

**When Pigs Fly Series – Part 2**  
**Hope for Restored Relationships**

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We are in the middle of a series called **When Pigs Fly**. You may be puzzled by the strange title. What we are actually talking about is overcoming skepticism with a faith that believes all things are possible with God.

We serve a God of the miraculous. A God who loves to confound the skeptics and the naysayers.

**Last week** Pastor Brian talked about our God who heals the sick. Over the years we have seen God do that in many people's lives in our church!

**This morning we want to talk about the God who heals broken relationships** - when everything in you and around you says to throw in the towel and walk away.

In this message **I am not talking about abusive relationships**. Sometimes separation is needed in those situations.

I am talking about relationships at home, school, work, church, or broken friendships that have gone sideways. Offenses have come in. Hurtful things have been said or done. We may feel betrayed and trust is broken. **Do we just walk away from these relationships or is God big enough to heal them?**

In the bible we have multiple stories of broken relationships that were healed and restored. Some looked totally hopeless.

- **Jacob and Esau** - After Jacob stole the birthright Esau was so mad that Jacob feared for his life and had to flee to another country. After many years God helped them forgive and be reconciled.
- **Joseph and his brothers** – After his brothers sold him into slavery, God gave Joseph the grace he needed to forgive instead of taking revenge. And they were restored.

- **Hosea and Gomer**. A husband and wife. She betrayed him and had affairs with multiple men. He had every right to divorce her and move on, but he chose to pursue her, and God reconciled their marriage.
- **Paul and Barnabas and John Mark**. These very spiritual men had a big disagreement and it broke their ability to work together. But God helped them deal with their attitudes, forgive and we see John Mark working with Paul again and Paul later speaking fondly of Barnabas.

God has created us as relational beings. God has created us to be in relationship with him and other people in our lives. Healthy people need and want relationships. **But relationships take work. And all relationships are tested!!!**

We need a level of commitment in our hearts that enables us to work through the tough patches that happen in our relationships.

There are tons of good books written on this subject. But I have discovered that simply praying for God to change the other person does not work very well. **The restoration of relationships always involves God doing a work in me first.**

Let me share two of my favorite relationship building scriptures passages and then several things that help us partner with God in restoring and strengthening our relationships.

God has used these scriptures to confront attitudes in my life in how I relate to my wife and other people.

### **Philippians 2:1-8**

**Therefore if you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from his love, if any common sharing in the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion, <sup>2</sup> then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and of one mind. <sup>3</sup> Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, <sup>4</sup> not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others. <sup>5</sup> In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus: <sup>6</sup> Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage; <sup>7</sup> rather, he made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. <sup>8</sup> And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to death— even death on a cross!**

## **Colossians 3:12- 14**

**Therefore, as God’s chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. <sup>13</sup> Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. <sup>14</sup> And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity.**

These verses are packed with relationship building keys. I wish we had time to really dig into all of these truths.

The biggest problem in relationship meltdowns is we are all fighting for our position, our needs, our rights, and our perspective. We are so focused on getting our point across that we are no longer listening to the other person’s point of view.

**Most arguments are over differing perspectives.** We see things differently and have differing needs. That’s why we need to listen with lots of humility!

**“The moment are emotions get involved communication begins to break down and our logic begins to go crazy” – Bob Mumford**

In our nation, civility has gone out the window. We don’t know how to disagree in a civil way anymore. Disagreement is reduced to name calling, character assassinations and even violence. If you disagree with me then you are my enemy.

This is so sad. Jesus shows us a different way. Paul sets Jesus before us as our example of how to relate to others. My first encouragement to you is...

### **1. Choose relationship over being right.**

I need to give up the right to always be right and have things my way.

Jesus laid down his heavenly position and rights and came to love and serve us.

His life was all about us and our needs – a life of humility, not selfishness.

**Phil 2:3-4 Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others.** (Putting my wife’s interests first)

A fixation on our own needs and rightness can choke the life out of a relationship.

We are wrong when we insist on always being right. Sometimes we are right in our facts, but we are wrong in our insistence on being right. **We may win the battle or argument but lose the war.** We lose or weaken the relationship by our need to be right.

**STORY: Author and speaker Leonard Sweet tells this story:**

Tom Wiles served a stint as university chaplain at Grand Canyon University in Phoenix, Arizona. A few years ago, he picked me up at the Phoenix airport in his new Ford pickup and whisked me away to keynote a leadership conference at the university. Since I was still mourning the trade-in of my Dodge truck, we immediately bonded, sharing truck stories and laughing at the bumper-sticker truism: *"Nothing is more beautiful than a man and his truck."*

As I climbed into his new Ranger for the ride back to the airport a day later, I noticed two big scrapes by the passenger door. "What happened here?" I asked.

"My neighbor's basketball post fell and left those dents and white scars," Tom replied with a downcast voice.

"You're kidding! How awful," I commiserated. "This truck is so new I can smell it."

"What's even worse is my neighbor doesn't feel responsible for the damage."

Rising to my newfound friend's defense, I said, "Did you contact your insurance company? How are you going to get him to pay for it?"

"This has been a real spiritual journey for me," Tom replied. "After a lot of soul-searching and discussions with my wife about hiring an attorney, it came down to this: I can either be in the right, or I can be in a relationship with my neighbor.

Since my neighbor will probably be with me longer than this truck, I decided that I'd rather be in a relationship than be right. Besides, trucks are meant to be banged up, so I got mine initiated into the real world a bit earlier than I expected."

- **What an amazing attitude – I would rather have a good relationship then prove to him that I am right.**
- **Now that is spiritual maturity.**

You and I don't always have to be right or have the final word. I don't have to always be correcting my wife or others for factual mistakes in conversations. Most times it just doesn't matter. Let it go. Choose relationship!

