

Harris Creek Baptist Church
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Sermon Series: Uncommon Family
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Generational Baggage

Well, when Monica and I got married—we have been married for seventeen years—and when we got married, we took part in this tradition known as the “honeymoon.” And we were super excited about it because neither of us were well-traveled. We had not been to a lot of places. So we were going to go to the Caribbean in Mexico. We are going to fly into Cancun and hit some all-inclusive resort at The Rivera Maya. And because we just got married, we did not have a lot of luggage, we did not have a lot of suitcases. And so we borrowed some from our parents. We took five suitcases on our honeymoon, and this is not where I say, “Hey, my wife takes a lot of things.” Because we both are notorious over-packers. Still to this day: Notorious over-packers.

But we have the five suitcases, going there to the Cancun area for a week. And we go over to DFW. Now DFW—I do not know if you have been to that airport, but they have the notoriously large escalators. Like, just really tall escalators. And so this is a problem, you know. She has her carry-on. I am the new husband like, “Don’t you worry, I’ve got it! I am going to figure this out! I tell you what, why do not I—usually I will let you go first. But why do not I go first, you king of pull up and make sure that last one stays in place.” And so I am just trying to figure out how to load them on the escalator one after one, as I was trying to even—before that—move them through the airport, which was a little bit of a juggling act. But I got there, and we got on. And then she gets on, and we are on the escalator and we are moving. Long, just moving up to another level there at DFW. And we got to the top, and it is interesting on escalators how the sides don’t move. Like, the rail moves, and the stairs move, but that glass part does not move. Well, one of these suitcases kind of hit the side, and just lurched me back. Just kind of jostled me. And then I hit her: I stumbled back and then I hit her, and then she is falling down the escalator. But don’t you worry, I am the new husband! I grab her and I just roll in a heroic feat. I just roll underneath her, and then I fall. And then she falls. And we tumble down head over heels, from the top of the escalator to the bottom of the escalator.

Now it sounds dramatic; it was dramatic. It was. Like, we get to the bottom and I am like, (repetitively from the moving escalator) “Oof, oof, oof, oof. I got to get up, but I don’t know that I can.” I am bleeding. I am bruised. I am hurt. This is all completely true—(jokingly) as if I am like, “Let me start the message with a lie.” I’m like, is this a bad omen, I don’t know haha, those early years were tough. So yeah. Here is the moral to the story. You go through life with your parents’ baggage, you are going to get hurt and someone else is going to get hurt. And that is the truth.

Now it is a cute story, kind of a metaphor to set this up, but don’t lose that truth in the metaphor. You go through life, which you are, you are like, “Oh I wonder if he’s talking to me?” Oh I am! You are doing that right now. “Who is you?” You are! “Even if I’m younger?” Oh yeah! “Even if I’m older?” Oh yeah! “Married with kids?” Uh huh! If you go through life with your parents’ baggage, you are going to get hurt and someone is going to get hurt.

Check this out: You do not have to. It is work, it is a shift in the mind, it's a daily practice, but you don't have to. And I know that not everything that we got from our parents was bad. Our parents, for a lot of us, have entrusted to us great things. Parents in the room, entrusting to your children great things: I get that, it's not all bad. Just today, we are talking about the bad. And it is checking your parents' baggage. If you are here and you are single, this is an amazing time to do this. This is the time to do this. To understand, okay, what are those things that I am learning from my parents? Those things where you are like, "Nu-uh! Not me! I am not going too!" Yes, you will, it is the natural drift. So be aware of it.

You are here and you are a parent. It is tough, because you are kind of on-the-fly understanding, "Oh yeah, I did, I took this from them. I passed it on to them. That is happening right now, and I need to make some shifts. You are here and you are a grandparent, still a great time! Still an amazing time to understand, to go back and have conversations with your children and say, "Hey, you know what, I see this in what you are doing, and you got that from me. And it is not the joke at the kitchen table, joking "Haha, you got that from me!" No, no, it is like, "Hey we might need to make some shifts there." If it is inconsistent with the character of Christ it is probably something that God wants to change, the Holy Spirit wants to change, and the news flash is that he's big enough, he's strong enough, he's powerful enough that He can do it. If he had not changed that in, you it is not because of a lack of desire in Him. It is not because of a lack of ability in Him. And that is the message today.

