

JULY 9, 2018

Thanks for allowing me a break last week. I'm working on my new project and I'm really excited about it. It's finally on paper! I'm doing some rewriting on it and I have to turn it in next week. We're going to learn how to pray like Mary. That's what I'm working on right now, and that will be out in fall of this year through Ascension Press. You can look for that. Also, I want to take a moment since I wasn't able to do an on-air shoutout for a couple of weeks, to thank Erica, Maria, Claudia, Bridget, Bonnie, Sarah, Nancy, David, Hank, and Theresa, my newest Friends of the Show. That's been over several weeks. I am so grateful. It is so humbling to package up your little thank you gifts and say a prayer over those before they ship to you. It is very humbling to know that you would take the time to support what I'm doing. I appreciate it more than you could ever know. It is so encouraging to know that my effort is bearing fruit someplace. Thank you, Friends of the Show.

Since we have been in our series here on the Old Testament, we have been following along with both my Ignite book, which is a map for how to read the Bible, and Fulfilled, which is a faith-sharing model that teaches you how to share your Catholic faith with fallen-away Catholics or non-Catholics who measure the faith by the Bible. If we're not able to give a coherent explanation from the scriptures then a lot of times people who measure Catholicism through the Bible think we don't have a good explanation. I am just very excited that Fulfilled is out and that you are enjoying it. The next part is actually going to be in the warehouse by the time I begin filming "How to Pray Like Mary" next week. If you've been doing it and you have enjoyed it and you're ready for the next part, it's coming out right away. I'm excited about that because there is a lot of really good information in that second part. If you enjoyed the first part you're going to love the second part because there is a whole lot of small details that are somewhat shocking, really, for how carefully God's people and the Holy Spirit preserved the symbolism testament throughout the history. Just amazing, amazing things. I'm excited to know that you'll be doing that.

When we finish, my plan right now - and I feel like I got confirmation this morning in the readings - is for us to do Job next. I don't usually like to do book studies but in this case I feel really drawn to it. Book studies have been done a lot, and in the Catholic Church we have lots of expositional book studies on Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John or the Book of Revelation or Genesis or whatever. I don't usually like to take that approach simply because a lot of Catholic people who do not or have not had a regular habit of Bible study do not realize how books of the Bible apply to everyday life, whereas if you are doing a topical study then the application is immediately obvious and relevant if we talk about healing the father wound, or we talk about anger, or we talk about heroes of the faith, or whatever. I don't usually like to do that but I feel like I need to do Job. We are going to talk about suffering but we are going to do it through that book. Nobody in the scriptures, I think, suffered as

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much as Job, at least in the Old Testament. There is a lot to learn there. I remember God using Job to not just teach me about suffering but comfort me in some suffering. That's probably going to be our next study, but I am always happy to hear from you on Bible Study Evangelista or the Sonja Corbitt Facebook page as to what you'd like to study next. You can drop me a line there.

Let's get into the show. We are only one show away from finishing our Making Sense of the Old Testament series, where we have been exploring the Old Testament tabernacle as the center of life and worship for the Old Testament people of God. As I've said a few times, you cannot understand the Old Testament if you don't understand the tabernacle, because within it you get the liturgical year, all of the liturgical economy and the sacrificial economy of the Old Testament. In the earlier part of the series we covered the Who, What, Where, and When, and we are finishing up with the How. The How is the tabernacle. We're only one show away after we finish this show on the veil of the tabernacle. We will do the holy of holies and the ark of the covenant next week.

Today we're going to talk about the tabernacle veil in the sanctuary. I don't know if you've ever seen those huge, incredibly thick embroidered tapestries that hang in European country homes and old castles. I love period movies so I see them all the time as part of the sets of those movies. They are a lot like rugs as far as the thickness goes, and I always wonder when I see them how long it took to weave and embroider such enormous tapestries. The tabernacle included something similar. The second or inner chamber of the Old Testament tabernacle was called the most holy place, or the holy of holies. I have mentioned before that the Old Testament Jewish people did not have superlative language the way that we do. We say good, better, best, but they had king of kings, lord of lords, or holy of holies. Or, they would say something three times: Holy, holy, holy, lord God of hosts. You can see, then, that the holy of holies is similar to in Genesis when Adam saw Eve for the first time: "Bone of my bone, flesh of my flesh." That is superlative language. Jesus is the king of all kings and lord of all lords, just as the holy of holies is the holiest place of all holy places.

