

Identity Wars Series

#1 – Identity Lost

What I want to present tonight and over tomorrow is a series of presentations I guess that are a reflection of my own journey, to understand the ways of God. And I guess you could sum up this weekend series of presentations by the verse, “My ways are not your ways, and my thoughts are not your thoughts.” What you perceive me to be in some respects I’m not like that at all, and what you read in my book, the way you read it, you’re not actually reading what I’m trying to tell you, because of a number of issues. And we want to unpack those issues over this weekend, and hopefully as we do that, we’ll get a picture of God that is more and more beautiful.

You know there’s two ways that you can motivate people. One is to scare them half to death, and we could talk about the disasters, and all the terrible things that are happening in the world, and all the reasons that we should get our lives ready. And there is a place for that. But I think more so, that as we look into the beautiful face of Jesus, and we see how much he loves us and how much he cares for us, that we’re just drawn in by that love. And that motivates us.

In the end love is a much more powerful motivator than fear, and hopefully that is what we can do as we spend this time together.

Interesting picture, eh?

We will unpack this a little bit. Let’s just pray once more before we begin.

Father in heaven, we just pray that you would be with us as we start to take this journey, of how the human race lost their identity, and how we’ve been affected by this process. We pray that you would speak to our hearts, and help us to see how much was lost, and how much the recovery involved. And we just thank you and we praise you in Jesus’ name. Amen.

If you have your bibles turn to Matthew chapter 4, verses 8 and 9, and of course this has to do with the temptation in the wilderness. The two great kings representing their two kingdoms come together. And it climaxes in verse 8 and 9 of Matthew chapter 4. It says: “Again the devil took him up on an exceedingly great mountain, and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory. And he said to Him, ‘All these things I will give You if you will but fall down and worship me.’”

I’m amazed as I read this verse, at just the bold faced audacity of Satan, to say, “Look, I’m so desperate, I just need you to fall down and worship me.” He is in so much need of Christ to bow down that he just comes straight out and says it, which is interesting in and of itself. Obviously what’s going on here is that Jesus knows that His life is destined to take the path to the cross. And here Satan is offering Him an alternative. “Look you want this world. You want everything that’s in it. You want the people and all these kingdoms. I will give it to you! You don’t have to go to the cross! You don’t need to sacrifice! Just do one thing for me. Bow down, just once! It’s only once! Just bow down and worship me.”

And of course, as Jesus was shown all the kingdoms of the world, Satan gave Him a sweep of those kingdoms, I'm sure that Satan made sure that what He saw was all the beautiful things of the world. He covered up certain parts of the world that represent Satan's kingdom. The crime. The discouragement, the killing the murder, the destruction, the disease, the sickness, the earthquakes, the floods....he covered all of those things up and said, "Isn't it a beautiful world? I'll give it to you."

But we see Jesus' response to Satan's request in verse 10:

"Then Jesus said to him, 'Away with you Satan.'" Away with you! "For it is written, 'You shall worship the Lord your God, and Him only shall you serve.'"

He said, I have to come to claim your kingdom. I have come to establish My kingdom, and My kingdom is nothing like your kingdom. That is what we want to look at in our presentation tonight, the difference between Satan's kingdom and God's kingdom, and how that affects us.

We've read the text and there it is up on the screen. We've already read it.

OK. If we think about this world and the way that it operates, and the things that are involved in this world, I want you to consider this next statement. It's an interesting statement to give you an idea of what Satan's kingdom is really like. What happens to people when they become a part of this system. Well, I guess we can't really avoid it, we're all a part of it. The only way to escape it is in Christ.

It says here: (the text from the slide)

Depression and Suicide

In her opening address, the World Health Organisation's Director General Dr Gro Harlem stated:

"...initial estimates suggest that about 450 million people alive today suffer from mental or neurological disorders.... Major depression is now the leading cause of disability globally."

Why are so many people depressed today? Is there anyone here that hasn't, or hasn't had someone in their family experience depression? Feeling that it's just too hard, that I just can't continue anymore? Why do we get these feelings? Why does this come upon us? These are the things that we want to unpack as we look at this issue.