We hosted Becoming Something Live, that is a podcast here, we record here at Harris Creek. We hosted a live recording, and 1,000 young adults came in from around the country in this room for two days. And we say, "Hey, you guys get to choose the topic." And night one, someone said, "We want to talk about generational sin." We voted by shouts, and in full transparency that one won. But I was like, surely not. And so we went with some other topic, and then the next day they got to vote again, but now we did it through technology. They got to choose a topic and then upvote that topic. And again, they chose—a thousand young adults from around the country and even around the world, in this room—said, "We want to hear you, from the Scriptures, address generational sin." Who knew!? Not anxiety, not sex or dating, not anything about materialism, online dating, this is what I would have thought. No they said, "We want to hear you talk about generational sin." And so in this series Uncommon Family, that is what we are going to address. Generational sin. Why? Because it is so much of who you are right now. In fact, the greatest influences of your personality and your character are your family, your parents. Your family of origin. Even if they were not there. That one decision to not be there is one of the biggest factors in who you are as you sit there and hear this right now.

Some of you are going through life with your great great great great grandmother's control. Some of you are attempting to dodge your great great great great grandfather's alcoholism. This sin struggle, these character flaws, have been passed from one generation to the next like a relay button. "You ready? Because I am about to die and you are about to rise up and you be a parent, and I'm about to pass this on to you. You get it, and you run that quarter and then you just get ready to hand it off to your offspring." That is how it works. And you know, from the intense on your face and the leaning and the listening. I know that you know. You are like, "Yeah. Pretty much. That is what is happening."

So Uncommon Family. On Mother's Day, Nate kicked us off talking about an uncommon mother. The role of a mother from the Scriptures. And last week we discussed an uncommon view of gender. The number one question that I got last week, I will just answer you all right now, "How many emails did you get?" I got emails asking me how many emails I got. Not one critical email. Not a single one. Not to Harris Creek, not to me. And here is why. People are more reasonable than you think they are. Unreasonable people are just really, really loud. Not a single email. Now you know.

So today, we are talking about checking our parents' baggage which candidly is uncommon. It is not the normal practice. We are going to discuss five forms of baggage passed on by our parents to our children. And so let me just say this here: 90% of the time you're going to come into this room and I'm going to open God's word, or whoever is teaching is going to open God's word, We're going to go verse by verse, I'm going to read a section, and I'm going to explain that section, then I'm going to illustrate that section. That is just how that goes if you are ever like, "Oh yeah, there's a pattern to this." There is. That is what we do just about every single week. The other 10% of the time sometimes will be family meetings, sometimes that will be a teaching theology from the Scriptures, we are always going to address the Scriptures. And then sometimes it is going to be a little more topical in nature like this morning. This is a note taker's sermon. I am going to give you 21 Scripture today. Okay? It is a lot, it's going to feel like drinking from a fire hydrant. You do not need to remember everything; you need to grab on to the things that are most relevant to you and your family so that you can be an uncommon family. That is today.

And so I am going to read to you, out the gate, from Jeremiah 32. Jeremiah is a prophet, about six hundred years before Jesus shows up on the scene. And he is writing to the nation of Judah whose about to go into Babylonian captivity. And he is writing to them a message of judgement, and this is what he says, **"You show love to thousands,"** this is verse eighteen, **"You show love to thousands but bring the punishment for the parents' sins into the laps of their children after them. Great and mighty God, whose name is the Lord Almighty, [...]."** Now this seems uncharacteristic of God. That he would punish children for their parents' sins. So when we read this, we have to look at all of the Scripture and understand, "Okay, what is this actually saying?" I am not saying God cannot do that. God can do anything he wants, he's God, I am not. But as I look at all of Scripture, there seems to be verses that contradict this idea. And there is lots of confusion around generational sin, generational curses, hereditary spirits, are there demons assigned to my family that my great great great grandparents had that are basically like demons of alcoholism that we can't shake? I do not think there are demons where Satan is like, "Hey, you're the alcoholic one." I do think they study generations and understand the pitfalls that you are most prone to step in, based on nurture and nature. All they want to do is keep you out of right relationship with God, and so they feed you and tempt you and lie to you to make you trip up in the same way that they did your great great great great grandparent. And so what does this mean? I mean, do we suffer for the sins of our parents?

