

Sunday Morning, March 23, 2008

TORN

Matthew 7:1-12

R6-1748

● background SLIDE #: Curtain pix

ROGER

How many of you have ever ridden in an airliner—in coach class?

How many of you feel a little left out when they draw the curtain and tell you, even if you have to go to the bathroom, you are not welcome to go through the curtain?

Describe and banter re Julie's 1st class seat and my coach.

OVERHEAD SLIDE: In the big Temple of God in Jerusalem during the time of Jesus there was a big curtain.

This curtain was like a room divider separating the Holy of Holies from the Holy Place.

Place the ark of the Testimony behind the curtain

Separated God from man—because of sin.

JULIE

SLIDE: (Julie, repeat curtain slide) This was no small curtain!

We're not talking window sheers. Ex 26:31-34

"Make a curtain of blue, purple and scarlet yarn and finely twisted linen, with cherubim (gold thread) worked into it by a skilled craftsman.

This was one heavy curtain—thick and tough—and almost 50 feet high.

A funny thing happened to that curtain.

ROGER

SUMMARIZE: Matthew 27:45-50: From the sixth hour until the ninth hour darkness came over all the land. 46 About the ninth hour Jesus cried out in a loud voice, "Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?"-which means, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?"

47 When some of those standing there heard this, they said, "He's calling Elijah."

48 Immediately one of them ran and got a sponge. He filled it with wine vinegar, put it on a stick, and offered it to Jesus to drink. 49 The rest said, "Now leave him alone. Let's see if Elijah comes to save him."

50 And when Jesus had cried out again in a loud voice, he gave up his spirit.

SLIDE #: Matthew 27:51: At that moment the curtain of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom.

JULIE

A single man, with no knife or scissors, could not possibly tear a curtain with this tinsel strength. Besides that— Only God could rip this curtain from top to bottom.

God was breaking down the wall between us and Himself.

God forever opened the way into his presence.

ROGER

SLIDE #: OUR RELATIONSHIPS WITH GOD ARE BROKEN.

SLIDE #: OVERHEAD: DRAW pix of Adam and Eve walking in the Garden with God. Relationship of peace, intimacy and security.

DRAW pix of Three Story man in perfect unity.

Then they chose to sin and disobey God and all changed.

Bomb went off on the third story.
Like "9-11": all came tumbling down.

We are born into the world as 2nd story people. We need God to rebuild the top story.

How many of you have ever had to sit in "time out"?

Explain "time out".

Raise your hands-okay, be honest. What about you, Julie? You are a Christian and a pastor's wife and a minister. Surely, you've never been in Time Out!

JULIE

I spent most of my young life in "time out." It was my first day of first grade. I had pig-tailed hair, new Mary Jane shoes, and lacy socks. I had never been so clean.

I was so excited, I rattled off my every thought to my new friends in the lunch room: what I had for breakfast, how I found my Barbie lunchbox, and how I couldn't wait to climb jungle gym.

I had completely forgotten that there was no talking at lunch.

Then I noticed Mrs. Hubbard, my teacher, hovering over me. She took away my potato chips and made me stand in the corner in front of God and everybody. I was humiliated. I felt so alone and rejected. Busted on my first day of school.

ROGER

Julie, why didn't you obey the teacher? You did wrong.

How did you feel sitting alone in the corner with your face to the wall?

JULIE

I felt so alone—and humiliated—like Adam and Eve.

SLIDE #: Genesis 3:7: Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they realized they were naked; so they sewed fig leaves together and made coverings for themselves.

Genesis 3:10: Adam said to God: "I heard you in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; so I hid."

Now they stood bare and naked before all mighty God and they were humiliated, exposed and ashamed.

EXPAND story; talk about room, every one taking turns, how difficult to stand before the entire class, what she must have felt when standing there and when she peed. Talk about the wonder of teacher rescuing her—and restoring her to the class.