Just some statistics on depression and suicide. As I put these statistic together, I stopped for a moment to think about it's implications, and it was quite startling to see where many people are in the world today

(Text from slide)

1 million suicides every year

10 to 20 million attempts every year or up to 38 attempts every minute

38 times a minute, in this world someone gets to the point where they say, It's too hard. It's not worth it. I can't....I can't maintain this process. I can't continue on in this life. Suicide in the US for males between the ages of 35-49 is the number three cause of death
And Australia's youth suicide rate is the highest in the world

At least it was in 1998, I don't know whether it's changed since then.

Why is this so? Why are there so many people coming to this conclusion? What is it about life that is so terrible that death would be better than life?

These are the things that Satan didn't show to Christ when they were standing on the mountain. He didn't show him these kind of statistics. He didn't show him these kind of things. But these statistics here are a clear manifestation of living out the principles of Satan's kingdom.

We may not fully realise that this is the case, but it is indeed the case because obviously to live in God's kingdom, you would not feel like you want to end your life. To know God is to have joy and to have peace and to have the life abundant, as we are told.

So let's go back to the beginning. We were looking at some of the results that we see today. Lets go back to the beginning and unpack how Satan began his kingdom, why he began his kingdom, and this in Genesis chapter 3:

Genesis chapter 3, verses 4 and 5:

It says in verse 4; Then the serpent said to the woman, you will not surely die. For God knows that in the day you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil."

And this is the first time in Scripture, the very first time that he speaks. And these two verses here give to us the very centre of Satan's kingdom. The centre of Satan's kingdom. He says here, "You will not surely die," and that you will be like God, knowing good and evil.

If we have a close look at these two statements some conclusions from Genesis 3: 4 & 5 (do you like my little 3D graphic impression of Adam saying, 'Should I eat this or should I not? There's poison in it if I take this step.)

But what Satan is saying to Eve, saying that every object in this world has a certain power in itself, that Eve, you are autonomous, you don't actually need God to survive. You can live apart from him. You may choose to live with him, you may choose to follow Him, but you don't actually need Him. "You shall not surely die." If you go against what God says, you won't die. You'll live on. God's actually afraid, and this is, this lie above every other lie, is the source of nearly all the problems that we have today. This belief in some kind of power that we have within us.

And the second conclusion that we draw from Satan's presentation to Eve, is that there are objects of power that we can acquire to more fully empower ourselves. Not only do you have power within yourself, but by acquiring more things you can become more

powerful. He's saying to Eve, "Eve, you need to become a material girl!" It's in assets, you need to take hold of these things and you will become more powerful, and your eyes will be opened and you'll be like God knowing good and evil.

Don't you want that? Isn't that what you want?

Well, there's a heavy price to be paid for taking this view to light. This belief that we have some kind of life source within ourselves. Some kind of power within yourself. Let's have a look at what scripture actually says on how life really is. Where does life come from?

Look in Colossians. Colossians chapter 1 verses 16 and 17:

(Text from slide)

"For by Him (this is speaking of Christ) by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities of powers. All things were created through Him and for Him. And He is before all things, and in Him all things consist."

In Him all things consist. Everything has its life source in Christ.

I want you to turn I don't have it up on the screen, but turn to Acts chapter 17, Acts chapter 17 and we'll look at verses 24 and 25.

"God who made the world and everything in it, since He is the Lord of heaven and earth, does not dwell in temples made with hands, nor is He worshiped with men's hands as though He needed anything, since He gives to all life, breath, and all things."

Life comes from God. What makes our heart beat? God. It comes from God.

You see the cells of the heart the way that they pulse. There's no battery, there's no hook-up power....they pulse, because God makes them pulse. God is the one that sustains us. He is the one that keeps us alive moment by moment. And we're going to look at some more texts on this particular issue.

James 1:17 says every good and perfect gift comes down from the Father of lights. Everything good that you experience in this life comes from God. Everything good.

Every joy, every happiness, every moment of calm and peace is a gift to us from our Heavenly Father. And when we begin to understand these things life becomes something very different. Not only physical life, does God give to us. It says in the book Steps to Christ on page 9, that God is the source of life, of wisdom, and joy. He is the source of all these things. Every time that you have a good thought about something, God has inspired that thought. Every time that you desire to express love and appreciation to someone, God has originated that thought, and you have embraced it and expressed it. As it says in Steps to Christ, p 26, Christ is the source of every right impulse. Christ is the source of every right impulse. Every time you desire to do something good, it is because Christ has inspired you to do it.