This holy of holies, the innermost chamber of the holy place, held the most important object of the tabernacle. It was so secret, it was totally secluded and partitioned off, even from the holy place, which was itself partitioned off from the tabernacle floor. In fact, holy actually means separated or set apart. This area was the most set apart, distinct place on the earth. I want to read to you from Exodus 26:31-35 where we get one of the descriptions of this veil. "You shall make a curtain of blue, purple and scarlet yarn and finely twisted linen, with cherubim woven into it by a skilled worker. Hang it with gold hooks on four posts of acacia wood overlaid with gold and standing on four silver bases. Hang the curtain from the clasps and place the ark of the covenant law behind the curtain. The curtain will separate the Holy Place from the Most Holy Place. Put the atonement cover on the ark of the covenant law in the Most Holy Place. Place the table outside the curtain on the north side of the tabernacle and put the lampstand opposite it on the south side. You shall make a screen for the door of the tabernacle woven of blue, purple, and scarlet thread and fine woven linen made by a

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weaver, and you shall make for the screen five pillars of acacia wood and overlay them with gold. Their hooks shall be gold and you shall cast five sockets of bronze for them.”

Again, just like in all of the other facilities we have a specific set of directions for how to make the veil. The tapestry was made of finely twined linen. Linen is very breathable. We can see from the way all the furniture was situated that it faced the east, just like the whole tabernacle itself faced. This whole tabernacle faced the direction of the advent of Christ. I don't know if I pointed it out yet - I think I did when we did the overview - but the whole tabernacle structure is laid out like a cross. The temples in Jerusalem were built also to face the east and the Wailing Wall, if you notice when you see pictures of the wall where the contemporary Jews pray, is the eastern wall. Our own altars face the east. In fact, until Vatican II the priests and everybody faced east, and that was why. They changed the direction because the people complained that they couldn't hear and see what was happening but there was a reason for that. The reason was that the priest, as one of the people, also faced the east where Christ would return. He came from the east and it says that at the second coming he will come from the east. That is why our churches and why we all face east. When a body is brought in a casket for a funeral, it also faces east and that is why. At the resurrection Jesus will come again and he will come from the east. That is why we pray toward the east and that is why the churches are oriented toward the east.

There is a reason, people! There is a reason for everything the Catholic Church does. That's actually part of what helped me embrace Catholicism. There is nothing arbitrary. If you ask as a non-Catholic why we do so and so, half the time there was no reason. There was a sort of liturgy in a Baptist church. Every single Baptist worship service I was ever in always followed the same exact pattern. You come in and welcome each other, then you sing a hymn, then you welcome each other again. You shake hands and have this friendly moment or two. Then you sing another hymn or two and then you have a communal prayer. Then there is a choir session or some other singing special. That all takes about 20 minutes, then the pastor gets up and delivers a sermon and that takes about 40 more minutes. There might then be a 5 minute invitation and the service is over. Every single one I ever went to followed that exact same pattern. You might as well call it a Baptist liturgy. That's what liturgy means, it's a sort of ceremony or structure for a ceremony.

So, we know the veil is made of linen. We know that it faces east, the direction of the advents of Christ, and it seems to be the most intricate of all the tabernacle fabrics. It's the innermost veil and it hung from pillars by clasps. It divided the holy place into two separate rooms. The sockets of the pillars that supported the veil, or the screen it is sometimes called, were bronze. They must have been some distance from the framework since all the objects in the holy place were made of gold or silver. The fibers were twisted for greater strength. It was said to be elegantly woven together. There was a design, we saw, woven into the texture of the tabernacle curtain. Those were cherubim. It's interesting because the cherubim in the tabernacle were the forms or images that the people of God were allowed (recall the one of the 10 Commandments regarding graven images) to make, and not only were they allowed, they were commanded. This is interesting. We know from Genesis