If your dad robbed a bank and did not get arrested, what this verse is not saying is, let's say he dies and then God says, "No, he got away with robbing the bank, so I'm taking that out on you. You are going to suffer because he robbed the bank." Not what this verse is saying. What it does imply: if your dad robs a bank, he has questionable character, he is going to raise you under the

umbrella of that questionable character, you're going to learn things from him. You might even learn systematically how to rob a bank! You may say, "Hey, if this is what success in your life looks like, we're going to make you the best bank robber that ever was." Or let us say that in the effort of robbing a bank, he gets shot and killed or arrested and incarcerated for the rest of his life, then you grow up without a dad. That is you suffering from the consequences of his sin. So it is not this active punishment that God is actively punishing you because of what your parents did, but there is this past consequence that exists in a fallen world because of Genesis 3, that as we move through this, that can be passed onto us from generation to generation. So not an act of punishment, but a natural consequence to sin.

So I want to talk about five things that are most often passed from parents to their children. Acknowledging again there are great things that are passed on from parents to our children. Today we are talking about the negative ones. This one, this first one, it is woven into who we are, it's a hard foundation of so much of what we believe about the world. It is sturdy, it's foundational to our existence, and it's false belief. So much of what you know of God, the Bible, His Spirit, Jesus, the resurrection, the way you interact with God, it comes from your parents, right? I hear all the time, "Well I wasn't raised in a Christian home." "Well we got dressed up to go to church." "Well I believe that baptism is necessary for salvation." "I believe that you can't have instruments in church." Why do you believe that? Because you read a book, you tripped over a verse, and it spoke to you? No. No. You were raised in that tradition, and tradition is really, really powerful.

1. *False Beliefs*

Maybe you were raised in a tradition that "all ways lead to God." All ways lead to God. Here is what I can tell you about your family, just from that one, "Hey my parents believed that all ways lead to God." I promise you, you did not value evangelism. Like, you were not like, "All ways lead to God, but let's make sure nobody goes to Hell, by sharing the Gospel." I can tell that is true of your family. Some of you secretly believed all ways lead to God. "He'll probably let everybody in, so we don't have to feel bad for not sharing the Gospel." You get to Romans 10 it says, "How are they going to know unless someone tells them?" Here is what I can also tell about your family that believed all ways lead to God. They did not hold the Scripture as authoritative. They were not building up views around the kitchen table, "Hey, the Bible is the authoritative word of God, and where it says that Jesus is the way the truth and the life and no one gets to the father except through him, that's absolutely true. No, you did not believe the Scripture was authoritative. I hear about Church, like, criticism of Church is not biblical, it is traditional. The music's different than what I am used to. Oh? Well man, hold on! Let's make this place exactly what you need it to be. How loud do you want it? How many songs? How long do you want them to go? What songs would you like? That is your favorite? We will make sure we do that every week.

It is kind of funny, but it is also kind of weird that that's how we think about it sometimes. It is like, "Oh wait, hold on. You are not going to cater to my tradition?" Oh, it is big, I really think a church about 200. That is cool, chapter and verse please? That would be helpful to me. You know, I do not want to do anything outside the Bible. Oh, it is just your preference. Oh. Cool, okay. Alright.

It is a powerful one. It impacts how you see the world, it is foundational to your view of God and you have to, you have to check it at the cross. You have to bring that before the Lord and say, “Hey, I’m going to check this with the Gospel.” A big one here in Waco—I was raised in a home where we did not talk about our sin. It has tremendous implications for how you read the Scripture. You get to James 5:16, it says, “Confess your sins to each other...” you say, “Well there must have been something weird happening in the Greek there, that maybe that word doesn’t mean what I think it means. We just don’t really talk about sin; I was raised in a home where we did not really talk about our junk.” That is cool—you were raised in a home that was flawed. That is true about all of us. And there’s areas where all of our theology is off. Ideas have consequences, and bad ideas have victims. Ideas have consequences, and bad ideas have victims. And we are taught our view of God, His word, His spirit, I mean, you can just think about the Holy Spirit, I mean there’s traditions in the church that—tongues for example—you guys are going to have opinions about that based on what you were raised in. Prophecy: how the spirit works. Second baptism. These are theological ideas that impact our view of God. And so the belief that we build all of this on is the Gospel. 1 John 4, “If anyone acknowledges that Jesus is the son of God, God lives in them, and they in God.” And so we know and rely on the love God has for us.