There's good news in that! There's good news in that. People often say to me, Where is God in the world today? I say, Did someone smile at you today? Did someone tell you that they love you today? Did someone do something nice for you today? Well, God did that for you. Through that person. All we have in this process is a will. We have a will to decide to manifest what God impresses us to do or to manifest what Satan impresses us to do. We choose, we decide, and we get the benefit or the curse that comes from that choice. God impresses us. We enact what He thinks and feels. We share it with somebody else. We get the blessing. Our character is developed and encouraged. Satan says something to us, we do it, he tells us to do it, we receive the consequences and our character goes in a downward direction.

This is how the Bible would present to us the way it really is. So when Satan says, "You shall not surely die," it says in John 8:44 that Satan was a liar from the beginning and he abode not in the truth. He lied! You cannot live without God. It's impossible.

I remember thinking about this principle once. Actually it was when I was living in Glenmore Park when I was thinking about this. I was thinking about these concepts. And as I was walking around the lake there in Glenmore Park, I saw a mother swinging her daughter on the swing, and they were both laughing and enjoying one another's company. And the thought struck me, Jesus is the one that has given them this Jesus. Jesus is the one that allows them to enjoy one another's company. He has impressed them the need to spend time with each other in a fun way, and they are reaping the benefits of listening to that Voice. It matters not what their profession is, it matters not whether they claim to be Christian or not. The fact is that they responded to the spirit of God.

That's a big concept, isn't it?

Profession means nothing! What counts is whether we respond to the spirit of God or not. And so I thought, Wow this is an incredible concept. You know, to feel my pulse and to feel my heart beating and to know that God Himself is keeping me alive, that when I feel good thoughts it is He that is wanting to give these thoughts to me.

Some time ago my son in the morning, it was early in the morning, very early in the morning, came running in and jumped up on my bed....very early in the morning....and he threw his arms around me and said, "Daddy, I love you!" And right there Jesus said to me, "It's Me! It's Me! I wanted to tell you that I love You, so I asked your son if he could come and give you a hug for Me."

Woah!! I had to sit up and think about that for a while, even though it was very early in the morning.

Jesus wanted to tell me that He loved me. He could have done it directly, He could have done it through the scripture, but because the God of the Bible is a God of relationships, He wanted somebody else to enjoy what He felt as well, so He put it into the heart of my son, my son responded, he comes into the room, he throws his arms around me and we both – all three of us – enjoy that moment together. Now, that's a God that I can love.

That's a God that I can love. The most wonderful thing to realise as we read the scripture, the most freeing thing that you will ever learn in life, is that without Jesus you can do nothing! That is the most freeing concept in the world. Once you are released from the burden of having to do something, to be something, to achieve something, then the world is before your feet. It's yours, to let God live and through your life, and to maintain that relationship with Him.

Let me read you a couple of statements, or one statement in particular from the book, Education. Listen carefully to this, Education page 99:

(Text from slide)

Upon all created things is seen the impress of the Deity. Nature testifies of God. The susceptible mind brought in contact with the miracle and mystery of the universe, cannot but recognise the working of infinite power. Not by its own inherent energy does the earth produce its bounties, and year by year continue its motion around the sun. An unseen hand guides the planets in their circuit of the heavens. A mysterious life pervades all nature – a life that sustains the unnumbered worlds throughout immensity, that lives in the insect atom which floats in the summer breeze, that wings the flight of the swallow and feeds the young ravens which cry, that brings the bud to blossom and the flower to fruit.

The same power that upholds nature is working also in man. The same great laws that guide alike the star and the atom control human life. The laws that govern the heart's action, regulating the flow of the current of life to the body, are the laws of the mighty Intelligence that has the jurisdiction of the soul. From Him all life proceeds.

That's a powerful statement. Everything you see, everything that has life has the impress of God. It is not God, but it is His power coming out of Him to sustain everything, and of course as we think about Lucifer, wanting to establish his own kingdom. If he continually had to acknowledge that all life, all power, all wisdom, all knowledge comes from God, his kingdom is at an end.