**The second way we partner with God is to let him ....**

**2. Start with you.**

We always want God to deal with the other person first. They need to change, repent, apologize, and make things right.

But I have learned the restoration of relationships always involves God doing a work in me first. **I need to first take the plank out of my own eye.**

**1 John 1:8 If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us.**

If we claim it is all the other person's fault, we are either deceived or lying.

How am I doing in the department of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, patience and forgiveness?

The real question isn't always who offended who and who is right and who is wrong. **There is a much deeper question.**

I need to look inward and ask. Why am I so angry and upset? What is going on inside of me? Why am I being so defensive? Why does that trigger me? Why can't I forgive? What is God trying to teach me right now. Maybe I have some blind spots I am not seeing. Maybe I am more of the problem than I realize.

**Story of a healed relationship - Lizzie Smiley**

*"A few years ago, my marriage hit some really rocky soil... we're talking treacherous, broken-hearted, shattered dreams, on our faces crying out to God kind of soil. I really didn't think we were going to make it and frankly I wasn't sure I even wanted to.*

It was my faith in Jesus, the promises of God in the bible, and stories from courageous couples who beat the odds before us that made me try in that desperate season. It was the hope that I could still have the marriage of my dreams and honor God with it that helped me breathe during those dark days.

If there's anything I've learned, it's that the only way to heal any relationship is to work on myself. I can't control what anyone else does. Including (especially) my husband. It's when you commit your spouse and your marriage to the Lord, fall broken into His lap, and say "I give them to you, now deal with me..."

That's when miracles can happen!

It was *extremely* hard work. It was fighting the good fight of faith. It was dying to self. And it ultimately set me free and then healed my most precious relationship.

Of course, I still can't control what anyone else does, and we're not perfect. But my own wholeness gives me a healthy response to what they might do. Because I did the hard work, God gave me grace for others. He gave me His love for my hubby. We are reconciled, enjoying the beauty of new life through our baby girl, and more in love than ever. And now we are *crazy passionate* about telling as many couples as possible how to find greater intimacy with each other and God and heal from all of their hurts. *Marriages that seem completely dead can be resurrected*. Just like on your wedding day, divorce doesn't have to be an option.

*I can't tell you how much I want this for you, too.*

Listen, it doesn't matter what happened, who did what to whom, or whether or not both parties want to fix it— God is in the RESTORATION business. There's hope for you. If you're the only one fighting— seek God with everything you've got and pursue healing immediately and fervently. I don't know about you— but I'd rather go down fighting for God and His Word and the covenant He established, than to throw in towel because the other person *might* walk away. And, if you're both on board— heal together. It will be breathtaking!"

- A great story. I know that is some of your stories this morning too. I would add this thought to the healing process of broken relationships.

### **3. Give God time to work.**

Don't rush his timing. Don't try to force reconciliation. Allow God time to prepare hearts. Sometimes reconciliation takes a long time. But in the meantime, you can walk in forgiveness, gentleness, patience and kindness.

**Ask for forgiveness for your part. Your insensitivity. Your hurtful words.**

In many of our broken relationships we both grow and are eventually fully restored back to where we were or even on a deeper level.

**But depending on the nature of the relationship, offense, and broken trust things may never go back to the way they were.** You are reconciled but never fully restored. You find a new normal in the relationship that both can live with.

- Often you can still be friends on some level.

#### **4. Pray and Bless**

Jesus said to pray for, do good for, and speak blessing over those who mistreat us. Luke 6:27-36

**We can't always choose the conflicts that come into our life, but we can always choose our response to those conflicts.**

As we pray and bless, God does amazing things in our heart and he is released to work in the other person's life because we have forgiven.

We are no longer a prisoner to the pain or person. We are free to grow and watch God in his time and his way heal, broken relationships.

#### **Conclusion:**

We all deal with relationship issues. Some of us try to ignore it hoping it will just get better. Some of us like to confront it and fix it. Some of us are too wounded to even think about reconciliation at this point. For some the other person doesn't want reconciliation so there is not much we can do.

**But we can be reconciled in our own hearts about the situations.** Come to a place of peace and forgiveness where we release it to God.

I hope you have found some renewed hope this morning for your struggling relationships. God cares about them and as God and you partner together – miracles can happen!

**God is a God of relationship. He wants a relationship with us. He wants us to be reconciled to him. He wants to be our best friend.**

## Prayer Blessing

Heavenly Father, thank you for pursuing us and desiring a relationship with each of us this morning. We have offended you, sinned against you, and hurt you so often. Yet you chose to forgive us and have given us second and third and even more chances.

You have asked us to do the same with each other. To pursue relationship and reconciliation with each other. To forgive. To learn how to be compassionate, kind and patient with each other in our speech and actions. To lay down our need to be right.

Teach us how to bless instead of speaking negatively about others who are struggling to get it right. To speak the truth in love and kindness. In a way that builds up instead of tears down.

I pray for those walking the journey of broken relationships this morning.

I pray for much grace.

- Grace to allow you to examine their own hearts.
- Grace to deal with the pain, betrayal and woundedness in their hearts.
- Grace to heal.
- Grace to forgive from their hearts and to release the offender into your hands.
- Grace to be reconciled in their own hearts first.

And then Lord we pray for the miracle of reconciliation in the many relationships represented here this morning and for those watching online.

We pray for healing and hope. We pray for miracles where things seem impossible. Begin to shift hearts and circumstances.

Begin to restore friendships, marriages, parents and children, work relationships, school relationships. Wherever the enemy has destroyed we pray for you to restore.

**Now may the Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord make his face shine on you and be gracious to you; the Lord turn his face toward you and give you peace.” – May you know his grace in a new way in your life and relationships.**