

“CLASSIC TV AND FAITH:
VI - THE BRADY BUNCH
‘Oh, You’re in Trouble!’”
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Genesis 3:1-21

Matthew 4:1-11

A couple of weeks ago, something interesting happened to me. I had two different conversations with two different friends, and found out they had both had similar experiences very recently. **Not good** similar experiences, by the way! Both of them are grandparents, and both of them had had their grandsons lie to them that very week. And you know what? I think both of those kids are about 7 or 8.

At any rate, the circumstances were almost identical, which is what was so interesting. Both of the boys had been told they couldn’t have something or do something, then both of them, when their grandparent’s back was turned, did it anyway, and then, when confronted, they both lied about it! And might I add, both of the grandparents were really mad.

Which got me to thinking - when is it in life that we learn to lie? I mean, how old are we, and what causes us to start? We’ve all done it, and truth be told, we all still do it at times, at least tell little white lies.

But what is it that makes us lie, and how and when do we learn how to do it?

Well, I’m not sure of the answer to those questions, but I do know that lying and covering up our lies has been around as long as we humans have. Turn to the Book of Genesis, and you’ll see that it takes just three chapters before the first lie shows up - and it’s a whopper!

The ones lying are Adam and Eve, and they’re lying to God. Like the children of those grandparents with whom I spoke, Adam and Eve were clearly told by God what they could and couldn’t do - and then, when God’s back was turned, so to speak, they went ahead and did it anyway. They ate fruit of the tree which God had forbidden them to touch.

To make matters worse, when He confronted them about it, they tried to worm their way out of it. Adam not only blamed Eve for making him do it, he also blamed God in a way, when he said to God, “It’s the woman you gave me that made me sin.” The woman you gave me - like, “Hey God, it’s partly your fault too!”

And then of course, Eve blamed the wily serpent. It was the blame game all the way around, and in one form or another, humanity has been playing it ever since.

Which brings us to today's classic TV show - "The Brady Bunch." The Brady Bunch was a show that a lot of us watched when we were younger, and it's still around today in reruns. Just to remind you about it, or introduce you to it if you've never seen it -

(If I were brave, I would sing you the theme song, and you'd know the whole story.) "Here's the story of a lovely lady, who was bringing up three very lovely girls, all of them had hair of gold like their mother, the youngest one in curls. Here's the story of a man named Brady, who was busy with three boys of his own, they were four men living all together, but they were all alone. Til the one day when this lady met this fellow, and they knew that it was much more than a hunch, that this group must somehow form a family, that's the way they all became the Brady Bunch."

Well, anyway, you get the story. Carol, with three girls, met Mike, who had three boys, and they married and became a blended family, watched over by the family's housekeeper Alice. As you might imagine, sometimes the household was chaotic, and as you might also imagine, sometimes the children got into trouble.

And such is the case in today's episode which is entitled "Confessions! Confessions!"

The three boys - Greg, Peter and Bobby - are playing ball inside the house - something, by the way, they have been told repeatedly not to do. Well, at one point, Peter throws the ball, it gets past his brother, rolls out into the hallway, down the steps to the living room, and bounces right on top of their mother Carol's favorite vase - smashing it to pieces. Of course, as siblings are wont to do, right away little Bobby starts in on Peter - "Oh, you're in trouble. Mom told you never to throw a ball in the house."

Peter freaks out. He knows he's in serious trouble, and he's in for it. He also knows something else. He's all set to go on a camping trip with the Scouts that weekend, and he's been really looking forward to it, and now he knows that might be in jeopardy.

As a matter of fact, all of the siblings know how much Peter wants to go on this camping trip, so, under the guidance of the oldest, Greg, they begin to figure out how to cover up Peter's wrong-doing. And all of them - all six of them - get in on it.

All of them promise not to breathe a word about it to their parents or Alice,

the housekeeper. Then the boys rush off to the hardware store to get invisible glue, and then the girls help them carefully glue the vase back together. Phew! All's right with the world. It looks fine! So they put it back in its rightful place, and get on with life.

Well, soon it's dinner time. Mike, the dad, comes home from work with a bunch of flowers for his wife. The girls whisk them away and put them in a "safe" vase on the dinner table. Phew! Dodged another bullet. All systems are go. Everything's going great - Peter's going to get away with it!