And so he had to invent the lie that every object within the world has a certain power within itself, that that energy is not...or that source of life does not come from a Person, it actually is just there. And this is the lie that is destroying the human race. Destroying each one of us.

When we look at the kingdom of God we deal with the issue of value. Everyone of us needs to know that we are valuable. And because the Bible tells us that we have nothing within ourselves, no life, no ability to originate new things. It all comes from God, He inspires everything. We just embrace it and it becomes part of us, and blesses ourselves as well as others. When we realise that then we must see that in God's kingdom, that your value as an individual cannot be based upon we can do and what you cannot do ... because we can do nothing. Your value must be based only upon the fact that God made you. That God is your Father. And that God loves you. There is no other value for us than in that. That God is our Father, we are His children, and that He loves us.

Anything outside of that will only bring depression. Discouragement. And disappointment. If we try and gain value from anything else.

It says in Luke 12: 6 & 7, Jesus here explaining how God's kingdom works. The value system of the kingdom of heaven. It says here:

(Text from slide)

Are not five sparrows sold for two copper coins? And not one of them is forgotten before God. But the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Do not fear therefore; you are of more value than many sparrows.

This is a formula. Jesus says here that not one of the sparrows is forgotten by God. Of course, He can't forget the sparrows. He can't forget the ants! He can't forget the sand flies, because it's His power that is living in those creatures, and He knows where their power is, so He cannot forget the sparrow. When the sparrow falls, He knows. When someone hurts themselves, He knows. When someone is suffering pain, He feels it. He knows because it's His life source – it comes from Him.

Remember the story of the woman who had the issue of blood for 12 years, and in the midst of the crowd, she reaches out and touches the hems of Christ's garment. What did Jesus say, "I perceive that virtue has gone out from me." He knew. Life....life goes out and healing occurs, He knows. God knows.

So, you talk about the fact that God does not forget the sparrows, which means that God has thoughts towards the sparrows. And then He uses the word, "but" as a contrast... "the very hairs of your head are all numbered."

Do you know how many hairs are on your head? I guess it varies from day to day.

What is Jesus trying to signify here? For someone to know the number of hairs on your head? What does that say about that person? They're very interested in you. We may think they're very strange, but they are interested in you, they have an intimate knowledge of you. And details about you that not many other people – no one else would know. Not even yourself.

"But the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Do not fear therefore, you are of more value than many sparrows."

In this verse, what makes you valuable? God's thoughts towards you. The very hairs of your head are all numbered. He thinks about you, He knows where you live, He knows the thoughts you think. Psalm 139 – before you speak He knows the very words you will say. When you rise up, when you sit down, He knows where you will be next week. He knows where you were last week. He knows everything about you, and He loves you.

And as you think about that, it should start to create a sense of, "I am important. I am valuable. The God who made the heavens and the earth thinks about me!" And then we think about the fact that He thinks about us, the more valuable we become. How much does God think about us?

(Text from slide)

Many, O Lord my God, are Your wonderful works which You have done; and Your thoughts toward us cannot be recounted to You in order; If I would declare and speak of them, they are more than can be numbered. Psalm 40: 5.

How much does God think about you? What does it do when you hear these words, what does it do for you to think that God, He was there when you were born, there was a smile on His face, there was joy in His heard when you were born. He's watched you grow. He has plans for your life. He wants to see you enjoy life, He wants to see you prosper, He wants you to experience all the fullness that He has created. He wants you to experience the best of relationships. All these things He has planned for you. All these things He wants for you.

When you cry, He marks the tears. When you're hurt, He's there. When you're really down, there's one set of footprints in the sand. When you think about that, how does it make you feel? When you think about all the things that you're wrestling with, and all the things you're trying to achieve, and all the things you're reaching for, does it really matter? The One who made the heavens and the earth, the One that rules everything, the One that has His hand on the power switch all the time, He's the One that loves you. He's the One that has plans for you, as it says, "I have plans to prosper you and not to harm you, to give you hope and a future." That's the God that we serve.

So, when I start to feel that things are not going to well, I remember this verse, that His verse, that His thoughts toward me are more than can be numbered. And as I think about that, I'm investing in a value system that nobody can take away from me. If I invest myself in other people, if I invest myself in property, if I invest myself in land and money and knowledge and all these things, in other people, all these things can be taken away from me. But the fact that God loves me, nobody can take that away from me. And that's where I want to find my value.

