



The Beginning

Lee Lewis – January 16, 2010

Let me pray, and we will get started. We have a lot to cover today. “Father God, thank You for this morning. Thank You for a chance to gather together in this room. There are many different stories, many different testimonies, many who know you and many who don’t. But Lord, we come together today, and Lord, let the cry of our heart be to see You, to meet You and to hear from You. So for those who are eager for that, Lord, I pray that You would bless them in that. For those who doubt that, I pray that You would minister deeply to their hearts and that You would reveal Yourself to them through Your word today. Lord, where there’s woundedness and brokenness, I pray for healing that only comes through Your Son. And Lord, where there is fear, I pray that You would cast it aside with Your peace. Lord, we need to hear from You and we need to hear from You in Your Word. So we ask that Your Holy Spirit would move in our hearts, move in our minds and that we would see You more clearly today. We love You, and we ask all these things in Christ’s name. Amen.”

My name is Lee Lewis. I’m the care pastor here at the church. It’s so good to see you again. I’m glad that you’re taking this class. This step study, Recovery at the Village, the ministry as a whole has been really important to me personally in my life. It’s been important to my family. Both my wife and I have gone through really any and everything you can do within the ministry of Recovery, specifically step studies and the weekly meetings. So it has been a valuable, valuable part of the sanctification growing in and towards the Lord in my life. So I am excited that you’re here. You’re here for a variety of reasons, I imagine. Some of you would relate well with each other, and some of you wouldn’t at all. Some of you are desperately desiring to learn more about the Lord, and some of you are here because you’ve been made to be here, either by your wife, your husband or someone told you you had to be here. I know this. I’m a pastor at this church. I probably told a few of you to be here.

So if you have your Bible, open to Genesis 1. Genesis 1 and 2 are going to tell us a lot about God and how He created things to be, how He intended them to be. It’s very similar to what Revelation 22 talks about when God says He’s creating a new heaven and a new Earth, Genesis 1 and 2 speaks to this. Although Eden and the new heaven and new Earth are different, it’s very much the same in that there’s no sin in either one. And where we are today, what brings us here today is very much sin. So Genesis 1 and 2 are absolutely critical for our understanding of who God is, how He intended things to be, where He’s taking us back to and how we fit in that now. This isn’t just a story that you’ve heard in Sunday school. This is relevant now. It’s important. Where is God taking us back to and how did He intend it to be? We have to understand that. About four years ago, I had the opportunity to sit in a Bible study by Tommy Nelson, a brilliant, brilliant teacher when it comes to exegetical, expository preaching. He’s up at Denton Bible just up the road. He does this Bible study that I used to go to every week, and he

was doing this thing where he was going through the whole Bible in seven weeks. And obviously he wasn't reading the whole Bible, but he was hitting the major highlights and he was going to do it for seven weeks. So we started this Bible study in week 1 in Genesis and ended in Revelation on week 7. The first three weeks of this Bible study, he was in Genesis. Three out of the seven weeks, he was in Genesis. Two of those three weeks, he was in Genesis 1, 2 and 3. We're not going to go into that type of depth today. This book is a rich, rich book. You could not study it enough. You could not know all that Genesis offers us into who God is and how He sees things. So this is a very, very important book. I'm going to try to get to the heart of it, specifically for our purposes in this class. So just because it talk about it today doesn't mean that you shouldn't or can't go back and study Genesis more and more and more and continue to see more and more and more about God.

So let's look at Genesis 1, starting in verse 1. *"In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth."* Here's what I like about this. It starts with God. The Bible starts with God. It doesn't start with creation, it doesn't start with the waters, it doesn't start with the earth or the heavens, it doesn't start with the angels. *"In the beginning, God. . ."* And what we're about to see is that God is about to set a rhythm and bring about creation. He's about to create and say it's good, create and say it's good. So even the very creation that we're about to see created is from God. It didn't poof into existence; it didn't evolve. God is about to bring it. So *"In the beginning, God. . ."* Verse 2, *"The earth was without form and void, and darkness was over the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters."* So in the beginning was God, and then there was this formless void. This isn't a negative thing; it's not a bad thing; it's not a sinful thing. What it is wasn't ready to be inhabited by man. Think of it as the "not yet." So God is going to take the "not yet," and He's about to bring form to it so that we, so that man and woman, so that creation could inhabit it.