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3:24 that cherubim guard the way to the tree of life. The significance of those cherubim in the tabernacle, especially on the veil, is that God's innermost presence is guarded by these angels or cherubim. They guarded the tree of life and something, then, beyond that veil must have also led to that tree. That's kind of a neat train of thought to just sort of sit with. In the same way that God was surrounded by the Israelite people on the outer perimeter of the tabernacle, the whole tabernacle area including the camps that were camped around it, the outer courtyard, the inner courtyard, the sanctuary, and the holy of holies. God was surrounded by his people. But in that holy of holies God is also surrounded by these cherubim. In the innermost chambers where his presence rested he was surrounded by these angels. That was depicted by the cherubim that were woven into this veil. We are going to see as we go into the holy of holies next week that this is also the case in there.

We find in Numbers 4:5 that the veil was actually used to wrap the ark of the covenant to protect it when the Israelites moved through the wilderness. God commanded them to take this veil down when the pillar of cloud or fire began to move through the wilderness. The people of Israel knew then that it was time to move too, so they would use this veil to wrap up the ark of the covenant to keep it protected. We also saw in Exodus 36:21 that the colors used to make the veil were blue, purple, and scarlet. We know that blue is symbolic of heaven, purple is symbolic of royalty, and scarlet is symbolic of blood in the scriptures. We see that a lot. Purple was the most precious of all the ancient dyes. Blue, since it was associated with the sky, that is why it became symbolic of the heavens. Red will sometimes be called scarlet instead of red. We see that all over the scriptures.

I want to look at Psalm 22, because there is something really interesting there. This is actually a psalm (and psalm just means song) of lament or sadness. It's written by King David about his own distress and God's deliverance. It's also prophetic because Jesus quoted it when he was in agony on the cross in Matthew 27:46. I'm going to read you that. I just love the psalms and the prophesies of lament, like Lamentations. When you get depressed there is nothing better to read than this stuff. "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? Why are you so far from helping me and from the words of my groaning? Oh my God, I cry in the daytime but you do not hear, and in the night season and am not silent. But you are holy, enthroned in the praises of Israel. Our fathers trusted in you. They trusted you and you delivered them. They cried to you and were delivered. They trusted in you and were not ashamed. I am a worm and no man, a reproach of men and despised by the people. All those who see me ridicule me. They shoot out the lip and shake the head, saying "He trusted in the Lord. Let Him rescue them. Let Him deliver him since he delights in him."

This is interesting because Jesus quotes this psalm from the cross. I love that. Jesus uses the Scriptures. This is why it is so important that we know the Bible. Jesus uses the scriptures himself to understand his mission and to express his emotions, and to express and explain his mission to all the people around him. He begins to quote this psalm. This is actually the verse we are going to look at, "But I am a worm and no man, a reproach of men and despised by the people." We know that as his death approached, Jesus recited this psalm. You should read the whole thing. It speaks of his passion and it showing that he was the person that was

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spoken of in this psalm prophetically by David. He was using it to teach the Jews why he refused to descend from the cross. It was because the Father had determined that he should die for the salvation of men as David foretold. If you'll notice in that verse, in verse 6, the depth and the breadth of Jesus's suffering was such that he no longer felt human. He compares himself to a worm. The original Hebrew word in this verse reveals something really cool about that tabernacle veil. The name and the type of worm that the scriptures use here - and remember that this is prophetic of the Messiah - is called a tulpa worm, or a scarlet worm. This worm was actually a soft-scaled insect. It's similar to an aphid but it was called a worm by the Arab people, presumably because of its worm-like larva. It was used by the ancients to produce crimson dye. This worm attaches itself to a tree to feed. It dies and then its dried up body produces a dusty scarlet pigment that is used to dye fabrics, especially those that are used in the temple trappings, the priestly garments, and the royal robes. All of these, remember, symbolize the veiled presence of God.