Now, take a look at the screen to see what happens next -

Clip (from where the vase starts leak to where five of the six children confess to breaking it) 9:00 - 11:18

Oh, as the old saying goes, "what a tangled web we weave when first we practice to deceive." Because Peter wanted so badly to go on that camping trip, the whole gang began this elaborate cover-up, instead of just going ahead and telling the truth. And the longer it went, the deeper it got.

Adam and Eve did much the same thing when it came to their sin - they hid from God in the garden so He wouldn't see what they had done.

You'd think we would have learned from them, or any number of times, about what happens when we lie and attempt to cover up our sin. It is never good, and indeed it is so harmful for any number of reasons, a few of which I want to lift up today.

Lying and covering up our sin changes so many things.

First of all, it changes us. When we bear the burden of unconfessed sin, we're constantly looking over our shoulder, hoping not to get caught. It can make us nervous, anxious, jumpy. It can keep us awake at night, or at least cause us to wrestle with ourselves in our sleep. We worry because we're so afraid of being caught that we tell lies to cover up the lies we've already said.

Keeping what we've done wrong inside of us changes us. It just does - we are not right until we lay down the burden of what we have done and accept the consequences.

It also changes our relationships with others. Unconfessed sin and wrong-doing puts a barrier between us and others, especially the one we've sinned against or hurt. Sometimes we can't even look them in the eye, and the sad thing is, many times they don't know why - and are left to wonder what went wrong in

the relationship they had with us. Sometimes we stay away from them, because we feel too guilty, much like Adam and Even hid away from God in the garden.

Unconfessed sin and wrong-doing changes us and it changes our relationships with other people in our lives.

But most sadly of all, it changes our relationship with God. When we bear the burden of unconfessed sin, or worse, live in denial that we have sinned, we put up a barrier between us and God. And sadly, it says a lot about what we think of Him - that we're more afraid of His judgment than we are certain of His love and forgiveness.

Eventually, friends, lying and unconfessed sin takes its toll . . .

Let me take you back to the Brady Bunch for a minute. It obviously didn't take Carol and Mike long to figure out that it was Peter who had broken the vase, and everybody else was covering up for him. So to help him fess up to his sin, if you will, they put a little pressure on him. First, they brought all the kids together, and proceeded to tell them they would be punished, all except Peter of course. And then, they threw in a twist, Peter would be the one to decide their punishment. They were sure he would crack then, but he didn't - he still kept the secret.

So they tried Plan B. They decided to reward him. So they took him to a store where they invited him to get a lantern for his camping trip - and they were sure he would confess then, but he still didn't. He actually let them buy him a lantern.

So take a look now and see how this saga ends.

Clip (showing how all of the kids are doing chores on a Saturday and Peter's ride arrives to take him to camp, and he confesses finally and has to tell the group he can't go camping with them) 20:35 - 23:35

You know what? Peter Brady learned some of the same things that Adam and Eve learned on that day so long ago in the garden. That his parents' love was bigger than his sin; that they wanted to forgive him more than they wanted to punish him; and that their hearts were breaking over what he was doing to himself, and to them.

He also learned, as did Adam and Eve, that he had to pay the price for what he had done. He wasn't going to get a free pass, just because they loved him; nor did Adam and Eve get a free pass, because of God's love. There was a price to be paid, and all of them paid it. There are consequences to our sin.

But even in the midst of meting out punishment, God showed His amazing grace and love to Adam and Eve by giving them clothing to cover their nakedness, their source of shame. And even in the midst of Peter getting punished, we saw his parents' love and care for him - in the hug by his mother, and the wink by his dad.

Friends, there's a valuable lesson in all of this for us. We all sin, and we all fall short, and there is a price to pay for that. But through it all, despite our sins, our lies, our denial, our rationalization, our separation from God, He loves us, He wants what's best for us, He hurts for us, and He is always, always there for us with His amazing love, grace and forgiveness.

So, if today, you are carrying around the burden of unconfessed sin, and it's wearing you down, changing you and your relationships with God and with others, make today the day you give it up. Cast your burden on the Lord.

He wants to make you whole again.

He **waits** to make you whole.

Thanks be to God.

Amen.