One of my kids the other day, we were just having an honest conversation and I said, “I feel like if I fall asleep during my prayers, God’s mad at me.” I am like, man, you got that from your daddy. Me too. And I am 41 years old, and I realize the tradition of Christianity that I grew up in kind of saw God as this sheriff in the sky, just waiting to catch me for doing something wrong. And so much of my relationship with him was rooted in performance. And so when I came to the cross, I had to unlearn some things. Like, oh that is different than what I thought. And so this second one, this next one, this is one that you are not embarrassed of. It is kind of new, it’s got useful pockets. This is one of those things that your parents passed this on to you, and it is kind of useful in the world. It is helpful. And you don’t mind walking through the airport with the nicest bag there, because you learn performance from them.

2. Performance

You learn to perform from them. You think what God wants from you is your performance. It is performance-based acceptance, performance-based acceptance. Not an acceptance-based performance. You think, “Well God loves me if I am good, and he doesn’t love me if I’m bad. Or He loves me more if I got a quiet time.” Like, this is the simplest way to explain this is, “Oh, if I didn’t get a quiet time today, God’s going to get me.” That is so superstitious. Eastern philosophy. It is anti-Christianity, and it’s foundational to what so many Christians believe. “Wait, are you saying that I don’t need to get a quiet time?” I am saying that your quiet time should be rooted in your love and affection for God, and it doesn’t need to be quiet. And the time can vary. You have to foster any relationships that you want to grow, because you love them, and you understand how they love you. When you get in this mindset that “If I do this, God loves me more.” You have absolutely missed what is foundational to the truth we believe, which is the Gospel, that Jesus preformed on your behalf.

There has to be an unlearning and undoing that happens around this. And you know where this is learned? The soccer fields. At home plate. At the free throw line. When it is report card time. When it is time to go to the parent, or to dress a certain way, or to wear makeup, “Look pretty for mommy. I want you to look pretty. It is easter, look pretty for mommy.” And those little words plant seeds in hearts that grew. And the eating disorders, all kinds of confusion, they will be passed on from one generation to the next, to the next, to the next. Because you were taught this. And you have to take it and you have to check it at the cross. Whether it is sports, grades, education, or even what success in life looks like. “Hey, you want to get a good education so you can get a good job. Make us proud. Walk across that stage! Change that tab, make us proud! Are you not dating anyone yet?” You know what the undertone is? “What’s wrong with you?” Do you know what somebody leaves thinking? They leave thanksgiving thinning, “Somethings wrong with me. Somethings wrong with me.” Like, I did not send my kid into counseling just by asking why they were still single—yeah you did. And I am not saying it so you feel guilty, I’m saying this so you’ll stop. And so say, “What’s God’s expectation of them?” Because we take this (JP picks up a luggage bag), and we check it at the foot of the cross. Say, hey this is where this belongs.

Dr. Peggy Drexler, she wrote an article on the psychology today, she studied 75 highly successful women. These women had great families, great careers, altogether great lives. And she was really—as a renowned psychologist—really surprised to find that no matter how successful they were, they were still evaluating their success through the lens of their father’s approval. Even those women who did not have a good relationship with their dad, they were still giving their lives to please him. This was her big takeaway from studying seventy-five successful women. And the Gospel, it is God saving you in spite of you. It is God saving you despite your performance. The verse that honestly changed my life, “For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith. This is not of yourself, it is the gift of God, not so that anyone will perform.” Not by our works, so that no one can boast.

One observation of mine in our culture, is we grew up with overbearing parents—some of us, not all of us—grew up with overbearing parents that wanted us to do well in sports; and then we become overbearing parents who want our children to do well in sports. We did not like it, but we still do it. And you call that demonic, satanic, you call that whatever you want to call it, I am just calling it a tactic of the enemy to keep that in your family.