Isn't that incredible?? What's even more fascinating than the color is the word used to describe the veil in Exodus 40:21. This section is where Moses has obeyed all of the instructions that God has given him regarding the tabernacle. All of the furniture and facilities of the tabernacle have been made by the artisan and perfumers and weavers and all of that. Everything has been made and positioned, and Moses is beginning to offer sacrifices there in the tabernacle. It says in verse 16, "Moses did according to all that the Lord had commanded him, so he did." Then it talks in 17 all the way through verse 21 about the ark. In verse 21 it says, "And he brought the ark into the tabernacle, hung up the veil of the covering, and partitioned off the ark of the testimony as the Lord had commanded Moses." In that context, where it says "the veil of the covering", it uses the word covering in my translation. The Douey-Rheims says, "And when he brought the ark into the tabernacle, he drew the veil before it to fulfil the commandment of the Lord." King James says, "He brought the ark into the tabernacle and set up the veil of the covering." The New American says, "He brought the ark into the dwelling and hung the curtain veil, thus screening off the ark of the commandments as the Lord had commanded him." The New Jerusalem says, "He brought the ark into the dwelling and put the screening curtain in place, screening the ark for the testimony as Yahweh had ordered Moses." The RSV says, "He brought the ark into the tabernacle and set up the veil with a screen and screened the ark of the testimony as the Lord had commanded Moses." You can see that the two word choices are covering and screen. I am actually going to jump over to the King James Plus and I am going to look at this word covering in the original Hebrew. It is "sacac" It says the meaning is "a primitive root properly meaning to entwine, as a screen or woven. The implication is to descend, to cover over, to protect." And we know that is what that veil was actually there for. This veil was woven together to protect, cover, protect, hedge in, defend, join together, and shut up.

We may do a show on how to use this Bible software that compares the translations, because it is free. I don't know how many of you would be interested. If you are, please comment in your show notes, especially if you get the weekly email. Drop me a comment in the comment box and let me know if you're interested and we may try to do that. I would love for you to have this if you're interested in having it. It's a free program.

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I have a few announcements before we jump back into our study of the tabernacle veil. First of all, I am limiting my speaking dates. I am working on a new book and this new radio series for you. I love speaking and meeting you as I travel, so if you're interested in having me speak at an upcoming event near you please check out my speaking page at [www.biblestudyevangelista.com](http://www.biblestudyevangelista.com). There is a list of most-requested speaking topics. There are a bunch of video clips of me speaking live, a bunch of endorsements, a calendar of upcoming speaking engagements, and if you are interested you can click on the Event Request and Itinerary form and fill that out and send it to me, or to your formation director or priest or whatever if you're interested in having me come speak at your parish or mission or retreat. I'm limiting my dates this year. I learned last year that I need to do that. Secondly, I would be so grateful if you could rate the podcast on iTunes and Google Play if you have not already done that. It keeps the podcast visible so other people in iTunes can discover it on their own. You know as well as I do that Catholics need more Bible. Please help me do that. I need you to share, share, share! Share your weekly emails. Share the Facebook posts. I wonder sometimes what it takes to get people to share Facebook posts. I work hard on those things for y'all! ☺ Please share. If you love me, share the love!

Anyway, let's get back to the veil of the tabernacle. This is one of my favorite parts of the tabernacle. In the Hebrew the word used in Exodus 40:21 but also Exodus 25:20 is another spot that talks about the ark of the testimony. Sometimes it's called testimony and sometimes it is called covenant. They are interchangeable words. The word, the promise, the testimony are all interchangeable words. You have the Ten Words, the Ten Promises, the Ten Commandments, the Ten Testimonies, and then the covenant. It can be called the ark of the promise, the ark of the covenant, the ark of the testimony, the ark of the word. All of those things are interchangeable. But here, in this verse it says, "The cherubim shall stretch out their wings in love, covering the mercy seat with their wings. They shall face one another so that the faces of the cherubim shall be toward the mercy seat." This is actually talking about the ark, which we'll look at next week.

