



March 19 2023

Sunday Sermon Study Guide

Brian Bales, Lead Pastor with guest

Patti Broderick

Complicated: *Jesus, the Church and You
Restoration*

In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace. Ephesians 1:7

A Life Application Study Guide

James 1:22-25 tells us to put into practice what we are discovering in God's word.

INTRODUCTION

The church is designed to show the goodness of God and we were designed to be the hope in the world but too often the Church has harmed people in so many ways that many will think of church as a place to avoid at all cost. But the church is you and I, not a building with a white steeple on top. If we are the church, we must check to see if we are reflecting who God is and His goodness. We have the opportunity during this series to begin the process of Repenting, Recognizing, Restoring and Rejoicing as we allow the Holy Spirit to work in us individually and corporately to become the beautiful church that God intended for us to be.

LESSONS TO EXPLORE

1. How to begin a Restoration in our Heart
2. We are not Alone in our Suffering
3. Jesus our Redeemer
4. The Path Forward

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

1. The pain and suffering that some have experienced within the church cannot be diminished.
 - a. Broken trust, feeling left out, condemnation rather than grace: when have you experienced similar hurt or wounding in your own life within the church?

 - b. How would knowing that Jesus has experienced our pain encourage us to turn to him? Hebrews 4:16 encourages us to "approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need." Do you find this to be true or do you struggle with believing it?

2. Patti offers us the example of the suffering servant (Isaiah 53:3) as a place to begin to understand how restoration is possible.
 - a. "He was despised and forsaken of men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief." What we have experienced, Jesus understands first hand. He hasn't left us alone in our suffering. Why is it important to know this?

 - b. How do you believe the enemy would want us to approach our pain inflicted by the church?

 - c. Brian mentions turning feelings of abandonment (Jesus's lament on the cross) into a prayer to the Father. What would your prayer sound like?

 - d. How might this process and prayer strengthen your connection to your Heavenly Father and give you hope?

3. Jesus' example shows us our purpose as Christ Followers, even when we are at our weakest.
 - a. How did Jesus defend himself or answer back to those who were seeking to kill him?

 - b. Patti says that at His lowest, Jesus was able to reflect the character of His Father. How will others see Jesus and His grace in us even if we have been humiliated, or ostracized by the church?

3. There is a pathway to freedom but we must choose to follow it.

a. How do you reconcile forgiveness and justice as coexisting in the same process?

b. When you have been harmed within the church have you been more inclined to seek justice or to seek vengeance? Why?

c. How could working to forgive prevent us from becoming like those who have hurt us?

d. Suffering can be redeemed but it may not look like what we imagined. How will you trust God in the process?

e. We honor God when we pursue justice; how do we accomplish that without becoming defensive?

f. As prodigals ourselves, our goal in ministry to others is first, to listen well. How do we seek to understand the pain of someone harmed by the church?

MAKING IT REAL

This week begin the journey toward forgiving those in the church who have harmed you. Ask a trusted friend to join you on that path and invite Jesus to lead you.

Darkness cannot drive out darkness; only light can do that. Hate cannot drive out hate; only love can do that. - Martin Luther King, Jr.

Forgiveness is the final form of love. - Reinhold Niebuhr

Forgiveness says you are given another chance to make a new beginning. - Desmond Tutu

The voice of sin is loud, but the voice of forgiveness is louder. - Dwight Moody