When I was in the bunny class, my most vivid memory was when Diana was brought to the front of the room to do her show and tell project. She tried to talk but nothing would come out. Mrs. Chase kept plying her with questions. Diana was so frightened and overwhelmed she peed all over the floor.

There is no pain so deep as isolation and rejection.
Maybe your husband left you for another woman—the rejection was incredible.
Maybe you're so depressed you don't want to get out of bed
Maybe you're discouraged because you lost your job.
Maybe you just lost your wife to cancer.
Perhaps someone betrayed your friendship and you are afraid to trust anymore.

ROGER

Maybe you're ashamed of a bad choice you made in your past, and you feel like your prayers never get past the ceiling.
Maybe you feel like God couldn't love you because your Dad never did—or because of some things you have done.
Maybe you feel like God has forgotten you and that no one understands you.

But, because of Jesus Christ, it doesn't have to be that way.

Sin separates us and breaks up our relationship with a holy God.

10 commandments

SLIDE #: Seven deadly sins: accounts for virtually all the crimes, follies and misfortunes of mankind.

Pride is the foundation for every manner of tragedy and hurt.
Gluttony produces waste
Laziness results in basic needs going unmet
Lust results in all sorts of sexual sin
Greed bows down to worship money and things
Envy destroys the heart
Anger gives way to violence

Is there anyone among us without sin?

SLIDE #: Mohandas Gandhi's list of the seven deadly sins:

Wealth without work
Pleasure with out conscience
Science without humanity
Knowledge without character
Politics without principle
Commerce without morality
Worship without sacrifice.

JULIE

Is there anyone among us without sin?

SLIDE #: ROMANS 3:23: for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,

Sin is not just about doing bad things. It is choosing to walk away from a God who truly loves us and wants to be a part of our lives.

SLIDE #: [The Broken heart of God pix] Adam and Eve hiding from the LORD God among the trees of the garden.

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

ROGER

Do you hear the care and concern—and disappointment in God’s voice?

What was God thinking as He uttered this searching question: “Are you lying hurt or injured somewhere? Have you gotten tired of me? Have you found something else that is more fulfilling than I am?”

Now you know God knew where he was!

He was showing us his broken heart.

I think this morning that I can hear the hurt in God’s voice for some of you. Listen carefully, you can hear it too.

God is broken hearted over you: “Where are you. I have such great plans for you—we can have life together. Where are you?”

PEEK-A-BOO

SLIDE #: OUR BROKEN RELATIONSHIPS WITH GOD CAN BE RESTORED.

SLIDE #: Romans 6:23: For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

GOD DEVELOPED A PLAN TO FORGIVE OUR SIN AND RESTORE OUR RELATIONSHIPS WITH HIM.

OVERHEAD SLIDE: Woman saved through childbearing: one of your descendants will be the Savior.

Snake: “You will bruise his heel; He will crush your head.”

ROGER

SLIDE #: *Describe death on a cross by asphyxiation:*

JULIE

I never could fathom the price God paid when He let Jesus be put on the cross-until this fall.

Our daughter Brianna was gravely ill with a wicked undiagnosed bacteria, chronic pneumonia and severe asthma.

The doctors put her on massive steroids and breathing machines. Brie had to be watched 24 hrs a day. Two times we almost lost her. When she couldn't get air, she was crying in the hospital, and asked, "Mommy, am I going to die?"

I prayed that God would let me be sick instead of her. I couldn't stand to watch her suffocate. And clearly, I heard His voice say to me, "Julie-now you know how it feels. I watched my only Son suffocate and die on a cross for you." I went through the pain of watching my Only Son suffer and die to rescue you from your sin. I paid the ultimate price to bring you to myself.

Describe suffering

Describe broken heart

ROGER

SLIDE #: Matthew 27:51: At that moment the curtain of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom.

God tore the curtain so that we could know His love. He tore the curtain so that we don't have to be alone anymore. He ripped the divider between heaven and earth so that our sins are forgiven, so we could cheat death and have eternal life. He reached down from heaven to give us hope, acceptance, comfort and strength. He gave us an invitation into His family. Because of Jesus' death and resurrection, we can walk right into God's presence. We have a new start at life.