3. *Fear*

This is one, it is the one that is kind of falling apart. You know, it is kind of barely holding on. It has gone from one to the next state in your family. It is fierce. Your parents passed on their fears to you. You are afraid of what they’re afraid of. You learned to value because of what they are afraid of. Mom is a worrier, it seemed like good parenting at first, “What time are you going to be home, who are you going to be with?” But it is deeper than that, “Wash your hands, does he feel hot to you? Don’t drink that!” And it just grows. And it does not seem like a big idea, but you teach your child that this world is a trap that they’re going to fall in at any turn. They know that it is not safe. And your fears run the day, right? And maybe it could be worry, anxiety. Scripture says, **“Cast all your anxiety on Him because He cares for you.”** 1 Peter 5:7. It could be money. Like, “What if we do not have enough money? We have to get more money! We have

to save more money! Do not spend that! We need money.” **“I’ve never seen the righteous forsaken, or their children begging bread (Psalm 37:25).”** the Psalm says. Maybe it’s the approval of others. “We need them to like you. Hey, the Smiths are coming over! Get it together, clean your room!” “But mom, they’re not going to go in my room.” “They might go in your room! Clean your room!” I know, I want them to see this place as a showplace. Maybe undercover, better homes and gardens or something. I do not know, just get it right.

Galatians 1:10, **“Am I now trying to win the approval of human beings, or of God? Or am I trying to please people? If I were still trying to please people, I would not be a servant of Christ.”** This is big, this is a big one. And “It’s just my personality, just an enneagram 6, it’s who I am!” Just raising a bunch of Enneagram 6’s. You will pass it on from one to the next. Right?

You understand that any fear, any worry that you could have, the Bible addresses that. Like, God speaks into that. With the lie, there is a coinciding truth that you could put next to the lie and say, “Alright, what should I believe?”

Early on one of my kids—I do not know exactly when this happened—but they wanted to do something and I just said, “Hey, we can’t afford that, we don’t have money for that.” And I don’t know what I said in addition to that, but it just planted something in their heart where one of my children would just always be like, “No, no, no, we cannot spend money. Well how much does it cost?” They want to know how much it costs. “Well no, that is too much, don’t do that. No I do not want anything for my birthday.” Now my other two kids, they have got the other problem. Like, they could learn something from this. But there is something that I said that got stuck, and it just stayed with them, and I had to say, “Hey, listen, the Lord has never seen the righteous forsaken or their children begging for bread.” He is a provider, he provides for the birds, how much more does He love us. You have to fight those lies that I put there, with the truth of God.

This is one that you hope nobody notices, but they cannot miss it. You know, you are like, I want this to die with my parents, but they just see it so much with you and it’s their sin struggles.

4. Sin Struggles

It is those sin struggles that are padding us. But some of you are like, “Well isn’t that what we’ve been talking about?” No. We have been talking about fears and performance. We have been talking about beliefs. This is specifically sin struggles. This is the things that have been passed on like a relay baton, and I know your parents didn’t make you sin, but they gave you a variety of sins to choose from. They said, “Which one of these do you want to keep in our family?” And it could be anger, it could be alcohol, it could be sexual sin, it could be materialism, it could be vanity, it could be pride, and it is just passed on from one generation to the next like an inheritance. Hey, I am leaving now, so you make sure that you carry this forward and give it to your kids so that they can give it to their kids, and its nature and nurture at work. And what I want you to realize is that I do not think we do—I think we struggle to believe this. Your parents did not want that sin. You think, “Oh no! Not me! I am going to be different!” Don’t you think they said the same thing? You ever thought about that? It is not like whenever they were little they were like, “I want to be an alcoholic when I grow up!” It was just a force. It has just been

there, like “Here you take this it’s your turn to run with it! This is the baggage I want you to carry now!” And it just shows up in weird ways. You are super fit, you love to workout, you’re looking at old family pictures and you see your great-grandparent and you’re like, “Wow, they’re super fit too, must be good genes!” Or maybe it was body obsession and they worked out twice a day like you do. You know, maybe it was that. Maybe it wasn’t just nature. Maybe there’s a lot of nurturing that goes on to keep that in your family. Galatians 5:16 says, **“So I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh.”**

Genetics are strong when it comes to this. It is strong, it’s like David was a man after God’s own heart. He had a ditch. He had a women problem. He had a problem in his heart of how he viewed women. And so there’s adultery and murder because the only way to cover up a lie is with another lie. And then he has Solomon. And Solomon has seven hundred wives, and three-hundred live in concubines, and they are his downfall. They take his heart to run after other gods. Where did that come from? It came from his daddy. He learned that from dad. And so you have to walk by another spirit.

