

SERMON SERIES: Living as Loved

SPEAKER: Scott Beckenhauer

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Sermon Title

“His Love Turns Pain Into Purpose”

Introduction

This week we started our new series “Living as Loved”, focusing on what our lives would look like if we lived like we are loved by God. Our homes, schools, neighborhoods, jobs, and relationships would all look different, and our lives are changed when we know that we are loved. Over the course of the next 5 weeks, we are going to look at five truths about the love of God that affects our lives. This week, our focus is on the love of God turning our *pain* into *purpose*.

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Seek the Word

- Read John 9, the story of Jesus healing a blind man and restoring his identity. Then answer these questions:
- Put yourself in the shoes of the blind man. Blind for his whole life, treated horribly by the people around him, hopeless. What would you be thinking about yourself in the moments before Jesus showed up?
- Jesus heals the blind man and the Pharisees begin to question the man, telling him that he was a liar and could not have been healed by Jesus. What must that have felt like, to have respected people question the healing and the new purpose in this man’s life?
- The blind man went from a hopeless beggar to a hopeful worshiper because of Jesus’ love. What do you think mattered more to him: the restoration of sight or the loving care of Jesus?

Go Deeper

Scott gave us a challenge in his sermon, to name our pain. Oftentimes we shy away from our hurt, and decide that ignoring or hiding it prevents it from having power over us. But, when we can name our pain, we can bring it to God and let him turn it into purpose. So take some time, as a group or alone, to name the deep pains in your life. Who or what caused it and what it is doing to you. And then take some time to genuinely offer it to God.

Talk About It

- Scott gave us 4 examples of things that we could be “Living as _____”... worthless, damaged goods, not enough, unwanted. Which of these 4, or maybe if another comes to mind, do you often find yourself living as?
- What are the things in your life that make you feel stuck in your pain? What causes you to not give it to God?

- Proverbs 23:7 says “For as he thinks within himself, so he is.” This means “you are what you think you are, you will be what you think you will be”. We have a choice on what we think about God and ourselves. Are you thinking the thoughts of God or are you thinking the lies that have been planted in your life because of your pain?
- What could be the biggest impact area in your life, if you let God’s love transform your pain into a new purpose?

Wrap Up

Reminder: The truth about God’s love is that it takes our pain and transforms it into a new purpose. And that love comes regardless of what pain you may be holding on to. But we have a role to play in that transformation. Because that transformational power cannot come unless we give our pain to God to transform. Our perception of our pain, and therefore ourselves, has to become less like the lies of the evil one and more like the truth that God says about who we are. Our identity is solely in the love of Christ, not in the pain that a sinful world has caused. You are loved, live like it.

Challenge: This week, try to approach your pain with the mindset of God. The Scriptures tell us that “in all these things, we are more than conquerors through him who loved us (Romans 8:37)”. Your pain does not own you, your pain does not define you. Christ has defeated pain and sin and death. And when we accept the love of Christ, our pain becomes transformed into purpose. Each day say that verse as a prayer, and then live as conquerors over your pain, because of Jesus.

Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus– Philippians 4:6-7