SLIDE #: The torn curtain symbolizes that OUR ACCEPTANCE, OUR POSITIVE STANDING WITH GOD RESULTS FROM CHRIST'S WORK—NOT OURS.

Read and explain

SLIDE #: Hebrews 10:19-22: Therefore, brothers, since we have confidence to enter the Most Holy Place by the blood of Jesus, 20 by a new and living way opened for us through the curtain, that is, his body, 21 and since we have a great priest over the house of God, 22 let us draw near to God with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled to cleanse us from a guilty conscience and having our bodies washed with pure water.

JULIE

JULIE STORY of 6-year old mini-conversion and real conversion during college.

ROGER

● SLIDE #: Revelation 3:20: Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with him, and he with me.

SLIDE #: BECAUSE THE CURTAIN IS TORN, WE HAVE FULL AND IMMEDIATE ACCESS TO GOD THE FATHER.

Wisdom in tough situations

Guidance

Strength

Prayer: healing heart

Companionship: Holy Spirit

INVITATION

Pray a prayer in just a moment so you can come to Christ.

Bow heads and raise hands.

You are sick of the failures in your life.

You have wandered aimlessly for far too long.

You don't know what the right path looks like but you know you don't have it.

Trying so hard to get your life together and it is just not working.

Failed marriage; failed job; great job and you are absolutely miserable—because you have ignored the people you loved best—and they have walked out the door.

Committed sins you are ashamed of?

By receiving Christ: Wisdom in tough situations

Guidance

Strength

Prayer: healing heart

Companionship: Holy Spirit

The Father is waiting with outstretched arms for you.
In a minute I am going to invite you home.

● SLIDE #: imagine Jesus searching to find you: “Where are you.....?”

Set the emotional mood with one of Julie and my favorite stories. It describes the circles of God’s love for us and for others.

JULIE

LOVE YOU FOREVER

● SLIDE #: A Mother held her new baby and very slowly rocked him back and forth, back and forth, back and forth.

And while she held him, she sang:

I’ll love you forever,
I’ll like you for always,
As long as I’m living
My baby you’ll be.

● SLIDE #: The baby grew. He grew and he grew

and he grew. He grew until he was two years old, and he ran all around the house. He pulled all the books off the shelves. He pulled all the food out of the refrigerator and he took his mother’s watch and flushed it down the toilet. Sometimes his mother would say, “This kid is driving me CRAZY!”

● SLIDE #: But at night time, when that two-year-

old was quiet, she opened the door to his room, crawled across the floor, looked up over the side of his bed; and if he was really asleep she picked him up and rocked him back and forth, back and forth, back and forth.

While she rocked him she sang:

I’ll love you forever,
I’ll like you for always,
As long as I’m living
My baby you’ll be.

● SLIDE #: The little boy grew. He grew and he grew

and he grew. He grew until he was nine years old. And he never wanted to come in for dinner, he never wanted to take a bath, and when grandma visited he always said bad words. Sometimes his mother wanted to sell him to the zoo!

● SLIDE #: But at night time, when he was asleep, the mother quietly opened the door to his room, crawled across the floor and looked up over the side of the bed. If he was really asleep, she picked up that nine-year-old boy and rocked him back and forth, back and forth, back and forth.

And while she rocked him, she sang:

I’ll love you forever,
I’ll like you for always,
As long as I’m living
My baby you’ll be.

● SLIDE #: The boy grew. He grew and he grew and he grew. He grew until he was a teenager. He had strange friends and he wore strange cloths and he listened to strange music.

Sometimes the mother felt like she Was in a zoo!

● SLIDE #: But at night time, when that teenager

Was asleep, the mother opened the door

To his room, crawled across the
Floor and looked up over the side
Of the bed. If he was really asleep she
Picked up that great big boy and rocked
Him back and forth, back and forth,
Back and forth.

