

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We've been preaching through the book of Genesis and we're continuing tonight. Of course all of these things kind of build on each other, so if you get confused remember that it's valuable to go to the website and listen to the sermons that came before.

**Genesis 2:18** "Then the Lord God said, "It is not good that the Adam should be alone. I will make a helper fit for him."

This is the first place in all of scripture where something is declared "not good," and it is being alone.

God is a trinity of persons—absolutely not alone—but Adam is alone and not in God's image.

So God makes Adam and Eve, helpers for each other, yet that's just a picture of the fact, the deepest story, that God is our helper. He completes us, He judges us, and He justifies us. However, we are tempted to complete ourselves and to cover ourselves with the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. The law and works of the law were tempted to judge and justify ourselves.

**Genesis 3:6-7** "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, she took of its fruit and ate. She also gave some to her husband who was with her and he ate."

"Then the eyes of both were opened and they knew that they were naked and they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves aprons – loincloths."

They judge that spot on their body where they are incomplete by themselves and only completed by the other. So you see what was meant to be completed and covered with life and love they now cover with law and justifications and fear.

You know when the love is lost, that's when we call the lawyer, isn't it? And we begin passing judgments, for "love covers a multitude of sins."

**Genesis 3:8a** "And they heard the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day..."

The evening of the 6<sup>th</sup> day, the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence – literally "the face"--of the Lord. They hid themselves from his eyes, his judgment.

**Genesis 3:8b** "...and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God among the trees of the garden"

Literally in Hebrew "the tree" of the garden. I think they're hiding in the tree that they just ate from, as evidenced by what they do and they say next.

"The Lord God called to the Adam." Remember the Adam is mankind. The Adam is not singular: it's Adam and Eve, for the two God sees as one. The two have become one. Or they were one until they hid their shame with fig leaves and fear.

**Genesis 3: 9** "The Lord God called to the man and said, "Where are you?"

Now God knows where they are, doesn't He? Does God know where you are? But he still calls, doesn't he? You see he is drawing Adam out.

**Genesis 3:10-13** "And he said, "I heard the sound of you in the garden and I was afraid because I was naked and I hid myself." He said, "Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten of the tree of which I commanded you not to eat?" The man said, "The woman that you gave me to be with me, she gave me the fruit of the tree and I ate." Lord God said to the woman, "What is this that you have done?" The woman said, "The serpent deceived me and I ate."

Can you hear how they're hiding using the tree of the knowledge of good and evil? "It was the woman that you gave me." The man blames the woman and God. How? He judges the woman and God. So he separates himself from the woman and God: he's alone. The woman blames the snake. The snake doesn't mind. He lusts for division, separation, aloneness and hell.

Adam says, I was afraid because I was naked and I hid myself. He hid his self from God. Remember Adam is dirt into which God breathes His breath, His self. So now Adam hides his dirt from the breath that gives him life, right?

"The day you eat of it, you will die." God's judgment means death.

Yet God's breath is life.

So God's presence is judgment and life.

It's the tree of the knowledge of good and evil and the tree of life.

It's death and resurrection.

But Adam hides from God's presence.

Now, I hope you see how absurd and entirely ironic this whole situation is: in the fear of death, Adam who is dead hides from life.

We all do.

**Roman 7:9** [Paul writes] "I was once alive apart from the law, but when the commandment came, sin came alive, and I died.

We're dead! Dead! Yet—

**Hebrews 2:5** "The devil has subjected us to lifelong bondage through the fear of death."

Dead—but so afraid to die, we hide from life. That's us: imprisoned in a lie, we hide from the truth. In the land of the lost we hide from the way. Jesus is the way, the truth and the life. He is God come to us, looking for us in the evening of the 6<sup>th</sup> day. He was crucified from the foundation of the world. His death on the tree is God's judgment. He is the love of God poured out, he's grace.

So in death, darkness and lies Adam is hiding:

his sin from the grace of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.  
himself from God.  
his dust from breath.  
his dirt from the seed, the eternal seed.  
his darkness from light,  
his lostness from the way,  
his lies from the truth,  
his death from the life.  
his judgment from God's judgment.  
himself from his helper.

