

## Series Slide

I want to start this morning- as we approach a very controversial topic that can tend you to just think about whether what I'm

**In this room right now**, there's a man who 20 years ago as a little boy, watched his father walk out of the door and out of his life, because his Dad found love in the arms of someone other than that little boys mom.

- ...and today, now a 30 year old man, he remembers that moment...because he's just done the same thing to his wife.
- And he hates it. But he can't stop himself.

**In this room right now**, is a woman who just last night on her computer screen, watched two other people in a sexual act. And she's done it for the last 5 years, 3 times a week.

- ....she knows its breaking her, but she can hide comfortably behind "being a female" because "that's a guys problem".
- So no one ever suspects it, and no one ever asks her about it.

**In this room right now**, there's an 11 year old boy, who 2 years ago, when he was 9, innocently clicked on a pop-up ad on his computer...and though he didn't quite understand what he saw, he was drawn to it.

- ...and for two years, he's been robbed of being a kid...
- because all he thinks about, is how quickly he can find himself alone with the computer or phone so he can look some more.
- He doesn't understand how his soul is breaking...he doesn't understand how this physical act is changing his future...and his parents have no clue its happening.

**In this room right now**, there's a woman....that feels like she should be a man... Her life since she was a kid has been filled with confusion and wrestling, and hurt. She's tried to fit in, she was rejected by her parents...her church...her friends...and she's finally come to grips with "who she is".

- ...but there is a bitterness, a skepticism even as she sits listening to me ramble...
- "Can I trust these people?"

- Will they love me when they find me out? Can I ever fit in here? Will anybody really love me?

**In this room right now**, there's a man who was sexually abused by his uncle. ...and he's never told anybody.

- There's a woman that was raped. And she's never told anybody.

There are women that have had abortions

- ...and regret them.

There are women that have had abortions

- ....and fully defend their right to do it again.

There are straight people that are afraid of gay people. Because they are gay.

There are gay people that when they hear someone say "Christian" recoil and immediately prepare to defend themselves- who barely made it through the door today without a panic attack because of the hateful things that their church did to them.

There are people that are judging me because I just said the word "gay" instead of Same Sex Attracted.

And if said Same Sex Attracted, a whole new group of people would judge me for not saying queer or LGBT2SQQIA+.

- Because this is "pick a side" culture that's doing everything to keep anybody from actually listening to and loving one another until you capitulate and celebrate the way MY SIDE thinks.

In this room are **single people** who wonder if they'll ever be married. And there is a mixture of anger...and hurt...and longing.

There are married people who think, they are trapped in a marriage...and there is a mixture of anger...and hurt...and longing.

There are divorced people who think "I can't undo being divorced...and so I'll always have an asterisks next to my name. A un-reversible scarlet letter."

**In this room** are women who have used sex to get things...and men who have used sex to define themselves.

**In this room** are those who have prided themselves on their virginity...and there are those who have prided themselves on their promiscuity. Meanwhile, neither of them have a clue about the crash that's about to happen in their lives.

And then there is you.

Maybe you are one of the people I listed. Or maybe your are upset because in some way I left you out. Or maybe you are a brother. A sister. A mother. A father. A friend. A husband. A wife. and you love someone who is in those positions. You desperately want to understand what God has to do with any of this. Can he help? Or is He part of the problem?

Maybe you are thinking of ditching God altogether because of you just think of the bible as homophobic, transphobic, and in general completely incompatible with any kind realistic understanding of today's concepts of sexuality and gender.

Whoever you are. Whatever your story is. I'd like to pray for you right now. And whichever one of those descriptions made you the most uncomfortable- I want you to pray for that person.

**[PRAY]**

PRAYER:

- Feel loved.
- Patience through questions. That we assume the best about one another, that we are open to deep rooted beliefs being challenged...
- Stay unified with the church through this.

- They would decide to follow Jesus at all costs
- That I would preach with humility, conviction, and deep love.

## **Title slide- "Heavy Breathing: Why What We Do with Our Bodies Matters"-Genesis 1-2**

ILLUS: Priest finding couple having sex on the church property.