While she rocked him she sang:

I'll love you forever,
I'll like you for always,
As long as I'm living
My baby you'll be.

•SLIDE #: That teenager grew. He grew and
he

Grew and he grew. He grew until
He was a grown-up man. He left home
And got a house across town.

•SLIDE #: But sometimes on dark nights
The mother got into her car and drove
Across town.

•SLIDE #: If all the lights in her son's house
Were out, she opened his bedroom
Window, crawled across the floor,
And looked up over the side of this bed.
If that great big man was really
Asleep she picked him up and rocked
Him back and forth, back and forth,
Back and forth.

And while she rocked him she sang:

I'll love you forever,
I'll like you for always,
As long as I'm living
My baby you'll be.

•SLIDE #: Well, that mother, she got older.

ROGER

Would you consider inviting Christ into your life today?

In a moment I will invite you to pray this prayer with me inviting Christ into your life.
But, lets read it first. I don't want you to be saying words you have heard for the first time.

☉ SLIDE #: Dear Jesus,

I have made plenty of mistakes. I have sinned many times. I need help. I need forgiveness from
the haunting guilt and second guesses that never go away.

She got older and older and older.
One day she called up her son and said,
"You'd better come see me because
I'm very old and sick."

So her son came to see her.

When he came in the door she tried

To sing the song. She sang:

I'll love you forever,
I'll like you for always...

But she couldn't finish because she
was too old and sick.

•SLIDE #: The son went to his mother.
He picked her up and rocked her

Back and forth, back and forth,

Back and forth.

And he sang this song:

I'll love you forever,
I'll like you for always,
As long as I'm living
My Mommy you'll be.

•SLIDE #: When the son came home
That night, he stood for along time
At the top of the stains.

•SLIDE #: Then he went into the room
Where his very new baby daughter
Was sleeping. He picked her up in
His arms and very slowly rocked
Her back and forth, back and forth,
Back and forth.

And while he rocked her he sang:

I'll love you forever,
I'll like you for always,
As long as I'm living
My baby you'll be.

My conscience is broken. I am sorry for my sins, for the things I have done wrong, that hurt You and the people around me.”

I am tired of being lost and separated from you. I am ready to be found.

☉ SLIDE #: I believe that Jesus Christ died on the cross to forgive my sins. So, at this moment I ask you to forgive me and to restore my relationship with you—because of what Jesus did on the cross for me.

I want your peace. I want you kingdom. I want your forgiveness. I want your life.

I now invite you into my life to be my Lord and my Savior. Thank you. Amen.

MANY OF YOU ARE LONGING TO RECEIVE CHRIST.

MAY I INVITE YOU TO PRAY A PRAYER WITH ME.

☉ SLIDE #: Dear Jesus,

I have made plenty of mistakes. I have sinned many times. I need help. I need forgiveness from the haunting guilt and second guesses that never go away.

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I now invite you into my life to be my Lord and my Savior. Thank you. Amen.

Who prayed that prayer? Raise hands.

All stand.

If you prayed that prayer I want to ASK YOU TO COME FORWARD: Big step. Walk down aisle and meet me in these next moments.

If alone or scared, tap someone on the shoulder and ask them to walk down with you.

You have tried for so long to keep your life all together, there is life—the life of Jesus Christ and you can enter in today.

If you prayed that prayer, come.

Counselors and pastors here to explain and pray with you; Bible for you as you begin your new spiritual journey.

RESPONSE SONG of worship: Sing while you come forward.

EVERYONE SINGING: *RESCUE*

AFFIRM THOSE WHO HAVE COME (applause)

Congratulations to those who have come. CLAP.

MOVE TO BACKSTAGE:

If you didn't come, come on back.

WORSHIP LEADER CLOSE SERVICE.

If you would like to speak to someone, go back stage.
Go to ABF
Welcome to stay, pray and worship
If swamped: Help
Further encourage people to respond