

TRANSGRESSION: A BREAKING OF TRUST

2 CORINTHIANS 5:17-19

INTRODUCTION

Good Morning Harvest!

It's good to be with you this morning. We are continuing our Church at Home series today with the word, "transgression."

This probably isn't a word that you commonly use and the Bible Project video does a good job of explaining the meaning behind it.

To keep things simple, I'll be using the definition of breaking trust for transgression.

But rather than giving a broad overview of transgression in the Bible, I'd like to instead share with you:

- **how transgression is a lot more prevalent in our lives than we think**
- **what should we do about it as Christ followers**

All of us have experienced our trust being broken and many of us have broken trust with others.

But as I was reflecting on the word transgression this past week, I didn't realize how much broken trust there is in today's society.

And rather than starting with examples about how trust has eroded here in the U.S., I'd like to start by sharing with you a story from the Bible.

As I share this story with you, I want you to keep in the back of your mind, how would this story play out in today's world.

THE STORY OF NABAL AND DAVID

This story is from 1 Samuel 25. It's pretty long so instead of reading it, I'll just give a summary.

The story begins with David when he was on the run from King Saul. He and his men were hiding out in a place called the wilderness of Paran. Near this wilderness, there was a town named Carmel where a super-rich guy named Nabal had a thriving livestock business.

But Nabal had a reputation of being rude and in your face, which probably helped him in his business transactions. As rude as Nabal was, he had a wife named Abigail who was discerning and beautiful. The totally opposite of him.

Now when David heard Nabal was near the neighborhood where he was hiding out, he sent some of his men to let Nabal know that they've been protecting Nabal's shepherds as any good neighbor would.

Remember, during these times there wasn't any police or other law enforcement in the area that would protect people.

David also told his men that after they let Nabal know they've been protecting his workers, to ask him for some compensation.

It wasn't a dollar amount, just anything Nabal had on hand that he would be willing to give to David and his men.

So, what does Nabal do?

He doesn't trust David. He basically says that David is a nobody who went against the king. He isn't going to give up his hard-earned food to a nobody.

Well, when David hears this from his men, he is furious and tells all his men to gear up because they're going to show Nabal who he is messing with.

But Nabal's wife, Abigail also gets wind of this and hears that David's men were telling the truth. So, she rushes out to get to David and his men before they reach her husband and her household.

She tells David that her husband is a worthless man and to not pay attention to what he said. She gives David a ton of food as a gift and ask him to forgive Nabal.

Here are her words in 1 Samuel 25:28

[SHOW 1 SAMUEL 25:28 ESV]

[28] Please forgive the trespass of your servant. For the Lord will certainly make my lord a sure house, because my lord is fighting the battles of the Lord, and evil shall not be found in you so long as you live.

I highlighted that word trespass because that's the same word in Hebrew as transgression.

Abigail is asking David to forgive Nabal for breaking trust with him.

And how did Nabal break David's trust?

He dismissed David's protection over his shepherd's which David did out of a true sense of hospitality.

During these times and in Middle Eastern culture, hospitality was extremely important. David did what any true neighbor would do. He looked out for the wellbeing of those around him even if he didn't know them.

And Nabal threw that back in his face.

Now let's see this story in light of modern-day America

If a person who you heard was a fugitive on the run, came up to you and said he saw you park your car in a bad neighborhood and protected it. Now he would like some compensation, what would you say to him?

Remember, David is on the run from King Saul who is the legal king at this time. David is a fugitive from the law of the land, even if that king is corrupt.

How many here would trust this on the run fugitive and give him a meal? Let's even say that this meal isn't fancy, it's just from McDonalds. How many would do that for him?

To be honest, I wouldn't.

And I think that says something about the times we live in.

When I look at our society today here in the U.S., I see no trust. Most neighbors don't look out for other neighbors.

Politicians don't look out for the little guys. And the companies that we work at don't look out for us as their workers.

We live in a world that trust is already broken.

DOGGIE DAYCARE ILLUSTRATION

This reminds me of the Doggie Daycare, me and Fei send Cody to. Cody is a dog we're fostering for some friends.

I've noticed that every time we get Cody back from the Doggie Daycare that he is super hungry and always needs to go to the bathroom right away.

And every time, I ask Fei, do you think this Daycare is feeding Cody? We give them enough food for his lunch.