Have you ever wondered what would have happened if Adam and Even just wouldn't have hid? Maybe the same thing that happens when any of us stop hiding and surrender to grace.

Life!

A young pastor rang the doorbell of one of his parishioners. He thought someone was home but no one came to the door. Finally, he just wrote a scripture text on the back of his business card and slid it under the door. The text was Revelation 3:20, "Behold I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door I will come into him and sup with him."

Two days later the pastor received his card back in an envelope. Along with the envelope was another note, a quotation from Genesis 3:10, "Lo, I heard the sound of thee in the garden and I was afraid because I was naked and I hid myself."

Well, if you're naked, it's wise to hide yourself from the pastor, okay? But if you're a bride, don't hide from the groom. Let him cover you. That's when life happens.

We're the bride, Jesus is the groom. He says, "Behold, I stand at the door and I knock" --and I knock and I knock, and we hide. We all hide.

You say how do we hide? Well, I think we hide a lot like this.

### **Video Clip**

JIMMY: My first memories are kind of hazy. All I remember is a place with white walls, bright lights and a gigantic bird. I was there because I was born with no Immunities. A single germ could kill me. When I was born, my mom took me home, beautiful Palmdale, California. Mom helped me make friends right away. Our house was enormous like a castle, and for the first time I felt completely free.

JIMMY'S MOTHER: There, now you're safe from that evil, filthy world. You're home, Jimmy, and you never ever, ever have to go out there again.

JIMMY: I had a big room with my own bed, lots of toys and two pairs of retractable arms.

JIMMY'S MOTHER: 'And the price climbed to the top of the tower and said, 'Come with me and we'll live happily ever after.' And the princess left her plastic bubble and died.' The end. Those evil doctors. Nobody's going to get any germs on my little boy now. You'll always stay pure, won't you Jimmy? Jimmy, breakfey!

JIMMY: I had my reading. I wish they had more than one magazine in the world, mom.

JIMMY'S MOTHER: So do I dear.

JIMMY: My favorite TV show, Land of the Lost. I wish TV's had more than one channel, Mom.

JIMMY'S MOTHER: Oh, so do I dear.

JIMMY: And I had the best teacher in the whole wide world. Then the Indians decided to move to the reservations where they could open casinos and sell tax free cigarettes and stay out of the white man's way.

JIMMY'S MOTHER: Another "A+", Jimmy. Lunchie!

JIMMY: Suppertime was the best. Nothing could beat mom's homemade vitamin-enriched, soy-based, germ-free, fat-free, fiber-free cookies. I grew up like any other kid. At 16, I didn't get a car but I did get an electrical rock music guitar.

Do you see what I'm saying? I'm saying that I think we're all an awful lot like Jimmy The Bubble Boy. We're surrounded by life but hiding in bubbles made out of fear. We're afraid that if we're really exposed to life, we'll die. That fear, you see, that fear is actually a lie. You see, Jimmy actually does have immunities to germs. It turns out that his mother is lying in order to maintain control of Jimmy.

You know the devil is lying in order to maintain control of you. He'll even use mother church. Sometimes especially fallen mother church. In the world there is sin, and sin involves pain.

But you actually have an immunity to sin. That immunity is called grace. Grace is God's judgment upon sin, so grace can hurt. It really can if you choose to hang on to sin. Grace is infinitely more powerful than sin.

Now listen close. If you don't really believe in God's judgment of grace, you'll think that you have to protect yourself with your own judgments. You'll think you have to build a bubble out of your own justifications, knowledge of rules, and lots of good deeds. That often looks like religion. We each live in a bubble of justifications constructed in fear. We think the bubble is home, safety, freedom and life but it's actually bondage and death where we become comfortably numb to life, to love.

I think this is our bubble.

[image]

If you were here last time we were in Genesis, I think you'll remember this. I think this is our bubble. My bubble. The false self that I think is me. What Paul calls the old flesh or the old man – the old Adam – it's the kingdom, you see, of my own judgments. It's my own deepest hiding place. It's where I go to be alone. Yet it's not good for Adam to be alone. Inside that bubble is false security, lies, darkness, loneliness and death. Dark.

Outside the bubble is what?