Verse 3, *"And God said, "Let there be light," and there was light. And God saw that the light was good. And God separated the light from the darkness. God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And there was evening and there was morning, the first day.*

And God said, "Let there be an expanse in the midst of the waters, and let it separate the waters from the waters." And God made the expanse and separated the waters that were under the expanse from the waters that were above the expanse. And it was so. And God called the expanse Heaven. And there was evening and there was morning, the second day.

And God said, "Let the waters under the heavens be gathered together into one place, and let the dry land appear." And it was so. God called the dry land Earth, and the waters that were gathered together he called Seas. And God saw that it was good.

And God said, "Let the earth sprout vegetation, plants yielding seed, and fruit trees bearing fruit in which is their seed, each according to its kind, on the earth." And it was so. The earth brought forth vegetation, plants yielding seed according to their own kinds, and trees bearing fruit in which is their seed, each according to its kind. And God saw that it was good. And there was evening and there was morning, the third day.

And God said, "Let there be lights in the expanse of the heavens to separate the day from the night. And let them be for signs and for seasons, and for days and years, and let them be lights in the expanse of the heavens to give light upon the earth." And it was so. And God made the two great lights—the greater light to rule the day and the lesser light to rule the night—and the stars. And God set them in the expanse of the heavens to give light on the earth, to rule over the day and over the night, and to separate the light from the darkness. And God saw that it was good. And there was evening and there was morning, the fourth day.

And God said, "Let the waters swarm with swarms of living creatures, and let birds fly above the earth across the expanse of the heavens." So God created the great sea creatures and every living creature that moves, with which the waters swarm, according to their kinds, and every winged bird according to its kind. And God saw that it was good. And God blessed them, saying, "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the waters in the seas, and let birds multiply on the earth." And there was evening and there was morning, the fifth day.

And God said, "Let the earth bring forth living creatures according to their kinds—livestock and creeping things and beasts of the earth according to their kinds." And it was so. And God made the beasts of the earth according to their kinds and the livestock according to their kinds, and everything that creeps on the ground according to its kind. And God saw that it was good."

Now I want to stop right there just for a second. So you've got this chaos, this formless void, and God said, "This is not ready to be inhabited by creation, by man. I'm going to bring rhythm, I'm going to bring *shalom* and I'm going to set a rhythm." And we just read the rhythm. God created in day one and said it was good. God created in day two and said it was good. He creates and says it is good. You see this rhythm starting. He's taking this formless void which was not ready to be inhabited by man and He's creating rhythm, He's creating *shalom*, He's bringing peace, He is making it. And who says it's good? God says it's good. It's not good because it's pretty, it's not good because it looks neat, it's not good because it seems to fit well in that thing. It's good because God created it and He said it was good.

I'm from New Mexico, the flat desert. You can see for fifty miles in any direction. It's really desolate and really boring. But not too far from where I live is the base of the Rocky Mountains, not the mountains that Texas talks about, real mountains. We have a camp there. Before we lived here, we used to go there often for a week or so. When I would go to this camp, my dad and I would go up and climb the biggest mountain in that area. At the top of this mountain, on a clear day, you could see all the way to El Paso, hundreds of miles away. You could see the White Sands Missile Range where they tested the first atomic bomb. It's just this beautiful landscape. Well, on one of these hikes as we were going up this mountain, we were climbing this tree. Now just for a little background on my dad because it helps the story, he is a horticulturist, which means he knows everything about trees that I never wanted to know about. So when we would go on vacations or we would go to different places, he would point out just the different vegetation and tell me the Latin name and I didn't really care. This was one of those times. We're climbing up this mountain and we stopped at this tree. I was out of breath,