That's my son. I wanted to share with you the story that God needed to share with me to help me to understand this principle of how much that He loves me. See, it's OK that I've told you all these things, and maybe some of you will feel a little warm and fuzzy about that, but it needs to go deeper than that to understand, to really believe that this is how God feels about us, and when I had this experience with my son initially, I said, "Hey, wait a minute God, You don't know me!" And then I'm going, 'What am I saying?' Of course you know me. And this was the experience, this was the day my son Michael was born. This is a picture in the hospital. And when he first came out, and I held him in my arms. My eyes locked onto his eyes. It's what I refer to as an eternal moment. You can't describe it, only those that have been there will understand. An eternal moment as I looked upon this beautiful creation. He didn't look so beautiful having just come out, but he was part of me and my wife. And he was ours, and God had given him to us. And he was looking up at me, and saying 'Hi dad, I'm here.'

And as I looked down at my son, this thought came into my mind, this boy has my nature, this could be a problem. He is stamped with a nature that is rebellious, and he could grow up and turn away from me. He could maybe choose not to want to be my friend. He may choose to turn away from me. And I said to God, I prayed a prayer right there as I held my son, I said "God I never want anything to come between me and my

boy. And I just want him to know who I am.” That’s what I prayed. Very, very powerful moment.

Four years on, after that event, we were living in Queensland, I said to the Lord, a number of times, even before I became a Pastor here in Penrith, I said, “Lord, one day I’d like to move out of Sydney because it’s really too much traffic, but I didn’t think He’d take my word and carry me out on a stretcher. And thanks to a number of you here that helped me to move to Queensland, the Lord certainly blessed. And for quite a number of months I used to just walk in the forest as I was regaining my strength after I had that health collapse. And it was about 4 years, when Michael was about 4 years of age, that I started, or the Lord started to impress me about when I first held my son. I was thinking about what God meant to me, and what I meant to Him. And as I walked along, I started remembering holding my son, and I started remembering the prayer that I prayed, “Lord, please don’t let anything come between me and my son. And I just want him to know who I am.” And right there at that moment, as I replayed those words in my head, it was like I heard in my mind a very distinct voice, and it said, “You remember those words? You remember what you said about your son?” And I can still remember it today as clear as a bell, I heard the voice say, “Adrian, that’s how I feel about you.”

I didn’t know what to say. That’s how You feel about me? “Adrian, I just want you to know who I am, and I don’t want anything to come between you and Me because you are My son. I made you, I formed you in the womb. I made you to be Mine, so that we can enjoy one another’s fellowship. And I don’t want anything to come between us, and I will do whatever it takes to make sure that we are together forever.”

Man, that just blew me away. And I started, all the stuff started surfacing, all this stuff that I had learnt over the years about you just can’t enter into a relationship with someone so holy and so good when you are so vile and so bad. I mean I could if I wanted to in front of other people. I’m not such a bad person, we’ve all got our lines that we can use to assure ourselves that we’re OK, but when you’re talking to God, that stuff doesn’t cut it. I’m saying, “God, why would you want me?” What would you see in me? Why do You waste Your time with me. You keep calling me and I keep falling. You keep drawing me back, and I keep stumbling, keep making mistakes. I’m not true to the relationship. I’m often off and doing other things, and oh, sorry God. Why do You persist? “Because you’re My son. You’re My son. I made you. That never changes. Nothing you can do can add to that, nothing you can do can take away from that, you’re My child and I love you.”

And that experience, that experience thanks to my son, my son has preached a most powerful sermon to me. God through my son, to help me to look at things very differently. About what’s important and what matters in the Christian walk.

And so, this is the relationship that God wants to have with us, but this is the relationship that Lucifer rejected. He rejected this relationship. Here we have the verse where he says:

(Text from slide)

“I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God; I will also sit on the mount of the congregation on the farthest sides of the north.” Isaiah 14:13

And I've often thought about the times, and I don't know how God creates a spirit being Lucifer with not flesh and blood like we are, he was a spirit being. But when God spoke him into existence, or he formed him or whatever He did, there is Christ and He made Lucifer, and Lucifer was His son. And the thing that God one day feared would happen, happened. Lucifer said, "I don't want a relationship with you. I want to do my own thing. I want to go my own way. I want to be my own person." And the only problem with that is of course that even angels have no power in and of themselves. It all comes from God. That's a thought to remember when someone tries to scare you with how powerful Satan is. He's only as powerful as God allows him to be.