In Acts 17 Paul writes, "In God we live and move and have our being." So all around the bubble is God. God is the way, the truth, the life, the light. God is love, god is a trinity, so God is so entirely and utterly not alone and God is good. God is the substance of heaven. You know when Jesus came preaching, this is what he preached: the kingdom of heaven is at hand, love, joy, peace, patience, kindness goodness – its' all at hand right there all around us. So searching for heaven is like a fish searching for water in the depths of the sea. That means heaven isn't something that I achieve so much as something I surrender to. It's not something I comprehend but something that comprehends me. Heaven is the kingdom of God's judgment all around me.

You see there is a great threat to my kingdom of judgment. There is a great threat to my dark little bubble world. There is a great threat to the control that the evil one exercises over me. There's a great threat to my self-centered kingdom of my own judgments. The threat is other judgments. Other people's judgments, especially God's judgment. My helper's judgment. The greatest threat to my self-centered, self-satisfied, little bubble world—the greatest threat to the land of the lost is the presence of love.

### **Video Clip**

JIMMY: I was so happy. I had everything a boy could ever want until... Chloe.

JIMMY'S MOTHER: And then Pinocchio came out of his plastic bubble, touched the filthy little whore next door and died. The end.

The clip just shut off early. She says that's not the kind of friend that Jesus would want you to have, Jimmy.

Well you see, Chloe loves Jimmy and Jimmy starts to love Chloe, so mom feeds Jimmy lies to fill him with fear to justify the bubble. One kiss from Chloe could kill you, she teaches Jimmy. A kiss is bacteria, pain, and death. And in a way – get this – a kiss would kill Jimmy. It would kill that false Jimmy trapped in a lie.

You know when Adam sins he creates a bubble with his sin.

[image]

A bubble of not God's judgment, not God's word, not God's kingdom: a void. Then he protects that judgment with justifications.

He protects this – bad judgments:

[image]

from this – good judgments:

[image]

with leaves from the tree. More of the tree.

[image]

There's a fig leaf right there. See he's putting them all over himself to protect himself. He reinforces his bubble with justifications and hides himself there in fear.

It was the woman that you gave me, says Adam. It was the snake, says the woman, not me, NOT ME! Don't look at me. Don't judge me. Don't see me.

You know once we've sinned, in order to make ourselves right we have to make someone else wrong. Once I've sinned, in order to judge myself right I have to judge someone else wrong.

For instance, if I judge my addiction as right, I have to judge others opinions of my addiction as wrong and then I'm alone. The more that I'm alone, the more I drink or abuse or whatever to sooth the loneliness that I've created. The more I justify my drinking until I'm utterly alone in my bubble of death.

If I justify my lust as right, I have to judge others as wrong. In fact I have to judge women as objects for my consumption. So the more I justify myself, the more I de-humanize them. I kill them to me and I kill God in them to me. I crucify him in my heart. Then I am king of my kingdom but everyone in my kingdom is dead, including me.

If I justify my greed as good, I judge most of the world as bad. Do you realize that half of the people in Sub-Saharan Africa live on less than a dollar a day? A dollar a day, and I've seen it. I've been to Kenya and Mozambique. Hand an orphan a dollar and he or she can eat for a day instead of starve. They each have names like Steven or Keisha or Timothy. If you're like

me tonight after church you'll go out and get something to eat and you'll do your best to forget Steven and Keisha and Timothy. The bill will come to something like \$32, \$33 dollars and that means that if you would have just had ramen noodles for dinner, Steven and Keisha and Timothy could have eaten for 10 days rather than starve.

Now if you're like me right now you're thinking something like this. "Yes, but that won't solve global poverty. Yes, but it's also important to celebrate with your family, and the rapport they will have with you always. Yes, I am to love my neighbor but if Steven, Keisha and that other kid, are they my neighbor?"

See what you're doing? Sewing fig leavings. Building a bubble. Justifying yourself in order to hide yourself from God's judgment which is love. So even if some of your justifications are correct, they are all wrong for the justification itself shows that you don't want to love Steven or Keisha or Timothy. You don't want them to be your neighbor. Even judging, you could justify yourself as a sin for God has judged and he's already pronounced judgment.

