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THE ORIGINAL DESIGN OF PRAYER TIME

Genesis 3:8-13

INTRODUCTION :

Last week I mentioned the 75 year research Research on Happiness made by Harvard :
75 year research 724 men on Happiness by Harvard – good relationships. Followed since 1930. Most of the them are in the 90s (60 are still alive)

“Good relationships makes us happier and healthier. People who are connected with families, communities (*e.g. churches*) are happier, they are physically healthier and they live longer who are less well connected”

- - Harvard Medical School professor and researcher, Robert J. Waldinger

This is truth established right from the beginning of the Bible :

Important : God has designed man to find satisfaction in relationships :

Genesis 2:18 “It is not good for man to be alone...”

But men and even Christians are missing out on the best relationship they can have and that is a relationship with God.

Going to church, hearing and reading God’s Word and prayer are the ones, THE SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINES ARE THE ONES that nurture our relationship with Him.

You might say, Pastor, I don’t need to these disciplines in order to have a good relationship with God.

I always say, “You will never be good at something you want to improve if you don’t regularly spend time on it.”

This is the reason why most of the metaphors in the Bible that Paul uses in growing in faith is about an athlete.

Illustration : Do you think Pacquiao can become a great boxer without discipline? We were talking about this before that you see Pacquiao’s growth as a Christian is tremendous, it’s because I’m pretty sure the same discipline he applied in his sport is the same discipline for his spirit.

Spiritual discipline brings us back again to the original design of God when it come to our relationship with Him.

Genesis 3: 8 Then the man and his wife heard the sound of the LORD God as he was walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and they hid from the LORD God among the trees of the garden. 9 But the LORD God called to the man, "Where are you?"

Pray

God has created man to have a relationship with Him and to enjoy that relationship with Him.

Let's look at God's original fellowship with man. God's original design before man was banished from paradise.

1. Man was familiar with God

⁸ Then the man and his wife heard the sound of the LORD God as he was walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and they hid from the LORD God among the trees of the garden.

Remember : It is always God who initiates prayer time...our conversations with Him...
LORD God as he was walking in the garden
The reason He was walking in the garden is in order to initiate a conversation with Adam and Eve.

Remember this : Every urge to go to church, every urge to kneel down and pray, every push to read God's Word or hear God's Word, every conviction of sin...comes from the Holy Spirit.

THAT'S THE TIME, GOD WANTS TO INITIATE FELLOWSHIP WITH US.

And when Adam and Eve hid, he was the one who initiated the conversation by saying...
⁹ But the LORD God called to the man, "Where are you?"

As if God was expecting to find Adam and Eve in their usual spot so that He can talk with them.

During that time, Adam and Eve was familiar with God's presence...

Proof : Just at the sound *Then the man and his wife heard the sound of the LORD God as he was walking*

Etymology : sound – voice KJV - "kowlē" - sound, voice, noise

Example : My wife knows that I'm the one who's arriving or coming up the stairs and I asked why? She says...ang bigat daw ng yapak ko.. (my footsteps are heavy)

Or it's just like a dog familiar with the sound of His master

GOOD TO Note : It doesn't say first that they saw Him and then they reacted...they already reacted when they heard

WE NEED TO BE FAMILIAR WITH GOD'S PRESENCE.

Question : How can we be familiar with God?

Answer : They were familiar because **there was a set time to converse with God**

Look : This time is *"cool of the day",* **a time when all work is done or no work has been done yet.**

Look at how the Lord's example when He was here on earth.

Mark 1:35 "Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house and went off to a solitary place, where he prayed."

Luke : 5:16 "Jesus often withdrew to lonely places and prayed."

Why do we need to withdraw? Why do we need a set time.

Because there are competing voices that are designed to distract us away from the voice of God.

Look at Genesis 3: .⁹ But the LORD God called to the man, "Where are you?"

¹⁰ He answered, "I heard you in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; so I hid."

¹¹ And he said, "Who told you that you were naked?

VERY IMPORTANT : Before the serpent talked with Eve, **who were the only voices they heard?**...Adam hearing the voice of Eve...Eve hearing the voice of Adam...and Adam and Eve hearing the voice of God....**THERE WERE ONLY 3 VOICES**

In our everyday lives, we need to learn to drown out the noise and just hear what's most important...God's voice.

Illustration : There was an Indian who was invited by a friend to go to visit him in Manhattan. If you've been in Manhattan, it's a very noisy and crowded place. But while the Indian was walking along a busy street, he stopped his friend and said, "Did you hear that?" His friend said, "Hear what?" There were lots of noises, cars honking, people chatting, music all over, police sirens and etc. But the Indian said, "Do you hear the cricket?" The friend said, "No.". The Indian said, "I hear it...just wait here." And then the Indian traced where the sound was coming from and he found the cricket underneath a stone. The friend was so amazed and said, "How did you hear that cricket amidst all the noise?" The Indian said, "People only hear what they want to hear." And then he asked his friend, if he has coins in his pocket. The friend said, "Yes, in fact, I've got lots of coins." So the Indian said, "Can I borrow it?" The friend, who doesn't know what the Indian was up to decided to give the coins. When the Indian got the coins, he then threw it in the air and all the coins dropped on the ground and made a sound as it hit the pavement and a lot of people stopped on their tracks to see where the coins are? The Indian said to his friend, "See? People only hear what they want to hear."

If you want to hear God's voice, you will hear God's voice through His Word in the Scriptures. Part of prayer time is spending time reading and studying the Bible.