Only as powerful as God allows him to be. If you read in Revelation 13, talking about the beast with the 7 heads and 10 horns, it says it was "granted" to the beast to have power. It was given, God allowed it to happen, to help us to understand what happens when you move away from the system that God has established.

And so Satan forms a new kingdom, he designed a new kingdom. Not based on relationships, but based on achievement. He could no longer say, God is my Father, because then he would have to always say, I'm bank-rolled by the Father. He wanted to push all that aside and say, "No, I have my own life, I have my own energy, my own intellect, my own skills, my own abilities, and I will form my own kingdom and be my own person and be amendable to no one."

This is the kingdom that he wants to establish. There's a kind of sadistic attraction, to be amendable to no one, to rule in your own capacity, to do your own thing and not be responsible to anybody. There's a kind of a strange attraction to that kind of kingdom, which all of us I'm sure have felt the attraction of.

It's a system that Satan has established. Look at the self-powered cycle, believing that you have power within you, and that's what keeps you alive. And this is the problem that you have to deal with. If you have success, and you believe that power has come from you, or even if you somehow even remotely connected the fact that God has given it to you but it's something that you've done, when you have success, then you will have pride. Pride, because I've used my power, I've achieved these things, I did these things. You know, why can't you do it? I've done it. Why can't you do it? Pride. Pride will always result. Self-satisfaction, complacency, when we feel that we can do something., when the scripture plainly says, you can't do anything without me. What happens when we have a few mistakes. We make a few mistakes, we mess up, your value based on your performance, you're ability to do things and you make a few mistakes. Fear. Desperation. Working harder, denial.

I remember working on a computer project, and working on – this is when I was doing computer programming – I was working on the modules, and I had to hand that module on to someone else to look for all the mistakes and the problems I had in the code. And he came back with all these different things that I'd done wrong. I went into denial. I said, "No, you're just doing this to have a go at me. It's not that way at all. You're just being a bit rough." Does anyone have that kind of problem at work. People going into denial? Because their value is based on their performance? I handed over that code saying 'I've done a good job,' he handed back garbage. Yeah, but I went to university, and I !

How much money is wasted, and people's egos bouncing off each other, trying to protect themselves. They make a few mistakes as I've heard some people say, "I'm quite willing to admit when I make a mistake, I just don't make them."

Or you might have heard the song, "O Lord, it's hard to be humble when you're perfect in every way." Have you heard that song? Interesting song. Because in this system, you can't make mistakes. There is no room for mistakes. Mistakes mean you're nothing. You're useless. And so what happens when you make a total mess up. Failure. Fear, despair, worthlessness. I'm just no good. I tried, can't do it. Hopeless. And then after going through that cycle for a while, some people never come out of this, they just stay there until they die, but others think I've got to try harder, I've got to have another go.

So, we get determined, we work ourselves up, "Alright I've got to have another go at this, I'm going to try again. I'm going to get that raise, I'm going to get that job promotion, I'm going to do that PhD, and I'm going to get all these things and then I'll feel better. And then you get to the top, and then you're proud again. And then it just keeps going around, and around, and around. That's the way life is in Satan's part of the world. Constant oscillation between self-satisfaction, pride, looking down your nose and despair and worthlessness. Up, down, up, down. Does anyone sometimes feel their life is up, down, up, and down. Where's the consistency? Where's the consistency?

You know, people get home from work. How's your day?

You should have seen what happened today!! Ugh!

You know? And then you've got - liked that did you? Then you've got, you know, those mothers that do home duties, and it's very hard when you're working at home looking after kids and doing all those things, and you get to the end of the day and Satan says, 'And what have you done today? Except change a few nappies, various things like that. You've done nothing, haven't done anything!' Oh dear, no wonder I don't want to stay in this job. Because there's no performance, there's no achievement, we're not going anywhere. Looking after kids is a dead-end job, you're not going to get anywhere with that. That's what Satan would have us believe. 'Put 'em in day care, get rid of them.' They can get out there, get that degree, that's stuff that you need to get, that's more important.