Now get this, if you feel all guilty and everything and so go home and make Top Ramen for dinner so you can mail \$30 to World Vision tomorrow, you're still justifying yourself aren't you? You're still covering yourself with fig leaves. You're still afraid for yourself and hiding yourself with good deeds with knowledge and religion and you still don't love Steven and Keisha and Timothy all that much.

Actually, you're using them to feel better about yourself. Just like a Pharisee, you're giving alms to feel good about yourself, to protect yourself by hiding yourself. So you don't have to surrender yourself and fall on the temple floor like a tax collector crying out to God, "Have mercy on me! A sinner, for I am dead in my trespasses and sins and the uncircumcision of my flesh, my bubble!"

Well I'm just saying that when I justify myself I tend to kill everyone else, then I'm king of my kingdom of judgments. I am Lord of my bubble. The God of my own world and yet everyone and everything in my bubble is dead and I'm dead.

What I'm trying to say is that this bubble is hell. I think Adam and Eve are hiding in hell or at least the edge of hell. See, they have already left the garden; the problem is they just don't know it. Hell is where people hide from God's presence.

Job begs God to hide him from His face in hell.

Jonah runs from God, dives into the sea and hides from God in hell – the belly of the fish. By hell I mean Sheol or Hades, the outer darkness where we hide from God.

I think the best description of Hades outside the bible is the book the Great Divorce by C. S. Lewis. In the Great Divorce hell is a place where everyone gets whatever they want, but no one wants what they get for no one has the capacity to want love. So they all live in these immense mansions utterly alone, perpetually concerned with themselves and their judgments and their dignity and their grievances and what the people are saying and public opinion and their justifications. You see it begins here on earth and extends under the earth into the grave. Just like it extends under the earth into the grave in scripture: Sheol, Hades, the grave.

Lewis writes: "Hell is a state of mind. And every state of mind left to itself, every shutting up of the creature within the dungeon of its own mind is in the end hell. But heaven is not a state of mind. Heaven is reality itself."

I'd put it this way, hell is fallen man's – fallen Adam's – state of mind and heaven is God's state of mind. Remember, states of mind are more real than matter. Even the science of quantum physics now demonstrates that our judgments somehow create reality. Our judgments create hell, but God's judgment, God's word, Jesus Christ and him crucified creates all things eternal. Heaven.

I think hell is made with our judgments and guarded with our justifications. One day we'll be destroyed with God's fire, but now it's guarded with our justifications. Maybe that's why there is no record of Jesus talking of hell to Pagans. He warns the Scribes and the Pharisees, the religious crowd, warns them a lot. Maybe it's because they're the ones most in danger of getting stuck there, buried in all their justifications and judgments. Judge not lest you not be judged. In my experience religious people are pretty good at judging. People like me, religious people like me.

See it's the Scribes and the Pharisees that know how to guard their sinful selves with religion. It's "the sons of the kingdom" who will be cast into the outer darkness. It's the Scribes and the Pharisees that Jesus calls white-washed tombs, that is walking graves, hell on wheels walking around.

You see the problem isn't that you sinned. Jesus already died for your sins. You know that? John says it. He didn't just die for your sins, he died for the sins of the whole world and from the foundation of the earth the Revelation reveals.

The problem isn't that you've sinned, but that you still hide.

The problem isn't that you sinned, but that you don't yet truly believe you're forgiven.

The problem is a lack of faith in God's judgment and so you hide yourself in your own justifications and that my friends is death and hell.

God loves people trapped in hell, yet God hates death in hell. That's why in the end with the end he will destroy it.

**Revelation 20:14** "Then death and hell were thrown into the lake of fire and death will be no more."

God is consuming fire. To have this bubble destroyed from the outside in is to be cast into the lake of fire. The second death.

[image]

But to have this bubble destroyed from the inside out is to drink fire into yourself. It's to die to yourself and surrender to God's mercy. It is to say God I confess my sin and I receive your grace. God have mercy on me, a sinner.

[image]

Then Christ is born in you. He is formed in you. Christ in you. And this vessel of wrath becomes that vessel of mercy—an earthen vessel—dirt—filled with the breath of God. The new Adam: life.

You see I think that's what would have happened if Adam and Eve would have stopped hiding and surrendered their naked selves to grace. They would have got pregnant with eternal life.