2. Man was face to face with God

Genesis 3 : *⁸ Then the man and his wife heard the sound of the LORD God as he was walking in the garden in the cool of the day,*

See here : Oh I love this.... **Do you know that when we are praying it is not us reaching out to heaven but God reaching out to us from heaven to be with us here?**

Theological term : “theophany” - appearance of God as man

Two things : *Sound of the Lord.... Walking in the garden*

Question : How are we sure that when we talk with God we are face to face with Him?

Answer : “Theophany” ...appearance of God as man... during the Old Testament times **BUT TODAY!!! God did not only appear as a man....HE BECAME MAN!!!**

“Incarnation” God becoming man...Jesus Christ and

WHERE IS JESUS CHRIST RIGHT NOW?

Ephesians 2: ⁶And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus, (where is Jesus and where are we right now?)

Important : This is the reason why we can go face to face with God, it is because of Jesus Christ...God not only making a theophany (appearing as man)...He became man (incarnation) in order to make it possible for us to be in His presence.

Religion says that we still need to go to another person to pray to go to God when Jesus Christ says, I am the only way.

John 14:6 "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.

1 Timothy 2: ⁵For there is one God and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus,

Illustration : While talking with my Nanay on the phone one time, she said she really misses me and wants to see me. I told her, “May Skype naman ah” (There’s Skype). But my Nanay said, “Iba pa rin yung nahahawakan mo at nayayakap mo.” But in order for me to do that, I have to take time out of my year, spend money just to be physically present with my Nanay.

But with God, because of His Son Jesus Christ, we just need to take out a time in our day and we can be physically present in front of Him anytime and you are immediately assured you are in His presence. It’s because our Lord Jesus became man to die on the cross for our sins and the third day He rose again and He’s now at the right hand of the Father, mediating for us.

3. Man was free and relaxed before God

Genesis 3 : ⁸ Then the man and his wife heard the sound of the LORD God as he was walking in the garden in the cool of the day.

Adam and Eve's time with the Lord was the most relaxing part of their day. It wasn't a disturbance while they were naming all the animals or exploring the earth God gave them. It was a time where they can just talk and relax.

Having fellowship with God here in the church or in our prayer time should be our most relaxing time when the day hasn't started yet or the day has ended. That's why Sunday service is the start of the week.

Illustration : Sometimes, in my prayer time, I don't say anything. I'm just there relaxing before God.

They say that true intimacy/friendship is established is when you can spend time with each other without having the need to talk with each other. It's about the time you spend with them.

My best friend in the Philippines, we always go for coffee every Tuesday. We pray. We talk about the Lord and the lessons He taught us last week. How He is dealing with us. But sometimes, we can spend several minutes not talking but just relaxing without a single shred of awkwardness.

Question : How can we be free and relaxed before God? **Let's study first, why man lost that familiarity with God?**

⁸ Then the man and his wife heard the sound of the LORD God as he was walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and they hid from the LORD God among the trees of the garden.

Why did they hide?

They felt guilt and shame. Guilt and shame is brought about by knowing that they disobeyed God. You can never feel free and relaxed before God if there is something blocking your way.

Isn't that happens when sometimes, you and your wife can't talk, or your friend can't talk because you have an issue between you. Just like with the Lord, we need to deal with an issue.

What is the issue? SIN!!!

NOW Observe again:

VERY Important : This is the reason why God became man and He is Our Lord Jesus Christ so we don't have to hide ourselves anymore because of our sin.

Hebrews 4: 14 Seeing then that we have a great High Priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God,....

16 Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

Look at the first question God asked : v.9 But the Lord God called to the man, "Where are you?" THIS IS THE FIRST QUESTION ASKED BY GOD IN THE BIBLE?

Why would God asked that? Isn't He omniscient? God is Omniscient...He knows everything so He knew Adam and Eve sinned but why did He still initiated a conversation with them instead of just exacting them death...

It's because He was giving them the opportunity to tell them to say to Him. "Oh Lord, we messed up." But instead they hid themselves, they did not confess their sin and instead blamed others for what they did.

10 He answered, "I heard you in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; so I hid."

11 And he said, "Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree that I commanded you not to eat from?"

12 The man said, "The woman you put here with me—she gave me some fruit from the tree, and I ate it."

13 Then the LORD God said to the woman, "What is this you have done?" The woman said, "The serpent deceived me, and I ate."

When we are praying, we usually follow this formula :

A-C-T-S : Adoration, Confession, Thanksgiving, Supplication

But sometimes, we have sinned against God and instead of ACTS, we need to

C-A-S-T : Confession, Adoration, Supplication, Thanksgiving

We need to confess our sins with God...so there's no hindrance in our fellowship with Him.

1 John 1:9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.

CONCLUSION :

Story : I remember my father-in-law was telling the story that he was asking the children was home already. All of his children were already adults So in one of their conversations, the kids asked my father-in-law why does he have to ask whether they got home already or not, my father-in-law replied, "Kung pusa nga hinahanap, anak pa."

It's just like with us when we don't attend church or we don't have a prayer time, he is looking for you and asking **"WHERE ARE YOU?"**

What is the Biblical proof? Luke 15:11-32

Remember the story of the prodigal son. He asked for his inheritance and during that time, when you do that, it's just like saying to your dad, "I consider you as dead." It means the dad meant nothing to him now. But the son fell into hard times, literally hard times and realized what he did and decided to go back to his father...so he went back and look at what the Bible says :

Luke 15: 20 So he got up and went to his father.

"But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion for him; he ran to his son, threw his arms around him and kissed him.

The father was so happy that he celebrated and threw a party.

This is the reason why our Lord said,

Luke 19:10 For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost."

ISN'T IT AMAZING THAT GOD HIMSELF IS LOOKING TO HAVE SOME FELLOWSHIP WITH YOU. **WHERE ARE YOU?**

S.G.D.