Then there is this one. This is the one you are going to try to carry with you. You want it to be a carry on, and you hope that no one notices that it’s just a little too big and a little too heavy. You don’t want them to stop you and ask you about it, because that gets really awkward. This one is abuse and abandonment.

5. Abuse and Abandonment

It is heavy. Even when I speak those words in this room, abuse, and abandonment, it just gets a little weightier in here. You feel that. And some of you are like, “Man, it doesn’t seem fair that he gets to be on that stage, and I have to sit here. And he gets to talk about that. It feels like a violation to me, like I am being traumatized all over again. I do not want to go back there, I hope no one notices.” And I wonder how this is impacting some people. But you do not understand, the way you defeat the enemy here...

Part of my story, and how God is going to use it for good, because he’s that powerful. God was abused on a cross, brutally murdered, stripped naked in front of everyone. That is the abandonment that some people feel, just that mom and dad promised that they would love each other forever, and then one of them said, “You know what, I changed my mind and I’m moving out.” And that felt like they were not just leaving their spouse, it felt like they were leaving you. And you are trying to figure out, “Okay, what does that mean for me?” It means that some healing is necessary. You are going to be okay. Every single person that can hear me right now has a story. Every person has been hurt by an uncle, an ex, a parent, the babysitter, someone. Someone has not met their expectations and there are varying degrees of hurt—I understand that. But the Scripture says—you feel left, and the Scripture says that He is a father to the fatherless. Psalm 68, **“A Father to the fatherless.”** That is who he is, and a defender of widows. It is God in his Holy dwelling. Psalm 24 says **“The Lord is close to the broken hearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit”**.

And some of us are like, “Yeah, but I got to get even.” And here is what 1 Thessalonians 4:6 says, “No one should wrong or take advantage of a brother or sister. The Lord will punish all

those who commit such sins.” So the Lord is the avenger of these things. And so the solution to any generational sin is understanding that you, God’s Holy Spirit in you, get to change the narrative. You can be the transitional member of your family. Here is what you need to know, that you have a perfect Father, whose not a reflection of your earthly father, but the perfection of your earthly father. He does not have the sin struggles. He is not asking you to perform. He does not have any false beliefs; these don’t mark him. And as you get to know Him and understand that he is your heavenly father, your perfect father, you can trust Him and can rebuild your life on His love for you. And it is never too late! If you are great-grandparents, it’s not too late. The Scripture says, “So in Christ Jesus, you are all children of God through faith.” That he is our father, we’re not just given a supernatural inheritance, we’re given a supernatural spirit that helps us overcome the sins of our past generation. And God’s Holy Spirit is one that is big enough. Your understanding that this has to stay with you is a gross misunderstanding. It is a heresy. It is a bad theology. Because what I read in the Scripture is it is no longer you who lives, it’s no longer your great great grandparents’ sin that lives in you, Galatians 2:20 says, “I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I now live in the body I live by faith in the son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.” So I want to be clear, this is not a “This dies with me!” This dies with me. This is a “This died with Him!” It died with Him.

When you came into relationship with Christ, you grow and renew your mind around the reality that God allowed His son, Jesus Christ, to die for your sins, and has given you His Holy Spirit. You have to know that His Holy Spirit is strong enough to deal with the sins of your parents. And you have to check the baggage at the cross. That is an uncommon practice. Come here and say, “False beliefs, I’m just going to build this on John 14:6, that Jesus answered, **“I am the way, the truth, and the life, and no one gets to the father except for me.”** God wants me to perform for him, right? No, Titus 3 says, **“But when the kindness and love of God our savior appears, he saved us, not because of righteous things we have done, but because of His mercy.”** I know there’s fears. 1 John 4:14 says, **“There is no fear in love, but perfect love drives out fear.”** Because fear has to do with punishment. The one who fears has not been made perfect in love. You have to combat these lies with the truth. We say, “Yeah but the sin struggles, they’re there and I’m handing them off.” Because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit who gives life has set you free from the law of sin and death. There is another way.