### **"What does this have to do with the stars?"**

That's a question that a lot of us have lost. What do our bodies and how we use them have to do with the bigger picture of what God is doing in this world? Is my sex life just about people consenting? Is my gender just the way I p feel inside? Does what I do with my body have anything to do with Heaven and Earth- and the God that made them?

This is what we are going to explore, slowly, and carefully through the Scripture over the next year. Every 4-6 weeks- I'm going to preach on this- and in our community groups and through conversations we have and stories of our people that we listen to- we're going to think through that question. What does Sex & Gender have to do with what God is doing in the world...and in us. We're going to get out of just our small cultural moment... and into the bigger picture of why we're here...and what in the world that has to do with boyfriends, girlfriends, husbands, wives, neighbors, gay, straight, male and female...

And that's why we're starting at the beginning.  
Genesis. Creation.

Let me just say, I know that its not easy to hear me if I approach the Bible as if its "God's word" and you don't.

Ok...here we go. **Genesis 1-2**

### **Genesis 1:1-2**

**In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.**

**2 Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness covered the surface of the watery depths, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the surface of the waters.**

- Alright, here's what I want you to note here. I want you to see the spiritual here.
- God, who is spirit, is creating from nothing...physical.
- So, the physical is being MADE by the Spiritual. God.

### **Genesis 1:24-25**

**• Then God said, "Let the earth produce living creatures according to their kinds: livestock, creatures that crawl, and the wildlife of the earth according to their kinds." And it was so. 25 So God made the wildlife of the earth according to their kinds, the livestock according to their kinds, and all the creatures that crawl on the ground according to their kinds. And God saw that it was good**

- Don't miss that.
- As God creates the animals, he is creating them "according to their kind".
- Think of it like this, God all along as he creates, makes up new molds. New patterns.
- Its like if you had a wad of Play-Doh, and you decided to make replicas of food. So, you start making molds. Or cut out patterns...you know, like cookie cutters.
- So you get a coat hanger, and bend it into a triangle, to make a play-doh pizza.
- Then you make a little circle out of a piece of cardboard, so you can make a bunch of grapes.
  
- That's loosely what this means "according to their kind".
- Whatever it is to be an animal, God's making that mold, those patterns that are their own distinct kind. They are all related in the sense that God is making a mold for them.
  
- If that doesn't make sense yet, hang on for the next verse, I think this will clear it up.

## **Genesis 1:26-27**

- **Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, according to our likeness. They will rule the fish of the sea, the birds of the sky, the livestock, the whole earth, and the creatures that crawl on the earth."**

- **27 So God created man in his own image;**
- **he created him in the image of God;**
- **he created them male and female.**

Ok, so God has been creating animals according to their kind, but now, when he decides to create humans...he doesn't go to the kitchen drawer. He's not making something distinct from himself....he's not fashioning a new mold....or a new pattern...

- Instead he's making humans...male and female...according to HIS OWN KIND...as a picture of himself.
  - God is becoming the pattern.
  - For the first and only time in all of what God created. God is putting aside all the cookie cutters he made, he's putting the molds and the patterns away...
  - ...and he is laying down in the play-doh, tracing himself.
  - Making an image of himself.
  - Now, God himself has become the cookie-cutter.
  
  - This makes humans distinctly different from the rest of creation...but at the same time...clearly a part of it.
  - Higher than the animals...a picture of God...but yet, still NOT God.
  
  - And for the rest of the Bible...for understanding who you are...what your purpose is...and yes...for understanding sexuality...this is crucial.
- Can I tell you one of the most unhelpful things that goes on in the secular-Christian debates today?
    - Looking at Genesis as if its supposed to tell us how old the

earth is.

