



Sermon Series: Cycle Breakers

Sermon Title: The Cycle is Broken

Date: 12/31/2023

Big Idea: Allow God to break your destructive cycle.

You can do this by following three steps:

1. Identify the cycle.

Genesis 6:5-7

God created man and put him on this earth, put him in comfortable habitation, and this is what has led to a cycle of violence that has permeated mankind. The grief that God feels in His heart is striking. This has been building and building since the beginning of creation. God identified the vicious cycle that humanity has fallen into. His creation has turned against Him, and He knows He must start fresh, and His fresh start will be Noah and his family.

What are the destructive cycles that you've inherited because of your past, your family, or your relationships? You need to answer by going to God. Have the attitude of Psalm 139:23;

2. Make the costly sacrifice.

Genesis 8:20-22

Just two verses before this, Noah steps out of the ark for the first time since the flood. His first act when he stepped off the ark was to worship. This was a costly sacrifice with only seven pairs of clean animals and seven pairs of clean birds (Genesis 7:2-3). The sacrifices that we are called to offer God should cost us something. We're called to present our bodies as a sacrifice (Romans 12:1), and offer a sacrifice of praise! (Hebrews 13:15)

There are times when we don't get the answers we seek. Where our will is seemingly different from God's. To praise God in uncertain times or in times of trouble requires sacrifice. It's choosing to be righteous and obedient to God amidst circumstances, and even though we don't take delight in our circumstances, we praise God nonetheless. Think about

Paul and Silas from Acts 16:23-25. Paul and Silas made a sacrifice of praise to God. In the same way, Noah made a costly sacrifice to God.

Noah's costly sacrifice to God was pleasing to Him, so much so that Scripture says, "... the Lord smelled the pleasing aroma". Then, God promised that He would never curse the ground because of man again.

3. Remember God's promises.

Genesis 9:12-17

God used the rainbow as a sign to Noah and all generations that He would be faithful to His covenant. There is no condition under which God will take back this promise. It is a covenant that is unconditional, one that was made with every living creature. It does not depend on anything that Noah or his descendants had to do to fulfill it.

Let's also look at it like this: In the same way that God provided Noah and his family a way to be saved in the ark, God has provided us with a way to be saved through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. Noah was saved from God's wrath that came in the form of the flood, and believers in Jesus are saved from "the wrath that is to come" (1 Thessalonians 1:10)

This is where we remember the promises of God. When we try to break a cycle in our lives, it can be difficult. The temptation to fall back into what we have known for so long can be strong. When we choose to end a destructive cycle, let us draw towards the words of Jesus in John 16:33. This is the foundation of our peace in Jesus: He is in control; He offers you peace. He speaks of HIS victory. This is not a statement equivalent to, "Keep going. Cheer up. Try harder". Jesus knew that the victory is His and that you can live freely because of it. 1 Corinthians 10:13

Breaking a cycle does not happen overnight. It takes time, repetition, prayer, and continual worship of God. Here, Jesus is limiting the temptation we'll withstand and providing a way of escaping it. Thanks to the strength that God grants us, there will always be a right way, one that does not require disobedience.

In the same way that the rainbow provided humanity with a sign of God's promise to never again flood the earth, we look to Jesus and how he has overcome the world through His death on the cross to make it through the temptation of falling back into a destructive cycle.

Discussion Questions:

- What about the sermon stuck with you this week? What part challenged your thinking?
- Describe a time in the Bible when someone was tempted and God showed provided an escape.
- What is the best way to confront someone who has a destructive cycle in their life?
- What would it look like for you to make a costly sacrifice to God?
- Is there a destructive cycle that you've inherited from your family, or your relationships? Explain