Exodus 40:21, when it is talking about the word screen or covering that I read all those versions for you a minute ago, and in Exodus 25:20 it's the same word used there. As I said, sometimes it's translated cover, sometimes woven, sometime knit. This word is used almost exclusively in the Old Testament to describe the veiling of the presence of God from human eyes in this holy of holies. You can see, there, that a woven veil covered the presence of God. It actually appears one other place, and it is a very intriguing place. Again, we are going to go to the Psalms, to Psalm 139. You have heard this chapter, I guarantee it. "Oh Lord, you have searched and known me. You know my sitting down and my rising up. You understand my thoughts from afar. You comprehend my path and my lying down. You are acquainted with all my ways. For there is not a word on my tongue, but behold, O Lord, you know it all together. You have hedged me time and before and lay your hand upon me. Such knowledge is too wonderful for me. It is too high, I cannot attain it. Where can I go from your spirit? Where can I flee from your presence? If I ascend into heaven you are there. If I lay my bed in hell, behold you are there. If I take the wings of the morning and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, even there your hand shall lead me, and your right hand shall hold

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me. If I say, “Surely this darkness shall fall on me” even the darkness shall be light about me. Even the darkness shall not hide from you, but the light shines like the day. The darkness and light are both alike to you. For you formed my inward parts. You covered me in my mother’s womb. I will praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Marvelous are your works. That my soul knows very well. My frame was not hidden from you when I was made in secret and skillfully wrought in the lowest parts of the earth. Your eyes saw my substances being yet unformed and in your book they were all written, the days fashioned for me, when as yet there were none of them.”

I know you have heard this. “You formed my inward parts. You covered me in my mother’s womb.” That is so often used in the abortion fight to show that a baby in a mother’s womb is a life and had forethought - the forethought and love of God. What I want to show you is the word covered is the same word here that is used in the temple veil or tabernacle veil to screen the presence of God in the holy of holies from human eyes. “You formed my inward parts. You covered (or wove) me together.” What it is saying there in this prophetic way, in this most delicate poetry, is that his body -- the Psalmist, David - and your body, Dear One, was prepared to veil the presence of God, that one day each one’s anatomy should become a temple of God. The flesh is the holy preparation of God for his presence. Is that not incredible?

I’m going to come back to that in a few moments, but right now I just want to point out that Jesus understood this idea of the flesh covering or screening the presence of God himself. He shows us in John 2:19-22. It says, “Jesus answered them and said “Destroy this temple and in three days I will raise it up.” Then the Jews said, “It has taken 46 years to build this temple and you will raise it up in three days?” But he was speaking of the temple of his body. Therefore when he had risen from the dead, the disciples remembered that he had said this to them and they believed the scripture and the word that Jesus said.” Just in case they didn’t believe it, there is another example in Luke 9:28. He says, “It came to pass about eight days after this that Jesus took Peter, James, and John and went up on a mountain to pray. As he prayed the appearance of his face was altered and his robe became white and glistened. And behold, two men talked with him who were Moses and Elijah, who appeared in glory and spoke of his decease which he was about to accomplish at Jerusalem.” This is the transfiguration. Every single time I read the account of the transfiguration or I pray that mystery in the rosary or we have that feast day, I think of that old movie Cocoon from back in the 80’s where the old people live in this old folks home and these aliens dropped these cocoons, these pods, out into the ocean to incubate there and some guy found them on a fishing boat and he hauled one up and put it in the pool of this old people’s home. The old people, when they got in the water, it made them younger. They had more energy and they were more youthful and everything about their demeanor was younger. It was like a pool of youth. What they didn’t realize is that they were sucking the life out of the aliens in the pod. But I digress. What was cool about that particular movie is that one of the aliens peels back its skin. The aliens come back to earth and they want to get the pods and they realize that somebody has moved one of them. They find it. There is this alien woman (or at least she’s in a woman’s body) and one of the men is attracted to this alien who is in a woman’s body.

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She is going to show him that she's an alien so she peels back the skin from her neck and face and the light just shoots out. The alien is actually this being of light. Every single time I think of the transfiguration I think of that woman peeling back her face and the light coming out, and when she took off the skin that she was wearing she was a being of light. Every time I see this section or this passage that is what I think of. Jesus was not really peeling back his skin, of course, but the light that was in him was the presence of God himself. In fact, in the Gospel of John he calls it the shekinah glory. He says, "We all beheld the glory, the glory as of the only begotten Son of the Father."