- Genesis 1-2 are not given to us for that.
- They aren't here to understand HOW, or WHEN the world was created...
- ...they are given to us to tell us WHO created and WHY he created us...The creation account is not primarily about HOW- its about identity and purpose- WHO and WHAT FOR

And here comes some of that purpose:

### **Genesis 1:28**

- **God blessed them, and God said to them, "Be fruitful, multiply, fill the earth, and subdue it. Rule the fish of the sea, the birds of the sky, and every creature that crawls on the earth."**

- If you go back and read the rest of the first chapter of Genesis, you'll notice that God also gives this command to the creatures in the sea.
- My point is not that this command is unique to humans. Its that there is something being shared by humans and animals, "Be Fruitful and Multiply", have sex, have babies, reproduce...but also something that makes humans Higher...different...of God's kind, not the animals kind... "Subdue the earth...be higher than the birds and fish, and gazelles, lions, and earthworms"
- **You are physical like the animals...but don't forget...you are also spiritual...patterned after God to do something higher than the animals.**
- **So, I'm going to give you a big idea to hold onto from this first chapter of Genesis.**
- **You're like an animal, ...but you're more like God.**
- Your humanity has EVERYTHING to do with Sexuality and Spirituality.

Hold onto to that idea. Because now we're going to roll into Genesis 2.

Here's a way to think about Genesis 2.

- Genesis 1 is a poem. It is, in fact...written in the style of a Hebrew song.
- Its got a rhythm to it. God said. God created. God said "Its good"
- God said. God created. God said. Its good.
- God said, God created. God said Its good.
  
- So Genesis 1 is not giving you all the necessary details of creation, its giving you the beauty of creation. The rhythm. The song of creation.
- That doesn't mean we don't think it's information is worthwhile, it very much is. Its revealing in a very poetic way "the meaning of life."
- Its showing us the shalom, the wholeness and peaceful interaction of God with his creation.
  
- So, if Genesis 1 is a poem...or a song.
- Genesis 2 is newspaper article. Genesis 2 is the report.
  
- You can also think of it like this.
- Genesis 1 gives you a 10,000 foot view...Genesis 2 zooms in on the details.
- Genesis 1 shows us God's TRANSCENDENCE...He's big...creating the heavens and the earth. Genesis 2- he's INTIMATE. His hands are in the dirt. He's walking and talking with humanity and creation.

So, now that we've read the poem, now that we understand... "we're physical like the animals...but more so, we're spiritual like God."

**Genesis 2 is going show us closer up why that matters.**

**Genesis 2:7-2:9**

- Then the Lord God formed the man out of the dust from the ground and breathed the breath of life into his nostrils, and the man became a living being.

- 8 The Lord God planted a garden in Eden, in the east, and there he placed the man he had formed. 9 The Lord God caused to grow out of the ground every tree pleasing in appearance and good for food, including the tree of life in the middle of the garden, as well as the tree of the knowledge of good and evil

### **Genesis 2:15-25**

The Lord God took the man and placed him in the garden of Eden to work it and watch over it. 16 And the Lord God commanded the man, "You are free to eat from any tree of the garden, 17 but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for on the day you eat from it, you will certainly die." 18 Then the Lord God said, "It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper corresponding to him." 19 The Lord God formed out of the ground every wild animal and every bird of the sky, and brought each to the man to see what he would call it. And whatever the man called a living creature, that was its name. 20 The man gave names to all the livestock, to the birds of the sky, and to every wild animal; but for the man no helper was found corresponding to him. 21 So the Lord God caused a deep sleep to come over the man, and he slept. God took one of his ribs and closed the flesh at that place. 22 Then the

**Lord God made the rib he had taken from the man into a woman and brought her to the man. 23 And the man said:**

**This one, at last, is bone of my bone  
and flesh of my flesh;  
this one will be called "woman,"  
for she was taken from man.**

**24 This is why a man leaves his father and mother and bonds with his wife, and they become one flesh. 25 Both the man and his wife were naked, yet felt no shame.**

### **1) Everyone is valuable.**

I've got good news and bad news. The good news is....

- Every single person sitting in this room right now, without an asterisks, without a caveat, without knowing what you believe about God, or sexuality, or politics....Without knowing your past, without knowing what you did last year, last month, or last night..., every single person here is valuable.
- No one is trash.
- Because you are created in God's image. Unrelated to anything you do or have done...Because you are a picture of God, you are valuable.
- That's good news.
- Here's the bad news
- So is every other person you hate, disagree with, can't stand to be around,...so is every person that's ever hurt you, lied to you, manipulated you...or disagreed with you.
- We don't get to believe that some people are image bearers of God and are valuable, while we believe other people are not.
- That's hypocritical.