Maybe it's not too late.

In Genesis 3 they hide. And so God proceeds to kick them out of the garden and curse the earth. In other words he's not going to let existence in that bubble be easy. He's going to make them hate the bubble and hate this world so they'll want to give it up. I call that the outer witness, and we'll talk about that next time. Through a cursed creation God attacks the bubble from the outside, but with the helper he attacks it from within.

Remember last time we said that in Christ God took the fruit from us, his bride, and he become sin for us, descended into our death and our hell into our deepest hiding place to be with us – Emmanuel – God with us.

In The Great Divorce, an angel says this:

“A damned soul is nearly nothing. It is shrunk, shut up in itself. Good beats incessantly on the damned as sound waves beat on the ears of the deaf but they cannot receive it. Their fists are clenched, their teeth are clenched, and their eyes fast shut. First they will not and in the end they cannot open their hands for gifts or their mouths for food or their eyes to see.

“Then can no one ever reach them,” someone says.

“Only the greatest of all can make himself small enough to enter hell.”

“And will he ever do it again?”

It was not once long ago that he did. Time does not work that way when once ye have left the earth. All moments that have been or shall be were or are present in the moment of his descending. There is no spirit imprisoned to whom he did not preach.”

You see Jesus is God's word of grace to us. In our very place of deepest shame, that place we nail Him to the tree of shame, our shame. Jesus is God's kiss of grace upon this dark bubble of a world, body broken, blood shed, painful but good. There he draws all men unto himself (John 12). There he romances his bride into surrender and from there he sends his spirit into our dark bubble hearts. His spirit who is love, the inner witness so that moved by love we surrender all our judgments. We surrender our judgments to God's judgment. We decide one kiss from him is better than our whole world. So we choose to lose our life in order to find it. So we surrender to the kingdom of heaven. So we die to this world and wake to the marriage supper of the land.

Well, in the movie, Chloe romances Jimmy from outside of his bubble. Even when Jimmy rejects her out of his own pain, killing her to himself she gives him a snow globe. A snow globe with two people inside the same bubble and a sign that says 'I love you'.

### **Video Clip**

JIMMY'S MOTHER: That nasty little slut left just in the nick of time.

JIMMY: I had no idea what I was up against. Chloe hadn't told me much. All I knew was that she was in New York, which may as well been on the other side of the galaxy. I only had three days to get there – three days. I just needed the bubble suit to last that long.

JIMMY'S MOTHER: Jimmy! Jimmy! Stop the car!

JIMMY: No Mom, I'm sorry. I have to do this. I'm not coming home.

JIMMY'S MOTHER: Jimmy! Jimmy, no!

But when Jimmy gets the gift, love infects his bubble. He has three days, three days like death and resurrection. He constructs a mobile bubble and sets out on the journey of his life. He gets beat up by a cult, he's included in a gang, he's conscripted into a freak show and he even goes over Niagara Falls in his bubble. It's the outer witness so that by the time he gets to the wedding where Chloe is marrying another. By the time he gets to the wedding the bubble is pretty beat up. But it's the inner witness – his love for Chloe – that ultimately finally finishes the bubble off.

### **Video Clip**

PASTOR: Do you Mark take Chloe to be your lawfully wedded wife? And do you Chloe take Mark to be your lawfully wedded husband?

JIMMY: Chloe!

CHLOE: Jimmy!

MARK: Hey dude, what the hell are you doing here? I thought I told you to head on home?

JIMMY: Just hang on a second, Vato.

MARK: Vato?

JIMMY: Shut up. Chloe, I uh.

CHLOE: What? What? [Jimmy takes off the bubble suit.]

Jimmy what are you doing? Jimmy? Jimmy?

JIMMY: I'd rather spend one minute holding you than spending the rest of my life knowing I never could. So if you don't mind, may I kiss the bride? I love you. I love you so much, forever.

CHLOE: Jimmy? [Jimmy collapses.]

No, no! I love you, Jimmy. I've always loved you.

JIMMY'S MOTHER: He's dead! You killed him! My sweet Jimmy, my precious boy.

JIMMY'S FATHER: Tell him.