The shekinah glory is the same glory that was present on the ark of the covenant in the tabernacle. That is what we are looking at. When Jesus talks about his flesh as being the veil for the presence of God, and our own flesh, that's exactly what he is talking about. Jesus's veil of flesh also screens the presence of God in him from human eyes. That body was rent by the passion. Matthew 27:50-51 says, "Jesus cried out again with a loud voice and yielded up his spirit. Then behold, the veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom, and the earth quaked, and the rocks were split." In the Old Testament, remember, when God was present and something miraculous was happening there were earthquakes and lightning and hail and thunder and all that. In this case, the same thing happened but that temple veil that separated the sanctuary from the holy of holies was rent in two. The book of Hebrews says when that happened we were allowed into the holy of holies because Jesus's sacrifice had been accepted. The temple veil was rent in two just like his flesh was rent on the cross. That passion tore his flesh just before the veil in the temple in Jerusalem that symbolized him was torn in two from top to bottom. Isn't that symbolism amazing?

So we are looking at Jesus's flesh as a temple veil, or a veil for the presence of God. In the agony of his passion, just after he quotes Psalm 22, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" the veil in the temple was split from top to bottom. Jesus's veil of flesh screened the presence of God in him from human eyes. His body was rent by that passion just before the veil in the stone temple in Jerusalem that symbolized him was also rent in two from top to bottom. That's why St. Leo said in his sermon on the passion "There was, then, so clear a change made from the law to the Gospel, from the synagogue to the church, from the many sacrifices to the one victim God himself, that when our Lord gave up the ghost the veil was violently and suddenly rent asunder." I love that. Hebrews 9 says that the way to heaven was then opened, for the holy of holies was a type of heaven and the veil signified that it was closed until Jesus burst through it by his death. Amen. Isn't the incredible?? "It is understood that there were two veils: one veiling the holy of holies, the other the outer part of the tabernacle, or temple. In the passion, then, of our Lord and savior it was the outer veil that was rent from top to bottom that by the rending of the veil from the beginning to the end of the world the mysteries might be published were hidden with good reason until the Lord's coming. When that which is perfect shall come, the other veil shall also be taken away so that we might see the things that are hidden within the true ark of the testament, behold the cherubim, and rest in their true nature." That's Origen on the Gospel of Matthew. He thinks that the veil that was rent was the outer one from the outer courtyard into the

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sanctuary, but I've always been taught and a lot of the Church Fathers believed that it was the inner one.

That veil that screens the holy of holies from our presence has been opened to us through Christ so that we can enter into the presence of God boldly. In fact, it says that we should approach the throne of grace with boldness. Isn't that cool? Origen, then, is actually quoting 1 Corinthians 13:10. It says "When that which is perfect has come, then that which is in part will be done away with." St. Paul is talking about how that second veil is the flesh that hides the glory of heaven, the ark of the angels, from all of us but for each at our death our flesh will no longer prohibit us from seeing God in the holy of holies. That's what heaven is. He is saying that our own flesh is a veil that keeps us from entering into the actual presence of God. That's true in a heavenly sort of way.

Now, I've been saying that our own flesh veils the presence of God in us and that is true, but we also should see our own flesh as being the veil that prevents us from seeing God face to face. I have actually read from one of the saints - I can't remember which, but it may have been St. Faustina - that when the flesh is removed the soul is so attracted to God it goes immediately into his presence. It is drawn inexorably. It can't even resist. The flesh is sort of a barrier, a protection, a screen, just like that veil woven in the tabernacle separated the people from the presence of God, but also that area from the people. I just think the symbolism behind this veil is so incredible for so many reasons.

Remember that it was beautifully embroidered with cherubim. I'd like you to think of how your own flesh and your own body, your being, are guarded by your guardian angel. We are also surrounded by angels, our guardian angels. In 1 Corinthians 6:19 we see the implications of the idea of our own flesh being woven by God to screen his presence. That means, Dear One, that your flesh hides the presence of God but it also means that everybody else's flesh hides the presence of God as well. I'm not talking about a salvific way. I'm not saying that every person will go to heaven, but I am saying that there is some of God in each person. Look what St. Paul says in 1 Corinthians 6:19, "Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the holy spirit who is in you, whom you have from God? You are not your own for you were bought for a price, the price of Jesus's body and blood. Therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit which are God's."