and he was just looking at this massive tree. And I said, "Alright, are you ready to keep going?" And he didn't move. So he begins to climb the tree, and I climbed the tree with him. We get to the top of this tree, and he begins to tell me about this tree, what the name of the tree is and how long the tree has probably been there. But what he told me was just profound to me. The trunk of this tree was probably eight feet in diameter. He told me that when this tree gets to a certain size, you can add a hundred years of its age for every foot of diameter of the trunk. Well do the math. He told me that it was probably between 700 and 800 years old, and we're in the top of this tree. You can see where it has been through forest fires, but it's still alive. And we're in the top of this tree, looking over this massive mountain range. You can see the White Sands, you can see Las Cruces and you can see El Paso. You can see the other mountain range, which is probably 400 miles away, like it's right in front of me in a post card. I lost my breath. It was incredible. It was one of the greatest scenes I've seen to this day, and I've been able to travel extensively to some degree. I've seen Africa, I've seen China, I've seen different parts of America, and this by far is the greatest thing I've ever seen. Do you know what makes that good? Do you know what makes that beautiful? God. He created it. He put His craftsmanship on it. He designed that tree. He made the bark on that tree. He made that landscape. Isaiah would say He carved those mountains with His hand. And He says it's good.

Here's why I'm talking about this right now. Because we have a terrible tendency as broken, fallen human beings to go to creation, to go to His stuff, to go to the things that He created and put all of our investments, all of our hope in them. God's made them and given them for our pleasure, not for our pleasure to terminate on them but for us to realize that it is beautiful and it stirs our affections towards Him. And I have this terrible tendency to go to His stuff and worship it, when He has given me those things to stir more affection towards Him. So the opportunity is to sit in the top of that tree, feel small and be overwhelmed to worship. And I did. Do you know how many people miss that? I miss that, you miss that. I probably missed that last night. I probably missed it this morning as I was driving here and watching the sunrise. We miss this all the time. We go to His stuff, we go to all of the things that He has created that He said was good, that He said has purposes that bring about a greater revealing of Him, and it just terminates on that rather than saying, "That is amazing. That is beautiful. I have to worship Him because of what I see in that small thing." We miss this all the time. And it seems like such a small thing, but it absolutely huge.

Let's keep reading. Verse 26, "*Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth." So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. And God blessed them. And God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth."*" This is the first reference in the Bible of the Trinity. There are weird things people try to do this. Verses 26-27 reference the Trinity: God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit and that they perfectly commune to one another.

It's not little Jesus and big God, it's not little Holy Spirit dancing around big God. They perfectly commune together as one God. There are a lot of weird teachings that try to deconstruct this. The problem with that is that there are other references with in Scripture, both Old Testament and New Testament, that are referencing this text, that are saying that God exists perfectly as the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. That's just a side note. I need to reference that God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit have always been, that Jesus wasn't Plan B and God conjured Him up and created Him because we needed a little baby that could come die for the sins of man. He has always been. And during this creation order, Jesus was there. During this creation account, the Spirit was there. During this creation account, God the Father was there creating and saying it was good.

And here you see Him creating man. He creates man, and He does something different when He creates man. He does something He hasn't done up to this point. After He creates man, He takes man, sets him in the garden and He begins to give him direction. He begins to move him and say, "Go do this. Don't do this. Go here. Do this." He begins to counsel man. This might seem like a moot point, but I promise you it isn't. Because here's what's going on. Remember that there's no sin in Genesis 1. There's no lacking, there's no need. God has created everything perfectly, and it functions in perfect rhythm. And God and Adam commune perfectly together. There's no interruption, there's no fracture that is bad or evil or wrong or sinful. It's all good. Yet God give Adam counsel? God gives him direction? What does that mean about us? What does that mean about you? Because there's no sin, yet he's lacking, he needs direction. From who? His Creator. That hasn't changed. You and I were created to need and be dependent on Him. So here's this silly idea that goes around, especially in America. There's this idea of independence, being self-made, pulling yourself up by your own bootstraps. God didn't create you independent. He created you to be dependent upon Him. So here is what I would propose to you. Everyone is dependent on something, even if you think you're independent. Independence is a lie. So just because you're not dependent on God, just because you're not dependent on your parents, just because you're not dependent upon anybody doesn't mean you're not dependent on something. The Bible would go on later to call this idolatry. When we go to created things instead of the Creator to sustain us, to help us, to lift us, to guide us, it's called idolatry. Because God's created us to be dependent on Him. So when we go to something else, when we go to creation, His stuff, you are revealing that you're dependent on something other than God. This is idolatry. God has created man, even from Genesis 1 where things are perfect and things are good, to be dependent on Him and Him alone.