- So anytime we are trying to snuff out the life of people...through murder...or through suicide, you aren't believing that statement.
- Because when we kill, either ourselves or another person, we are marring the image of God.
- We may have a Bible in our hands, but at the same time, we're driving a knife into our neighbors heart, or a razor blade across our own wrist.
- Now, Did that statement bring anyone comfort?
- Did anybody just think "Murder. Suicide. That's not me."
- "Whew. I really am a good person. I really do believe people are made in God's image.'

### • **Matt 5:21-22**

- Well, Jesus messed that up for you. See, Jesus said "If you hate someone in your heart...you've murdered."
- ...you've destroyed, marred, killed, an image bearer of God.
- When you look at a person and say "That slut."
  - You've murdered.
- ...and when you look in the mirror and say "What a slut."
  - You've committed suicide.
- Murder and suicide are simply the physical ends of the spiritual devaluing of the image of God in someone. Yourself, or your spouse. The man in the mirror, or the woman next door.
- Let me give you two real life examples of this hypocrisy.
- **ILLUS:** In San Francisco in 1978, Dan White murdered Harvey Milk.
  - Harvey Milk was the first openly gay man to hold public office.
  - And Dan White ran for office as a conservative, religious "defender of the home against homosexuals" -Turner, Wallace

*(November 28, 1978). "Suspect Sought Job". The New York Times.*

- When White lost his position, he murdered Harvey Milk.
- Because even though he claimed to believe the Bible about the idea that HE was valuable, he didn't believe it for Harvey Milk.
- Or in 2016, at the Pulse Nightclub in Orlando, when a 29 year old man killed 49 people and wounded 53 more in a mass shooting, because they gay.
- Dan White murdered Harvey Milk long before he crawled through a window and gunned him down. And Omar Mateen killed those 49 image bearers of God before he ever made his way to that nightclub...Because both of him hated before they committed those heinous acts. .
- Jesus comes along in the NT saying "At the level of your heart, you murder every time you say "I can't stand that person." Even if that person is the one in the mirror.

#### • **1 John 3:15-16**

- In fact, John writes not only should we not hate, and thereby commit murder...rather, we should sacrifice...and lay our lives down for our brothers and sisters.
- There is no category. Righteous, unrighteous. Good, Bad. Old, Young.. Everyone has value BECAUSE when God made humans, he didn't go to the kitchen drawer to get a pattern...he laid down in the dirt and traced himself.
- These opening stories of the world, of God as a creator, are telling us, If you are human, you have divine value. PERIOD.
- Whatever adjective you throw in front of that does not CHANGE THAT FACT.
- To believe this doctrine...means we treat everyone as valuable.

- Born. Unborn. Gay. Straight. Religious. Secular. Democrat. Republican. Sinner. Righteous. There is human being...ever...regardless of what they have done or haven't done that is anything less than the beautiful image of God.
- **Everyone is valuable.**

**Transition:** Now, I got another good news/bad news situation for you.

If its true that we are created in God's image, then...

## **2) Everything is worship.**

- Here's the good news.
- It means that everything carries meaning.
- It means that there is not a thing you do that is unimportant. And isn't that attractive? Don't we all want who we are and what we do to count? If this is true...then everything you do is designed to Picture something true about God.
- Take a look **Gen 2:15**
- You see here where God puts the man in this perfect garden and his purpose is to "work and watch over it"
- This is what I call a loaded verse.
- The author is packing TONS of meaning into short phrases.
- This is the difficulty with the difference between the Hebrew language that Genesis is written in, and English.
- Hebrew has a lot fewer words to work with than we do in English. And so, The words "put" and "work" and "watch over" have much deeper meanings than simply "God set them down in the garden and then had them tilling the soil and growing plants."
- The word "put" means to set at rest. It's a peaceful term.
- Its like when I taught for the first time...I thought "this. This is what

I'm supposed to do."