When this one, Isaiah 53 just says, **“By his wounds we are healed.”** But healing is possible. It comes through Him. But we say, well what am I supposed to do with that? Couple things: Great grandparent, it is not too late to talk with your kids and say there’s this thing that I’ve observed in your life that’s true of me, and I’m realizing you got it from me. And I just want to start by asking you for forgiveness that I did not catch this earlier. And I hope what I pass on to you is this process of asking forgiveness, that you might do this with your children. If you are a parent, I know you’re in the throes of it and it feels crazy. It is like, yeah this is a lot to juggle, and it feels so heavy because I know I’m feeling both hurt and guilt. I know that my parents did this, and I am doing it too, and so I’m crushed—I’m getting crushed between hurt and guilt. Neither of which are the Gospel. Neither of which are consistent with the truth that God makes you new. Takes your mess and makes it a message. Those are not just cute pithy preacher words. They are a reality that I’ve experienced firsthand.

And so you need to identify what they are. Write them down. Say them out loud. This is what has been handed to me. And you need to give it some thought, some space, to think, “Okay, how do I grow my understanding that this died with him?” And if you are a child, there’s no greater time. This has implications for your career, this has implications for who you marry, it has implications for things that you are not even thinking about right now. And there’s just no greater time to have hope and understand that you have a perfect father in heaven. This is what the Scripture says, it is 2 Corinthians 6:18-7:1, **“I will be a Father to you, and you will be my sons and daughters, says the Lord Almighty.” Therefore, since we have these promises, dear friends, let us purify ourselves from everything that contaminates body and spirit, perfecting holiness out of reverence for God.**” You have a perfect Father, and it seems in the scripture that He has expectations of us to be able to separate ourselves, or His spirit at least can separate us from our sins; even sins that we have been born into and raised in. Even things that happened to us.

And you thinking that He is not strong enough, that’s a misunderstanding of who he is. I have had the privilege of observing lots of young adults, lots of products of parents. I have seen some with deep hurts. I have a friend, close friend, Monica, and I have a really close friend—all of these are a part of her story—her dad committed suicide when she was one year old. Which led into a really tumultuous childhood with lots of strangers coming in and out of the home. She turned sixteen, her mom left, said, “I am going to leave you in this house and in this city by yourself. You need to figure out how to get to school, you need to figure out how to eat. At night you need to put something in front of the door, make sure no one comes in.” At sixteen! I do not know if there is anyone whose sixteen in here. If you have a sixteen-year-old, just think, by yourself, in the city, no family, at sixteen. And you think, “Well gosh, she must be really broken, in and out of counseling, in and out of therapy on all kinds of medication...” Let me be careful how I say this lest you think it is preacher talk. She is the most joyful person we know. Steady. Loves God. If you ask her and say, “How did this happen?” She would say, “God fathered me. He showed up. He taught me early on that He is enough. That this world is broken, but that He is enough. And I am going to be with him forever.” She would say, “God, protect me.”

I use her story to tell you He can. He is enough. I will let you pray right now, just as I pray, as we bow our heads, just think, “What do I need to take away?” Let me give you just a minute to do that. The bands going to come up, we will close in worship. Just think about, what is it that died with Him? What is it that is marking my life that needs to stay in the rearview mirror?

Father, help us. You are a father to the fatherless. It is by the stripes, the wounds of Jesus Christ that we have been healed and made new. We do not have to carry sin struggles and fears and performance, false beliefs, abuse and abandonment from one person to the next, generation to generation to generation. That right now we just want to ask your Holy Spirit to overwhelm those things that we are trying to hold onto. Would you break them in us? Not a curse in our family, not hereditary spirits, we are just saying we know that He who is in us is greater than he who is in the world. So Lord, would your Holy Spirit just overwhelm those things in us? And help us to surrender fully to Him. And we acknowledge God, I acknowledge that that means that our taste is going to change, and the things that we love, and how we spend our time, and what we do for fun, and what we can laugh at and be entertained by; all of that changes when we ask your Holy Spirit to overwhelm us. But Lord we ask your Holy Spirit to overwhelm us. Would

your Holy Spirit overwhelm us? God, would you overwhelm us? God, would you make us new? Would you clean us? Would you help us in this world? Let us not just pass on one thing from one generation to the next. We love you. In Jesus' name, Amen.