And here's something else we miss all the time. When you get burned, you get hurt by somebody, what do you do? You isolate. You put a wall up. "I'm independent. I can't trust anyone." Here's the problem with that. You're just dependent on all the little bricks you put around your wall, whatever those are, your security blankets. You just become dependent on those things. Those are things too. Those are part of creation too. You are not independent. You came here today dependent on something. Some of you went, like I did, to Exxon and got a cup of it – coffee, to get yourself going this morning. It's foolish to think that you're not dependent. And if you think that you are, that should be

one of the first things you should go to war against. God has created you to be dependent upon Him, and it's beautiful. No one looks at my little six-month-old, Abel, and thinks it's foolish and silly that we go and get him and feed him. He's six-months-old, he can't feed himself. He just started eating baby food. He can't even eat the baby food; it runs down his chin, and we have to scoop it up and put it back in his mouth. One bite takes six tries. No one looks at that and goes, "What an idiot little kid. He should be independent." That's a picture of me and the Lord. No one looks at that and calls it silly or foolish or ridiculous. And if you do, you have big problems. We were created dependent upon Him, and in that dependency, there is beautiful worship, beautiful communion and beautiful relationship between man and God.

Let's keep going. Verse 29, "*And God said, "Behold, I have given you every plant yielding seed that is on the face of all the earth, and every tree with seed in its fruit. You shall have them for food. And to every beast of the earth and to every bird of the heavens and to everything that creeps on the earth, everything that has the breath of life, I have given every green plant for food." And it was so. And God saw everything that he had made, and behold, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day.*" Chapter 2, verse 1, "*Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them. And on the seventh day God finished his work that he had done, and he rested on the seventh day from all his work that he had done. So God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it God rested from all his work that he had done in creation. These are the generations of the heavens and the earth when they were created, in the day that the LORD God made the earth and the heavens. When no bush of the field was yet in the land and no small plant of the field had yet sprung up—for the LORD God had not caused it to rain on the land, and there was no man to work the ground, and a mist was going up from the land and was watering the whole face of the ground— then the LORD God formed the man of dust from the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living creature.*" So here you see God taking some dust, He breathed into the dust and it turns into a man. I would say that that's a miracle. By definition, that's a miracle, because that's not normal. So you see even within the creation, even within God's setting order and creating it and calling it good, He's doing it in supernatural ways, so that no man might take credit for it. Because even the very creation we just got done reading about, He did it out of nothing. No man can say he's done that. Even with the brilliance of our technologies, even with the brilliance of the things we've come up with in this age, no man can say he has created from nothing, but God can.

“ . . . then the LORD God formed the man of dust from the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living creature. 8And the LORD God planted a garden in Eden, in the east, and there he put the man whom he had formed. And out of the ground the LORD God made to spring up every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food. The tree of life was in the midst of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. A river flowed out of Eden to water the garden, and there it divided and became four rivers. The name of the first is the Pishon. It is the one that flowed around the whole land of Havilah, where there is gold. And the gold of that land is good; bdellium and onyx stone are there. The name of the second river is the Gihon. It

is the one that flowed around the whole land of Cush. And the name of the third river is the Tigris, which flows east of Assyria. And the fourth river is the Euphrates.” Basically what they’re saying is that everything they needed was in the garden. There was no, “Oh, we’ve got to go to the next town because we don’t have this.” Everything they could have possibly needed was in the garden, everything, not part of it, not a little bit of it, everything. And then he goes into this lush detail of, “And there was this river and there was this river and there were these stones.” He’s saying it was plush, it was rich. It was more than they could have ever needed. There’s no lacking. Do you see that? The text is saying, “There is no lacking.” If you went to see my pantry at home, you would see lacking, lots of carbs and really nothing worth eating. I don’t think anyone would look at Dallas and say, “We’ve got everything we need here.” Even though there’s everything you would possibly want to buy, we are lacking even today. But here is this perfection; it’s beautiful. God had created, He said it’s good and it is not lacking. There is more than they could ever need and hope for, and God is the provider of this. He has created them, and He hasn’t left them to their own devices to go on and just do what God does. He’s there, He’s present and He has provided everything that they need.