- Its like when I held each of my 4 sons for the first time I thought "This. This is what I'm supposed to do."
- Its like when you (against all your better judgment about how you'll be late, or how messy you'll get...or how risky it is...)when you turn around on the interstate to go back and help that person change their flat tire in the pouring rain. You drive away, soaked to the bone, late to your appointment... no perceivable benefit to you at all...and you still think "This. This is what I'm supposed to do."
- When God 'puts' the man in the garden...he's setting him at rest. At peace...and what he gives him to do doesn't disrupt that rest...it's the very expression of it.
- See, he tells the man to Work and Keep.
- Now, without taking you through a lengthy Hebrew lesson that none of us have time for...to Work and Keep has the deeper meaning...to **worship and obey**.
- The expression of deepest rest.
- The way you are MOST human...physical and spiritual.
- Is to worship and obey in whatever state, whatever environment, whatever "adjective" you might find yourself in.
- This is what it means to IMAGE God.
- **To experience his deep true "This is who I'm supposed to be." Kind of rest by worshipping him and obeying our creator.**

## **Back to 2)**

**That's the good news. Everything is important because its all worship.**

**The bad news is this. We're all blowing it.**

- The word "worship" comes from the old English word "WORTH-ship"
- In other words, what you worship is whatever has ultimate WORTH in your life.

- Worshipping God simply means that you put ultimate weight on what he says about you. And about life. And about the world. ...and so, you trust him. You obey him.
- And though we all worship...most of us worship ourselves. Worshipping yourself just means ultimate weight goes onto you...about who you say you are...and who you say other people are.
  - And it ends in murder. And suicide.
- Listen, If all our lives are supposed to be a picture of God...and our ultimate rest comes from believing that GOD is the only one WORTHY of obeying...
- ...then that means not a single thing we do...should be separated from showing that worth.
- **[PAUSE]** ....Yet it is.
- When we make statements like "What does God care about who I sleep with?"
  - That's murder and suicide all at the same time.
  - You're telling yourself, at the root,
  - "The image of God isn't important."
  - What I do with "MY BODY" has nothing to do "WITH THE STARS ABOVE"
- When you say "Its not harmful to look at pornography."
- You are murdering every woman on that screen, because you are telling them "Your body is just physical. I can use your physical body without it effecting your spirit."
- ...and your also killing yourself at the same time.
- When you tell yourself, "As long as I love someone, it doesn't matter what gender they are, or whether or not we are married...as long as its consensual..."
- You are forgetting that EVERYTHING...every physical act...every thing you do is Spiritual. Its heavy. Its important.

- ...and most of all, you are forgetting that regardless of how you feel, you are created to show a picture of God to the world....and so it DOES very much so matter to God who you sleep with and what you do with your body.
- Its cosmically important that, yes, even the expression of your sexuality shows a clear picture of who HE is and HOW he loves us.
- See, the good news of being created in God's image is everybody matters...and everything we do matters.
- The bad news...(so to speak) is that it means caring about people you may not like, and it means I can't breathe a breath of air, much less have sex or change my gender- without it saying something about who God is and what I think about him.
- ...and we are all failing pretty miserably at that.

**TRANSITION:** Now, over the next year, we're going to work that idea out together. Of how we image God with our bodies...and what that has to do with the renewing of our spirits.

But let me give you a small look at what sex is supposed to be...and then a great hope for all of us that have messed up the image of God.

...and listen, my intent in any of this is not to be cute and funny...its to give this topic the gravity it should have...so allow me to explain this next point that I'm giving to you so you remember it on Tuesday and on Friday night...

...so you remember it when he says "If you love me, you'd have sex with me" or when she says "Its no big deal, we're just a couple of animals obeying our instincts."