So, you get stuck in this cycle, and this cycle is, well, that's why we get the depression and the discouragement. People get sick and tired of this cycle. Round and round and round, and then they say "I'm hopping out." And the only way they know out is to end it. The only way to get out.

So we need to do a comparison. Let's have a bit of a comparison between the two kingdoms, and this will be very important as we look at our next presentations. We'll need to remember this very carefully.

If you look at the two kingdoms, the attributes of the government, the currency - what do you trade on in that kingdom?

The citizenship – how do you become a citizen of that kingdom, and how are you valued in that kingdom. Let's have a look at the two.

In God's kingdom it's a family based kingdom – God is our Father and we are His children. The family system. That's why family is so important.

Adventist Home, p15 “The success of the church depends upon home influences.” No point getting all worked up about satellite dishes and all types of evangelism until you sort things out at home, because the success of the church depends on how things are at home.

Satan's kingdom: State, territorial. Satan is not our father. We have no allegiance to him as an authority figure, and so what does Satan do? He draws a line, a big line in the sand around us and he says, Alright, you're in my circle. You do what I tell you to do. See? There's the line. You're in that line. You do what I tell you, and you pay tax and you support me and you fight my wars, you do my dirty work, and if you get out of line, I'll get rid of you. We see things like that happen today in countries. We do, don't we? That's his system: state territorial, a state system.

I'm sure as lovely and as nice as John Howard is, I'm not related to him in any way. I have no allegiance to him in a family sense. I pray for him that he'll do a good job, but I have no response to his authority in terms of a family sense. It's just a state territorial thing.

I'm not saying that he's willingly in Satan's kingdom. I'm not saying that. That's just the system that we're in. The currency of God's kingdom is character. The transfer of, like as I said before, when my son was impressed by God to tell me that he loved me, God made the deposit in my son, my son expressed that to myself, we all became rich through that experience. That's the currency we trade on our characters. We invest in each other, we bless one another, and we grow in our knowledge, in our understanding and our love for one another. That's how you grow rich in God's kingdom. Because character is everything. Assets, well, let God worry about that. He's the source of life. Don't get too hung up on assets. But in Satan's kingdom assets, you know, he who has the most toys wins. Keeping up with the Jones's, everything like that. I guess I better put my iPod away.

You know. Alright, citizenship. God's kingdom. Sons & daughters of God. You're a citizen in God's kingdom simply by believing that you are a son and a daughter of God. Now, we need to expand that tomorrow, to say how that we have to be reclaimed through the cross, to come back to that position. But in God's kingdom, by being a son and daughter, you have citizenship in that kingdom. In Satan's kingdom, performance and achievement. And we're big on performance and achievement in Australia. We came fourth in the Olympics! Little nothing nation of 20 million people standing up against China and America and Russia. We must have rocks in our heads!

Spending all that money and all that effort, is it any wonder that's why we have the highest youth suicide rate in the world. How many kids go to bed at night because they can't be like Ian Thorpe, or Grant Hackett, or Leyton Hewitt?

Your value in God's kingdom comes from your relationship to God. That's where your value comes from, if you're willing to see it. In Satan's kingdom, personal achievement, power within your own life-source, that's where it comes from.

So, in Satan's kingdom we get imprisoned by this false identity, this sense that we have a power within in us, and that we can do and achievement and be all these things, and we get caught in this cycle, and we see that in Genesis chapter 10.

Genesis chapter 10 – sorry....no one corrected me.....Genesis 3. It's all right, I don't get my value out of that.

Genesis 3, 10 to 12. This is the classic Adam fallen on his face verse. Verse 10 "So he said, 'I heard your voice in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked and I hid myself.' And he said, Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree of which I commanded you that you should not eat?"

Adam has shifted now into a performance based kingdom. He's accepted Satan's lie that you have life in yourself. "You shall not surely die," and "you shall be as gods knowing both good and evil." And he's moved over, and now there's an issue of accountability. "Did you eat of the tree?" I know that eating from the tree means bad – bad performance. I can't acknowledge bad performance. So, how do we get out of that? Denial.

It says here that "the man said, the woman whom You gave to be with me, she gave to me of the tree and I did eat." He can't acknowledge that he made a mistake, because in a performance based kingdom you don't make mistakes, and if you do, you pretend that you don't, and you just hope that it goes away.