Verse 15, *“The LORD God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to work it and keep it. And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, “You may surely eat of every tree of the garden, but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die.”*” So here now you see that God’s not only the provider, but He’s the protector. He has already created man and given him some specific direction. “Go work the garden. . .Go name the animals. . .Go do this. . .” Now you’re seeing him saying, “Don’t do this. . .Eat of this tree, but do not eat of this tree.” So we now see God the protector. Again, God is not an absentee landlord who is distant and off somewhere doing what God does. He is very present, He is very near and He is their protector.

Verse 18, *“Then the LORD God said, “It is not good that the man should be alone;. . .”* This is the first time God has said, *“It is not good.”* And here’s what He is referencing. *“Then the LORD God said, “It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper fit for him.”* Now out of the ground the LORD God had formed every beast of the field and every bird of the heavens and brought them to the man to see what he would call them. And whatever the man called every living creature, that was its name. The man gave names to all livestock and to the birds of the heavens and to every beast of the field. But for Adam there was not found a helper fit for him. So the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and while he slept took one of his ribs and closed up its place with flesh. And the rib that the LORD God had taken from the man he made into a woman and brought her to the man. Then the man said, *“This at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man.”*” So God says, “You know what’s not good? That man should be alone.” And then He takes a rib and creates woman. Again, I would say it’s a miracle. And then you’ve got this relationship. I think this is another revealer about God’s character. We already know that God dwells perfectly, that there’s perfect communion with the Trinity. Now God is saying that it’s not good that man is isolated. So He creates a woman for more fellowship, for more communion, more relationship. So God creates this ability for him

to be able to have relationship, and He calls it good, because He says it wasn't good that he didn't have it.

Let me just throw this out for you. If you're isolated, if you don't have anyone in your life that speaks into you, if you don't have anyone in your life that rubs up against you and says, "Hey bro, I think you're off here," if you don't have anyone in your life who can encourage you when you're broken, when you're downtrodden, who can bear your burdens with you, if you're all alone and you do not do life with people and you do not walk closely with people, you're going against the very creative order that God said is good. He has created you to be in fellowship, He has created you to be not only walking with Him but also walking closely with others. And again, I'm not going to assume that everyone in here does that, because honestly finding community is very, very difficult. Finding people that you can open up to, be vulnerable with, share with, be encouraged by, that's difficult. But God says, "Pursue it, because I created it. It's My idea. I made this, and it's good for you." But again, we pervert even that. It's called codependency. And we go to relationships rather than to God. Relationships aren't the answer. People aren't the answer. He's the answer. He's our hope. And He's provided all these beautiful avenues that get us more of Him. But when we go to those first, they cease to be good and begin to be called sin.

Let's keep going. Verse 24, "*Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh. And the man and his wife were both naked and were not ashamed.*" That's talking about marriage here. Marriage was God's invention. He created it. So here you see God bringing man and woman together in the form of marriage and He says it's good. They were both naked and unashamed. I don't think anybody would want to be in here and be the only one naked. It would be very awkward and shameful. But here the nakedness wasn't shameful. There was no guilt, there was no wrong and there was no shame in any of it. It was all good, it was all beautiful and it was all seen in the right perspective, that God is the Creator of all this and it's wonderful because He did it. Don't miss that

There are a couple of things that I think we need to pay attention to. I think that we often miss this idea that God is our Provider and God is our Protector. I believe it's because we live in a fallen world. That's what Genesis 3 talks about. Sin entered the world and fractured everything. There was this time when man walked with God in the cool of the garden, there was perfect communion, there was perfect fellowship, so there was the opportunity and the ability to God to God and speak to Him and know He heard and to hear His voice clearly in return. Because faith was by sight. There was no, "Where is God? I can't see Him." He was right there. We do not have that now. We do not have this ability to hear perfectly from Him. There is static; it's called sin. And the more that I'm into sin, the more static there is, and it's hard to hear His still, small voice. It's because of sin. It's hard to commune with Him because of things dancing in my peripheral vision that want to take my focus off of Him and I go and I go away from Him. And every time I do that, it's harder and harder to hear Him. So the ability to walk with Him in the cool of the garden is gone. But He's still very present. He's still very much the Protector and Provider. Even now in a fallen, broken world, He is the Protector and

Provider. But we go to anything and everything but Him for refuge, for strength and for fortress. We go to His stuff rather than Him. You do this.