And do they actually take him outside to use the bathroom. Why does he always have to go so urgently when we get back?

I really don't trust this Doggie Daycare, but is that just me being paranoid?

He could be hungry because he's playing all day with other dogs. And he probably needs to go to the bathroom because we usually take him outside around the time we pick him up.

There are legitimate reasons for his hunger and his bathroom needs. But my mind automatically goes to blaming the Doggie Daycare. Why?

Because there's no trust. I question the quality of their care.

And I think it's this way for a lot of us, with a lot of things in our lives. We don't trust. Sometimes it's legitimate but other times I think it's just because we are a product of our times.

We don't trust because nobody trusts anybody.

So where do we go from here? Do we just say that's the way things are and live with it? Even as followers of Jesus?

I would submit that there is another way, especially as followers of Jesus.

Let's turn to 2 Corinthians 5:17-19. We are going to spend the rest of our time together in this passage.

Let me read these verses for us.

[SHOW 2 COR. 5:17-19 ESV]

[17] Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come. [18] All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation; [19] that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation.

I believe these verses show us a path towards living a life of restored trust. First between us and God and then between us and others.

Especially in our times of broken trust everywhere, I believe what Paul shares here is even more compelling.

We don't have to live our lives in this perpetual state of mistrust. As followers of Jesus, we ourselves have been restored and so we can then restore trust in this world

So I'd like to unpack these verses by observing two steps towards how we are restored by God to be able to trust again. And then end with how these steps leads us out into our present world.

REMADE AS A NEW CREATION

[SHOW REMADE AS A NEW CREATION]

The first step on this path of restored trust is being remade as a new creation.

We see this in v. 17. Let me read that again for us.

[17] Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.

Here Paul is saying, if we say we're Christian and we're truly trying to live a life that is in allegiance to Jesus, then we are a new creation.

If you're been a Christian for a while or been at Harvest for a while, you probably have heard of Christians being a new creation.

The Bible makes reference to this in many different places. In the book of Ezekiel, we see an image of a heart of stone becoming a heart of flesh.

Or Jesus makes reference to this in the Gospel of John when he talks about being born again to Nicodemus.

But all these references point to a reality where becoming a Christian isn't just accepting Jesus in your life.

It's so much more than just that.

When we become Christian:

- God is starting in us a whole new set of desires and new ways of thinking.
- We begin to see the world is a whole different way.
- It's not just a decision that we've made and then our life gets a little bit better. God is re-making us into a person who is more like Him but still true to who we are.

This is the first step because we can only truly trust in a world of broken trust if we are remade into a new creation.

This is why I believe human based solutions for the problems with our country or our society will only get us so far.

They do help but they don't really solve the fundamental problem that our world is deeply messed up.

Or to put in theological terms, everything in our world is touched by sin. Everything from individuals, to cultures, to even nature itself is corrupted by sin.

The only hope we have for a better world is in **God making all things new.**

And the word order of this phrase is important. **God doesn't make new all things.** If He did that then He would be starting over like He did with Noah and the flood.

Instead, God is making all things new. He is taking this world and us in it and remaking us and all things to become new.

It's like restoring an old car.

[SHOW RESTORING CARS IMAGE]



I'm not into cars that much but I do find it amazing how people can find old cars that are rusted and not drivable and then restore them so that they look almost new.

This is a glimpse of what God is doing in us.

RECONCILED THROUGH CHRIST

[SHOW RECONCILED THROUGH CHRIST]

The second step on this path of restored trust is being reconciled through Christ.

We are first re-made as a new creation but it is only through Jesus that we are reconciled to God.

We see this is Paul's flow of thought too at the beginning of v. 18.

[SHOW 2 CORINTHIANS 5:18a ESV]

[18] All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself

For many of us this is not new information. We often joke that the most common answer to all Bible study questions is Jesus.

But I'd like for us to take a moment and ask why did Paul decide to use the word reconciled to describe our salvation?

He could have described our renewed relationship with God in so many other ways, like He took away our sins or He gave us new life.

But Paul used the word reconciled, why?

To help answer this question, **let me define reconciliation as the repair of a relationship.**

And if Paul is describing our relationship with God as repaired through Christ, then what was broken in our relationship that it needed to be repaired?

Paul points to this in v. 19. He says,

[SHOW 2 CORINTHIANS 5:19 ESV]

[19] that is, in Christ, God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation.