And I hope that you can see from this that this is the problem with the fall of man. Why couldn't Adam just got back to God and say, Oh look, I made a mistake. I'm wrong. Can we rewind and start that again? We won't go to the tree, I promise, we won't go there anymore. He's in this performance based kingdom now, and he's got to admit he's got a problem. But the fact is that if God is the source of life, God is the source of wisdom, God is the source of knowledge and the ability to reason that he has a problem, he hasn't got that any more. He can't reason that he's got a problem, he can't see that he's got a problem. He can only see that God has a problem in making this woman who a few hours earlier said he was willing to die for. And that kind of fell on it's face when God pointed the finger at him, which is another problem all of its own.

So, you can see that once you're in this system, you can't get out. There's no way out because you can't acknowledge that you're wrong, and this kingdom is wrong. This kingdom is bad news. But once you're in it, you can't acknowledge that it's wrong, you've just got to ride it out until you die. And that's where many people go.

This is the point we need to finish on. God is in a very difficult situation. Adam and Eve have now lost their identity. Their identity is bound to the fact that they are children of God, and that He is their life source. That has been stripped away by Satan's lie, 'You shall not surely die.' Now they have a wrong perception of who they are, they have a wrong perception of who God is, and their ability to get back to God, you know, at this

point we were gone. The human race was finished. Absolutely finished, except for the plan that God had already enacted, and we will talk about that tomorrow. This is what God had to do with Adam and Eve, and with all of us.

(text from slide)

A Big Task

Help them to recognise their desperate situation. We have a problem here.

Influence the human race in the right direction without force.

Show them that they had a wrong perception of their character and kingdom and show them that He really loved them. How was He going to do all this? A way to remove their guilt and insecurity and to restore their identity and value as children of God. A way to reclaim their sense of purpose and destiny as children of God. They needed a life support system to give them time to choose and decide.

And lastly their had to be a penalty for their rebellion. That's a tall order. That's a lot to ask. And of course tomorrow we look at what Jesus did in His work in the wilderness and then the cross, He answers all of these things, but at this point identity is lost and this is what all of us have been stamped with. Every time we feel that discouragement, we feel that emptiness, we feel that worthlessness, we are experiencing the poison of this original statement in Genesis 3, "You shall not surely die." Whether you know it or not we can blame Adam and Eve for eating from that tree, but we eat from that tree every day, because there was nothing wrong with the fruit, what was wrong was the lie that was attached to that fruit, and that lie you and I embrace every day. Got to prove myself, got to achieve, got to do something, got to get out there. Embrace it every day.

I just want to close with a audio visual and it's from, I was doing a funeral service of someone and they played this song, and it sounded beautiful, and then I asked for the lyrics and I took it home and I listened to it, and it's the theme song from a film called City of Angels. And it was played a lot around the time of September '11 when those planes run into the towers. And as I listened, as I looked at the lyrics I could see there's a double meaning in this song. Someone else has put meaning into this song, and as I listened to the lyrics to this song, I could see this what this person is experiencing is an echo of what Satan experiences. He is locked in that cycle going round and round, he can't get out, there's no way back for him. And so there's this sense of hopelessness that he will take to his death, and its reflected in the words of this song. Just listen carefully:

Spend all your time waiting for that second chance
For the break that would make it OK
There's always some reason to feel not good enough
And it's hard at the end of the day
I need some distraction, oh beautiful release
Memories seep from my veins
let me be empty
and weightless and maybe I'll find some peace tonight
In the arms of the angel
Far away from here
From this dark cold hotel room
And the endlessness that you feel

You are pulled from the wreckage
Of your silent reverie
You're in the arms of the angel
May you find some comfort here.
So tired of the straight line
And everywhere you turn
There's vultures and thieves at your back
Storm keeps on twisting, keep on building the lies
That you make up for all that you lack
It don't make no difference, escaping one last time
It's easier to believe in this sweet madness, oh this glorious sadness
That brings me to my knees.
In the arms of the angel
Far away from here
From this dark cold hotel room
And the endlessness that you feel
You are pulled from the wreckage
Of your silent reverie
You're in the arms of the angel
May you find some comfort here.