And my prayer right now is that those things that you go to are swirling around in your mind, that God's pricking your heart and they're just popping up one after the other and that He's convicting you deeply. Because here are the things I run to. I run to good things. I run to relationships, my family, my wife. Those things aren't bad. I make them bad. My corrupt heart makes them bad. Most of us don't run to heroin. Some of us do. It's equally idolatrous. They're not different. The one who runs to heroin and the one who runs to relationships is the same, because you've gone to something else rather than the Creator. This is wrong, and it interrupts our ability to commune with Him, the Creator of all. It interrupts that. It interrupts the *shalom*. This is why the gospel is our only hope, because the gospel restores what Genesis 1 and 2 are talking about, because my ability to come before the Lord is made possible through Jesus, because I have nothing in me that can conjure up the ability to go back before the Lord. I can't walk in the cool of the garden with Him. I am unable to but for Christ. He makes Genesis 1 and 2 possible again. It's done for those who are sealed in Him, for those who are bound up in His grace because of Christ, we have the ability to go before God again, pursue sanctification, pursue growth and get more and more of Him, hear Him, see Him and be with Him. And it's different than it was in Genesis 1 and 2, I promise you. I don't get to walk in the cool of the garden with God, I just don't. But because Christ has sealed my heart, I can hear Him. He speaks to me through His word, His Spirit woos me and pushes me, just like He did Adam. "Lee, don't do this. . . Go here. . . Stop doing this. . . Get away from this. . ." He still counsels me. Just because sin entered into the world, God didn't stop counseling me. God continues to woo and pursue me. "Lee, this is dangerous. . . Don't eat of this tree. . . This will take your life. . . Go here. . . Get away from this. . . Do this and you'll get more of Me. . ." He's not different. He still provides everything that I need and protects me with His truth, just like He did with Adam, just like He did with Eve. And He promises the same for you.

So in most ways, sin enters the world and they are much different than they were in Genesis 1 and 2, but God hasn't changed though. God is the same. His love, His provision, His protection, His truth, His presence are the same. He didn't just leave us here and is just waiting to come back some day. He's very much in here. He's very much wooing us. The very fact that you're here this morning when you weren't promised today, the fact that He gives you the breath to wake up and He brought you here is evidence of His grace on your life. You did not earn the ability to come here this morning; it's evidence of His grace on you and toward you.

There was a time when I was in Wal-mart one Sunday a couple of years ago. We went to church on Saturday night and went to Wal-mart on Sunday morning to get our grocery shopping done. It was great because hardly anybody was in the store. There wasn't a lot of chaos and all the lines were open. So we get our groceries for the week and get into line. And there was an angst in my heart. I really don't know why, but there was just an anger. My anger isn't the type where I throw chairs across the room or punch people out or punch holes in walls. I just check out. I guess you could call it passive/aggressive. I