**3) Sex isn't dirty as long as there is heavy breathing.**

- You know, there are lots of Xians that have the idea that sex is dirty.
- That it's a necessary evil.
- But you don't talk about it, you pretend you don't do it, and you certainly don't ever preach about it in church.
- You have one awkward conversation with your kids about it, and then you move on.
- But that devalues sex as much as promiscuity does.
- That defaces the image of God just like sleeping with your boyfriend does.
- See, God designs the physical...to be enjoyed.
- **Gen 2:9**
- That's why he says to the humans in the garden, "enjoy my creation. Every tree is pleasant to look at and good for food"
- You should enjoy the physical.
- Part of imaging God is taking pleasure in the created purposes of trees...and people.
- But...he also puts in the garden a tree, that though it looks desirable, if they eat it, will lead to death.
- Did you ever wonder why God did that?
- Wouldn't it have been much simpler to not put that tree there?
- And what's the big deal? So they ate a piece of fruit that looked tasty? Does God really have to throw them out of the garden for that?
- Remember, God put the man and the woman in the garden to image him. To Worship and Obey. To REST knowing that they had all they could ever want.
- There is no way to worship...to give God ultimate worth...if every possible thing you do could give God ultimate worth.

- To freely be able to love God and WORTHSHIP him, to choose him over other gods....there had to be an opportunity for the man and woman to give worship something else.
- **There had to be an opportunity to lust.**
- See, lust is simply wanting something you don't have thinking it will complete you.
- Lust is the opposite of gratitude.
- Gratitude is being thankful for what you've been given knowing that its enough.
- Lust is taking that which is not yours...believing it will satisfy.
- Lust at its root, isn't about a man thinking a woman on a screen looks better than his wife...and so he trades her in.
- Lust is an insane desire to get what you don't already have.
- And so, Adam lusted. Eve lusted. They were tempted, yes, but they believed the lie that What God had given them to be enjoyed wasn't enough. They weren't grateful for it. Instead, they told themselves stories about how much better it would be "If I could just eat from that tree."
- The great irony of the fall of mankind is that the man and the woman were tempted by something God had already given them.
- They were tempted by a proposition that they could "be like God."
- ...And God had already made them in his image.
- ...and so it is with lust.
- God gives us something good that is enough...and we trade it in chasing something we already have.
  - And its suicide. It leads to death.
- Now, let me help you make sense of this dirty sex and heavy

breathing idea.

- You see in **Gen 2:7**
- When God makes the first person, he makes him from the dirt. It's the human connection with the physical. But he also, breathes life into him.
- God didn't do that with the Zebras. He didn't do that with the Howler Monkeys, or the Geckos.
- He did it to the human.
  
- This Breath isn't something the animals have. This breath is the divine connection every single one of us have to God.
- This Breath...is what gives a heaviness to our souls. It is what makes us higher than the animals.
  
- The action described here is not unlike a kiss.
- Heaven kissing the earth.
- God kissing humanity.
  
- The creator kissing his creation.

### **Back to 3)**

- When we reduce sex to a mere physical act in promiscuity....or when sex is reduced to a thing that shouldn't be enjoyed...a taboo thing to never talk about
  
- ...we are taking the weight, the importance, the heaviness out of it.
- ..and this is often after sex, we say "I feel dirty"
- "I feel used" "Like I wasn't WORTH anything"
- "Like I don't matter."
  
- This is why sex that is disconnected from the IMAGE BEARING part of our humanity...sex that disconnected from the weight-giving HEAVY BREATH of God...always leaves us feeling ...just dirty.
  
- Because the Physical is made to enjoy, but not to be your ultimate joy.

**TRANSITION:** So I'm gonna tell you. That nails everyone of us in here.  
From the back row...all the way up to me.

Dirty...stained...lustful...abused...broken image of God.

...and that's exactly when the best news you've ever heard completely turns everything around. See..

#### **4) Jesus died so you could be Naked & Unashamed.**

- Every single one of us wants to be Naked and Unashamed. But so few of us are ever able to be.
- Here's what I mean.
- Every time you take your clothes off, there is great risk involved.
- Will I like what I see in the mirror?
- Will the person who might see me like me? Will he love me? Will she love me?
- But its more than skin deep.
- The Physical and Spiritual cannot be separated.
- The longing to be Naked is the longing to be known.
- It's the desire to rid yourself of lies. To be transparent. To be honest.
- To be naked is to say, "I'm giving up all control of what you see."
- See, As long as we can cover up our imperfections with slimming jeans ... or as long as we can draw people's attention away from our binge drinking or low self-worth...with our athletic physique or perfect legs.... ...we feel safe.
- But the problem is, our imperfections are still there. Underneath.
- So, romantically speaking, anyone who simply accepts us for the way they THINK we look...we always have this underlying fear...what happens when the clothes come off? What happens

when I show who I am underneath?