We see here that trespasses against God was the reason for repair. And this word for trespasses has the same meaning as transgression which is broken trust.

So what Paul is saying is, we have broken trust with God which has broken our relationship with God and that is what is in need of repair.

This is important to reflect on because I believe we tend to look at **our relationship with God as transactional in nature.**

And by transactional, I mean, we believe if we follow certain behavior or do certain acts of service, then my relationship with God is going well.

Let me test us. If I ask you how is your relationship with God doing? What is the first thought you have?

I believe most of us, myself included, would think about how much or consistently am I reading my Bible? Or how much am I praying? Or how often am I attending church?

We boil our relationship with God down to certain behaviors we think define our relationship with Him.

But our relationship with God is so much more than just behavior. It's also about trust.

Pastor Dave brought this up in his sermon on Sin. How much do we trust God as the rule giver?

Even before we give in to our sinful behavior, we break trust with God by thinking that His commands aren't worth following.

One of the fundamental aspects of our faith is trust. Do we trust God?

I think this is why the snake tempted Adam and Eve the way it did. It attacked Eve's trust in God by telling her that she wouldn't die if she ate the fruit from the tree of good and evil.

And I believe every human after Adam and Eve even today struggles with trusting in God. If we're honest with ourselves, there are times where we do trust Him and there are times we don't.

But that's the amazing thing about what Paul says vv. 18 and 19. We aren't the ones who repair our relationship with God. God is the one who repairs it through Jesus.

It is only through Jesus is there any hope of a restored trusting relationship between me and God.

My hope isn't on how much I'm reading the Bible or how much I'm praying. It's not on how I'm serving the community or how much I'm serving the church. It's not even how inconsistent or consistent I am in trusting in God.

My only hope is on Jesus Christ and his death and resurrection alone. This is what defines my relationship with God.

And this doesn't give me a free pass to do whatever I want as long as I say my hope is only on Jesus Christ.

If my hope is only on Jesus Christ then no matter what is happening in me or around me, I will continue to strive to follow Him.

It's not about measuring up to some sort of standard that we set for ourselves. It is about moving forward in faith that even in the darkest of times, Jesus is the person I hope in.

SHAWSHANK REDEMPTION ILLUSTRATION

THE ATLANTA SPA SHOOTING

As many of you heard in the news this week, there was a shooting in Atlanta, Georgia. There were 8 people killed and the gunman responsible for these killings is currently held in custody.

They say he specifically targeted spa's. And of those killed, six out of the eight were women of Asian descent.

I mention this because it is another reminder of the darkness in this world. And how it can seem easier to caulk this up to how messed up the world is.

But it is especially in these times that finding hope in Jesus is so critical. Jesus suffered and died to bring about a new creation. One where these kinds of shootings never happen again.

This may sound naïve or simplistic but the only hope I have when I read news like this is in a future where Jesus is King and there is no more sin or death.

No law or system will stop humans from killing other humans. My hope is not in better human laws or better human systems.

My hope instead is in Jesus who reconciled me to God through his death and resurrection. And He will one day come back to bring about a restored world where news like this will never be seen again.

CONCLUSION

I'd like to close our time with this thought.

I think one of the reasons why Christianity seems so irrelevant is because it can seem like it's always about future hope.

I just talked about how my hope is in Jesus bringing in a future restored world.

But it would be a mistake to think Christianity is only about the distant future. It is also about what we can do in the present.

Paul talks about this at the end of v. 18 and at the end of v. 19. Let me read those verses for us again.

[SHOW 2 CORINTHIANS 5:18-19 ESV]

[18] All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation; [19] that is, in Christ, God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation.

God didn't reconcile us to himself through Jesus just so we'd have a good life. He reconciled us so that we would go out and share this with others.

Our faith isn't just about ourselves. It's about God changing us so He can change the world through us.

We definitely have some benefits when we are reconciled with God. But it would be a mistake if that's all we see in our relationship with God.

We are missing out on the great adventure God has in store for us if we stay at home and only focus on how to make our own lives better.

God has called us to something greater than ourselves. He has entrusted us with this message of reconciliation, this message of restored trust.

I can't think of a better message to give in our time than this message.

So, my hope for us today is not to hear this message and only think about my own relationship with God.

But I'd like to challenge us to see beyond ourselves and see how our relationship with God can be used by Him to reach others who are suffering or have lost trust.

Let's pray.