just check out, I withdraw and I shut down. I'm angry in my heart, but you don't really know it. My wife knows it well now when I'm angry. So we're in line and my wife had forgotten a card that we used at the time to buy crafts for kids on Sundays where we would go to this apartment complex and do crafts with them, teach them about Jesus, play kickball and do all kinds of things with them. So she would always buy crafts on Sundays, and she had a tax-exempt card that she had forgotten. Well of course it held the line up. This woman comes up behind us and she has a basket full of groceries. Well my wife is at the customer service desk getting another card. We were already checked out; we just hadn't paid. Well this woman comes up behind us and just has to stand there and wait. She is angry, bitter and telling everyone out loud how displeased she is with me and the cashier, but she's not looking at us. So it's awkward. And because I've already got this anger and angst in my heart, I just begin to get furious, not at her, not at the cashier but at my wife. I'm just furious at her. She gets back, pays out and I slam the credit card down on the check writing tray and walk off. We get to the car, I'm walking ahead of her and the Lord is just pushing me hard. I thought I had dealt with a lot of my anger. It's one of the reasons I got into this class five years ago. I thought I had dealt with it. I thought it was gone. And in a very visible way I saw it. And the Lord's just pushing me, "You still have anger, Lee." And I had learned what the root issues of my anger were, so I began to realize immediately, "You still have pride, Lee. You're still self-centered, Lee. You still think the universe is supposed to spin around you, Lee. You still are entitled, Lee. . ." And in that moment, I just cracked and I knew what I needed to do. And the Lord even began to show me what to do. "I want you to confess to your wife. I want you to apologize and humble yourself before her. And I want you to go back into the Wal-Mart, find that cashier and apologize to her. I want you to confess and apologize to her." And I'm just like, "Oh, I don't want to. I don't want to. But I know I'm going to get more of You if I do. I know I'm going to walk and grow in my sanctification if I do. Your Spirit is moving me and You are showing me Your truth." You see, even in my sin, even in my pride, even in my self-centeredness, the Lord swoops in and says, "Lee, no. Don't do this. Here's why you're doing it. You are insecure, you are prideful. I can change it, Lee. Now here's what it want you to do, and I'm going to heal you in your obedience."

Do you see that His truth, His kindness leads to repentance" And as I walk in that, I find more and more healing, more and more Him. He hasn't changed. But I know in this room that there are people who are lost to that. They have no clue that that's who God is today. Maybe they heard a story in Sunday school that talked about God creating everything and it was good and euphoric and beautiful, but that's not the God they know today. The God they know is distant; He's gone. Where is God? He's here, and He's the same as He was in what we just read about in Genesis. He's good. He provides everything you need. It starts with Jesus. And even today, He protects us by guiding us, leading us with His truth towards life, towards Him and away from the cliff that our hearts are so prone to walk over, the cliff that leads to death. That's where my heart always heads. But His truth leads me towards life.

In these last few moments, I just want you to ask the Lord, wherever you're at, whether you're walking with Him closely or whether you feel very distant from Him, whether you

know you have salvation in Him through Christ or whether you have nothing to do with Him in your heart, I want you to just ask Him to reveal Himself to your heart, to reveal those areas where you've chosen creation over Him and to reveal those areas where you've isolated, gone away from Him, trusted in your wisdom or the wisdom of the world rather than seeking His truth. He is still our Provider. He is still our Protector. This is very clear in Genesis 1 and 2. We just read about how He's a perfect Provider and a perfect Protector. And in supernatural, miraculous ways, He revealed it. And I promise you, He has continued to reveal it through the person and work of Jesus Christ. Sin, your sin, my sin has made it very, very difficult to see God as a Protector and as a Provider. Our own sin and our own rebellion have led us away from Him. The sins of others, the abuse and mistreatment of others have wounded us and we've run from God. And then we live in a world that is full of futility, full of sin, a broken, fractured world. We're hurting, and we've gone everywhere but to the Father. I plead with you today to return to Him. I plead with the Lord that He would turn your chin, turn your eyes to Him, that you might look upon Him again, that you might look to Christ.

Let's pray. "Father, we're going to need you for this. We're going to need You to work these things out in our heart. Because we are wounded, we are rebellious, we are suffering and we have run from You. We've run to many things other than You. But we confess right now that You are our Provider, You are our Protector and we want to find refuge in You. We want to find covering in Your truth. Let us return to Jesus today. Let us be reminded of what You've done in our hearts because of Him. And for those who don't know Him, would You show them their deep need for Christ? And would you break them now and break them deeply? Father, we love You, and we ask and plead that You would continue to reveal Yourself to us. Please don't leave us to ourselves. For the broken marriages in this room, I pray that You would restore and reconcile them. Where there has been unfaithfulness, where there's been lives, I pray that Your truth would bring firm groundedness that brings about healing. Where there is hurt, where there is despair, where there is hopeless, Lord, may Your Spirit move in and bring about peace, hope and love. We ask all these things in the name of Jesus. Amen."