- What will he think of me then?
- What will she think of me then?

- Because with the desire to be transparent, to be naked, is a deep desire to be accepted....To be loved. To be...unashamed.

- **Gen 2:25**

- The last recorded statement we have of perfection in the garden of Eden is this one. The man and the woman were BOTH naked and unashamed.
- Do you see that? The pinnacle of perfection. The deepest shalom. The great imaging of God. Is to be Naked and Unashamed.
- Man and Woman in the presence of God...totally known...no hiding...complete transparency...no defensiveness...
- At the same time...Unashamed...totally loved. Completely safe. Totally at ease with themselves and one another. No suicide. No murder. No death. Just life.
- Naked and Unashamed. Known and still loved. "This is how its supposed to be"
- But most of us can't find it.
- What's so ironic, is that millions of people today have learned to hide their true selves BY getting naked.
- Its twisted. Its backwards.
- Hiding the spiritual behind the physical.
- That's why I can walk across MTSU's campus any given day and see thousands of freshmen girls showing more skin than clothes, because they are so frightened that if someone REALLY finds out who they are...if someone goes deeper than SKIN DEEP, they'll be rejected.

- There are plenty of people taking their clothes off with one another before they completely open up about who they really are.
- See, our problem is we think there is a choice to make.
- We can either get love by being someone we're not. By using our bodies to distract from the heart...
- Trying not to let people see our flaws, our pride, our weakness, our fear, our selfishness...
- We think we can get love, we can be unashamed, but we can't be naked. Honest. Truthful.
- Or...We can be honest about who we are, we can tell the truth about our sin, about our brokenness, about our fears...but then, no one will love us. We'll be rejected again.
- See, you love it when someone says "I really like you." It makes you feel good.
- But when somebody who knows you deeply says "I love you." It can move you tears.
- Because That's what you're made for.
- To be deeply known...Naked.
- And to be totally loved...Unashamed.
- But you know, Its one thing to have a liar, or murderer, or a prideful person, or a gossip, or self-righteous person say, "I see you, and I love you."
- Its an entirely different thing to have the God of the universe say, "I see all of you, and I still love you"
- But that's exactly what he's done in Jesus Christ.
- See, We can't open up to God, we are afraid of what he sees, we don't want to read the Bible, go to church, pray, or hear anything

that has to do with God, because we know if he sees us, he may reject us just like everyone else. So, we cover. We hide from him.

#### **Back to 4)**

- But here's what I want you to know.
- Just like God created us by stirring up the dirt with his finger.
- God recreated us by stirring up the dirt with his feet.
- God became human in Jesus Christ. The spiritual became physical. The Word of God that was with God in the beginning, walked among us.
- Not only that. He lived a perfect life. Total shalom.
- Every single moment of his life he was thinking "THIS IS WHAT I'm SUPPOSED TO DO."
- But even though he was spotless, unblemished, not a bit to be ashamed of...He was despised, rejected, and crucified...totally exposed, shamefully hung naked on a cross.
- Why?
- Jesus was being shamed so you don't have to.
- Jesus was re-creating you, because you can't do it yourself.
- Jesus was covering you in his blood, washing away all your sin, your pride, your self-righteousness, your sexual history, your pornographic browsing, and he's saying to you, "I died. Now you can live."
- Please think about this.
- God himself in Jesus Christ, though he could see all the way to the bottom of your dark heart...every secret...every fear...every sin.
- He still came and died to bring you close to him.
- He knew you completely. And still died to bring you close.
- So you can be Naked and Unashamed in front of God.

- So you can approach God with confidence and humility.
- So you can be grateful, instead of lustful.
- So you can love others, the way you have been loved by God.
  
- So that in every physical thing you do, you can know, that in you is the heavy, weighty, glorious breath of the Creator that died so you could know him.
  
- Jesus' nakedness is your covering.
- Jesus' death is your life.
- Jesus' perfection...is now your beauty.

### **LORDS SUPPER- Physical but a Spiritual Reality**