God made you and formed you and knit you together in your mother's womb. You are His, Dear One. What he is saying there is to take care of your body. Some of you need to take better care of your bodies. You have addictions, you have bad habits, you don't have good habits. I say that and I am saying it to myself as well. I need to do a better job. We ALL need to do a better job of taking care of this temple that God has given us to veil his presence. I mention this in my book Fearless, but one of the very first confrontations that the Holy Spirit had with me was on my smoking habit. I was a smoker. He used this verse to talk to me about taking care of my body. I'd like for you to hear it in that same way. If your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit of God - AND IT IS - then what are you doing with your temple? How do you need to take better care of it? I pray that you would ask him.

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The flesh of your humanity hides the presence of God. Human anatomy screens the presence of God in the soul from ordinary eyes. I don't know about you but that makes me see other people that I meet in the marketplace a lot differently. In fact, Mother Teresa of Calcutta spoke repeatedly about Jesus in a distressing disguise. Isn't that the truth? In some of our neighbors that we just can't stand or we don't like, he is in a distressing disguise and they distress us every time they get around us. It's important that we understand this idea of the flesh being woven as a veil for God's presence. It does help us welcome and accept and embrace other people more fully than we would if we did not see the presence of God in them.

I'd like for you to just sit with God and ask God to help you identify a place where he would like for you to do a better job taking care of your flesh.

To tie this all together, the entrance to the holy of holies in the Old Testament tabernacle, which was symbolic of the presence of God with his people and it was the central part of not only worship but the life of the people in the Old Testament, was covered by an intricately woven tapestry. It was decorated by beautiful weaving in vibrant purple and blue and scarlet threads, and the cherubim that were depicted on it were artistic rendering of a sacred truth that God's royal and sacrificial presence is covered and guarded by a delicately woven veil, and angels in the tabernacle, in Christ, and in us too. I love that idea of the body as a woven veil hiding the most sacred place of a person's being. I love what the Catechism says in 2270. "Human life must be respected and protected absolutely from the moment of conception. From the first moment of his existence, a human being must be recognized as having the rights of a person - among which is the inviolable right of every innocent being to life." That is because, Dear One, if you do not have the right to life you have no other rights. Every other right received from that first right to life.

The catechism then quotes Psalm 139. It says, "You formed my inmost parts. You covered (or screened or knit or wove) me together in my mother's womb. I will praise you for I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Marvelous are your works." I don't know about you but that verse confused me for a long time, but now it is one of my favorites. What does it mean to be fearfully made? That's a strange way to put it. I actually ran across this as I was writing Fearless. How can somebody be fearfully made? It's not like God's afraid when he is making us, and I can't really imagine that he's trembling while he's knitting us together or forming us in our mother's wombs. I thought it was an odd turn of phrase so I started looking into it. Because I was writing Fearless, I learned that when the Bible was translated into English, to fear didn't mean to just be scared, it also meant to have respect for, like an awe or a wonderment. If you had a healthy parent-child relationship, you probably respected your parents and you feared that they would get after you, right? And if you had a healthy relationship you weren't actually in fear of being hurt or of your life but you had a great respect for them. That is what the Bible means by fear. So it says that we are respectfully and wonderfully made. Isn't that beautiful?

070918\_The Woven Veil

What does it mean to make something respectfully? God is an artist. He is weaving. He is weaving our flesh together. What would it be like for a normal person, a weaver, to make something respectfully? If the artist is just throwing the thing together and doesn't have a plan or doesn't have an idea of the colors...my mom is a cross-stitcher. She cross-stitches sometimes in a monochromatic, in one color. I've seen her do incredible beautiful work in just one color. The pattern in it is what is so beautiful. My point is that if you just throw it together it is not respectful. If you're weaving something respectfully you are taking time to plan and to think out every single step and to make sure that it is well done. You might make a sketch of what the weaving is going to look like, or maybe devise a statement or an emotion that you want to convey. Maybe if you're an artist you'd put subliminal messages in there to make people think about society, or to encourage them to change, or maybe you just want to make people smile. The point is that there is a plan and a purpose.

Just like a masterpiece, Dear One, God made you with a specific plan and purpose to accomplish something specific and to convey a certain specific message. Isn't that beautiful? I love it. You, Dear One, are fearfully and beautifully and respectfully made by the one who knit you together in your mother's womb.