JIMMY'S MOTHER: What are you talking about? Tell him what?

JIMMY'S FATHER: He's not dead. You're not dead, Jimmy.

JIMMY'S MOTHER: He's lying, Jimmy.

JIMMY'S FATHER: Tell him. Tell him everything.

JIMMY'S MOTHER: You're not dead, Jimmy.

JIMMY: I'm not?

JIMMY'S MOTHER: You developed immunities when you were 4. I couldn't bear to let the world ruin you. There are so many awful things out there Jimmy. There's so many horrible things!

JIMMY: So, since I'm not dead, um.

[Jimmy and Chloe kiss.]

You see the whole world is running from God and hiding from God. We, my friends, have some pretty good news. That is that the very thing you are most afraid of is what your heart most earnestly desires.

So stop hiding.

The kingdom of heaven is at hand.

So on the 6<sup>th</sup> day, he took the bread and he broke it. He said, "this is my body given to you. Take it, eat it." And in the same manner after supper he took the cup and he said, "This is my blood of the covenant. Pour it out for the forgiveness of sin, the forgiveness of many. Drink of it all of you. Do it in remembrance of me."

Forgiveness. This is God's judgment. This will burst your bubble. This is the thing that you have feared most. This is what you're running from. This is the thing that you have feared most and yet this is the thing that your heart most earnestly desires. This is the judgment of God and it will destroy all other judgments and make all things new.

So stop hiding.

You see the problem really isn't that you sinned, it's that you're hiding.

Let's pray:

"Lord God, we need the help of your spirit for we are so good at hiding. Would you find us?

And so right now I think he says to you, "Where are you?"

Are you in the trees justifying yourself? Explaining why you don't need him, a helper?

You're naked.

What are you ashamed of?

He's calling to you, "Where are you?"

Do you know who's standing right in front of you? At the end of the 6<sup>th</sup> day, at the edge of the 7<sup>th</sup> day?

It's Jesus. Look at his hands. Look out from under the leaves. There are scars on his hands, wounds on his feet. They are like yours, they are yours.

You feel lost?

You feel dead?

Do you know who he is? He's the way, the truth, and the life. That means, you don't know which way to go? He's the way. And the way is the truth, no more lies. It's not your plans; it's not how you can figure things out. It's not how you can make it all work; it's the truth right now in front of you in the moment. The way is always the truth, and the truth is the life.

So talk to him. Say in your heart I surrender myself, my naked self, and I receive your grace. He is the judgment of God on you, mercy.

The darker cups are wine, the lighter cups are juice. They're both mercy, God's judgment, God's fire, God's love for you.

Amen."

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Communion

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Benediction

You know I think the bible is so cool and the gospel is so cool and I want to be honest about it. Sometimes people have said, "Well that Pastor doesn't believe in hell." Hell is as real as sin and death and the grave. It's as real as this old body of mine and this earth on which I'm standing. But it's not as real as God. And we get trapped there, dark spirits inhabit the lies. Satan inhabits those places – the power of the void. He talks, I've heard him. Those places – that place in us – of doubt and fear and shame-- is what empowers a life of sin. It's what fuels so much of the pain and suffering of this world, and yet I think God allows the darkness to persist because He loves you. He wants you to surrender to His love.

So you see the problem really is that you're hiding. Not that you have sinned, but that your hiding in your own judgments, your own darkness, and we're very good hidiers. That's why we need each other. We need to confess our sins one to another. So it's a practice, a common thing that we do. A really sad deal with the Protestant reformation is we did away with the confessional. You're all the confessional, okay? You're all priests of the living God if you've surrendered your life to Jesus.

And tonight if you're stuck and you just want to confess some things, we have a ministry team and I'd love it you just spend some time with them. Because this is what happens when you confess. You are confessing your judgments, your darkness and you are looking into another person who contains the very spirit of the living God. You're looking into the mirror that is their eyes and they are looking back at you telling you who you are when you say, "I confess this, this, this and this" and they look at you and they say, "In the name of Jesus under the authority of his blood, you are forgiven." The gates of hell shall not stand against my church said Jesus, and that's how those gates are broken.

Believe the gospel, in Jesus name. It's really, really, really, really good news.

Amen.