Today I am sharing the third and last message on this series called “*Relationslips*.”

Let’s do a quick recap from the past two Sundays.

What is a *relationslip*? A *relationslip* is when we say or do something we shouldn’t have that hurts someone and hurts the relationship. Having *relationslips* or causing them is painful and emotionally consuming. When our relationships are hurting and broken, they weigh us down like a backpack full of bricks. Our minds are distracted continuously as we obsess about how to fix what we broke. We even get sick thinking of it trying to find solutions.

The truth of the matter, all of this has lasting and impactful effects on our lives. Many struggle with discouragement and defeat because of hurting relationships.

Where do we go from here now? I know we have disappointments and hurts lingering around in our thoughts, in our lives. Is this God’s will? Is this my cross to bear? Certainly not. If there is a cross to bear is obedience, never punishment.

Today, we are going deeper than just diagnosing brokenness; we will find a way to healing.

In Psalms 107: 19-20 we find this promise,

Then they cried to the Lord in their trouble (illness), and he saved them from their distress; he sent out his word and healed them and delivered them from destruction.

Throughout the Bible, we see this time and time again. God is ever willing to send his word of healing when we ask for help (Emiliano and Santiago’s story).

You would think this is an easy process, that is, to welcome forgiveness and healing, but it is not—we are proud and stubborn, and at a minimum, we are afraid even to ask. **When we avoid or ignore an issue, whether is spiritual, mental, or emotional, we can’t resolve it, it does not go away, it won’t get any better.**

So, yes, healing broken relationships and finding healing for ourselves is a difficult process because it demands intentional engagement, vulnerability, and honesty. Just knowing where to start is hard enough for anyone. But there is a story in the Bible that can help us find our way and understand how healing can come our way.

This is the story of king David and his sins of adultery and homicide. This is the story of David and Bathsheba and is one of the most dramatic accounts in the Hebrew Scriptures. This story is found in 2 Samuel chapters 11 and 12. This is what happened.

One night in Jerusalem, King David was walking on his rooftop when he spotted a beautiful woman bathing nearby. David asked his servants about her, and he was told she was Bathsheba, the wife of Uriah the Hittite, one of David’s mighty men that served in the army. Despite her marital status, David summoned Bathsheba to the palace, and they slept together.

Bathsheba later discovered she was pregnant, and she informed David. The king’s reaction was to attempt to hide his sin, so he commanded Uriah to report back to him from the battlefield to send him home, hoping that he would sleep with Bathsheba and provide a cover for the pregnancy. But instead of obeying David’s orders, Uriah slept every night in the quarters of the palace servants.

It became apparent that David and Bathsheba’s adultery could not be covered up that way. So, David enacted a second, more sinister plan: to send Uriah to the battle’s front lines to die. And that is what happened, Uriah was killed in battle. After her time of mourning, Bathsheba married David and gave birth to a son. But, 2 Samuel 11:27 notes, **“the thing David had done displeased the Lord.”**

When David and Bathsheba’s child was born, the Lord sent the prophet Nathan to confront David. Nathan used a parable: **a rich man took a poor man’s only sheep and killed it to eat, even though he had many flocks of his own.**

David, a former shepherd, was so angered by this story, which he thought was true, that he responded, “As surely as the Lord lives, the man who did this must die! He must pay for that lamb four times, over because he did such a thing and had no pity” (2 Samuel 12:5–6). Nathan then pointed to David and uttered the chilling words, “You are the man!” (2 Samuel 12:7).

There are several Psalms composed by David in which he wrote of this period in his life when he had carried around this huge weight of guilt but then had finally repented of his sin, and the Lord forgave him. Psalm 51 is perhaps the more obvious,

Be gracious to me, O God, according to Your lovingkindness; According to the greatness of Your compassion blot out my transgressions. Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity And cleanse me from my sin. For I know my transgressions, And my sin is ever before me.

Here, David desired to have the Lord give him a new heart and to renew the very spirit that was within him, both of which had been tainted by the stain of sin.

**This story has so many *relationslips* in it.** We see a king harassing a married woman and taking her to his bed. Then, this same man is trying to cover up his tracks by manipulating people for his benefit. We see lies, cover-ups, betrayal, infidelity, death, and all kinds of brokenness, even the innocent suffering for the sins of others. And **every time something is attempted to fix the hurts, they just keep getting worse.**

This story teaches us that to heal from *relationslips* we need to begin with God, getting things straight up with God first. Otherwise, our motivations to fix our brokenness may be self-centered, selfish, and ultimately cover-ups. You see, healing in *relationslips* is not about feeling better about ourselves, but getting right with God so he can then guide us to amend and heal our relationships with those with whom we are hurting.

This is so critical. **When we start with God, we move from judgment to reconciliation.** The difference between judgment and reconciliation is that in judgment the goal is to call out the wrongs (which the prophet Nathan did with David) to dictate a punishment sentence. But, in reconciliation, we confess our sins to one another (which king David did after hearing the prophet), and pray for one another so that we may be healed.

In 1 John 1:9 we have this promise, “If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”

Reconciliation is what the Gospel is all about, not punishment. Punishment is the suffering that comes as a consequence of ill actions; healing is what experience when we align ourselves with God’s grace.

Paul also wrote, “We implore you on Christ’s behalf: Be reconciled to God. God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God” (2 Corinthians 5:20-21).

Is this speaking to you? It certainly has spoken to me. Whatever the situation you may find yourself in, walking around in pain or hurting others is similar to living with an untreated wound. It can lead to further infections as the bacteria of bitterness and regret are left to spread, running constantly the risk of harming future relationships due to past wounds.

Here is a warning: **be careful of not losing your life, your best years, to the hurts of the past.**

Now, before I finish, I have one more thing to say. Maybe some of you are thinking: “I am not ready for this, I can’t have this, I don’t deserve the grace, I am too ashamed.” And you know, maybe you are right: you are not ready, you don’t deserve God’s grace, and yes, you carry a great deal of shame. But, so did king David. And, it hardly can get any worse than what he did. Yet, let me ask you: Did God abandon him? Did God wait for David to get better before God would help him? No, God did not, and God is also willing to forgive each of us in whatever our need may be right now. God will erase, wash, and cleanse every brokenness in us.

Remember the promise: “Then they cried to the Lord in their trouble (illness), and he saved them from their distress; he sent out his word and healed them and delivered them from destruction.”

Here is where we are, if we want to hear God’s voice, we need to seek him as David did. Be honest with God, and pray out any frustrations, fears, or doubts we may have. Confess the sin, recognize, and name the brokenness, not because God does not know it, but because we have been running from it thinking it all will go away—but it never does until is fully healed because **what we avoid can’t be resolve.**

Here is the good news: “a broken and contrite heart, God does not despise.”

God’s invitation to all of us is to come home, be reconciled, make peace, and put the past behind us. God’s invitation is to heal our hearts’ wounds and bring healing to the wounds of those we have hurt too.

In all of this, we start with God, we move with God, and we stay with God, so at last, we may declare like king David did: Praised be God! Amen.