

****Bumper Video –**

Relationships are hard

We all have at least 1 relationship that isn't great.. that is suffering or in disrepair. Sometimes we don't know what to do in a relationship... We avoid, we become passive aggressive, we attack, we give up.

How you respond in relationship difficulty is important... and how we respond is usually learned from past experience. Maybe you see that you do the same things your parents do in relationships. Maybe someone would get angry and storm out... maybe someone would shut down and refuse to talk... maybe someone would come out with a list of what the other person had done wrong... Their example might affect your response in relationship conflict.

There is a better example. **God as our example**

The entire Bible is one big example of God interacting with mankind in a relationship conflict. There is no better example. Look to God's example.

Last week we told you that because your Supernatural relationship... your relationship with God, can be fixed... then you should have hope for all your natural relationships. Your relationship with God is fixed very simply... a prayer of repentance... All our relationships should be fixed just as easily.

God's interaction with mankind can be described in one word. Love.

God's every action towards mankind is Love motivated.

We talked to you about the 2 kinds of motivation – a Fear motivation & a Love motivation.

Stop doing things out of fear.

Start doing things out of love.

Today we are going to talk to you about a Love that is Unbreakable. **Unbreakable Love.**

Have you ever said something like this... **"I would have done anything for that person..."**?

If they needed anything I would have tried to provide it. If they asked me to do something I would have done everything to try to do it. No cost is too great... If they needed to talk...

I've said that before... "I would have done anything for that person"

Have you noticed that it is usually said in the past tense and not in the present tense? We very rarely say "I will do anything for that person."

I would have done implies that there was a time where, because of how you felt and the condition of the relationship, you would have been willing to do anything.

And while there was a time.. that time has past and we are no longer willing.

The conditions have changed...

That person changed their behavior... they said something nasty, they started doing things that we don't approve of, they made a dumb decision, they got old or gained some weight, we found out who they really are and now the deal is off. ...The conditions have changed.

Or perhaps the person we said we would do anything for made a decision that moved them farther from us... They went to a different school, they started a different job, or moved to a further location... and because we don't **feel** as close to them... The conditions have changed.

Our lives are filled with relationships that we describe as "I would have done anything for them... but not anymore." And that is strange.

The promise of "I would do anything..." is an unconditional promise.

"I would do anything for love, but I won't do that" – Meatloaf. Whatever that is!?

We have become really good at making UNCONDITIONAL PROMISES but living CONDITIONAL LIVES.

Unconditional Promises Conditional Lives

We make unbreakable promises & break them constantly.

If I asked you to think of some of society's unbreakable promises that are often broken... You would probably think of Marriage first.

For better or worse til death do us part... Unbreakable promise Divorced in 8 years... Broken promise

That's the hot button one... But there are a lot more.

When we sign a contract or reach an agreement (unconditional) ...but then we back out of the deal (conditional)
That's why your cell phone contracts have those early termination fees

Before we are parents we make the stupid mistake of saying... "My kids will never do that" (unconditional) but then our kids do worse (conditional)

When a politician takes an oath to honor the office (unconditional) but lies, cheats, steals (conditional)

Every time we tell someone we love them (unconditional promise) but act differently... (Conditional)

When you lost your temper, When you lied, when you placed your needs in front of theirs, when you didn't forgive, when you kept score, when you were impatient, when you gave up...

The problem is we make unbreakable promises but then don't provide an unbreakable love.

What does unbreakable Love look like?

1 Corinthians 13:4-8 Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud.(NIV)

It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs.(NIV)

Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth.(NIV)

It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.(NIV)

Love never fails.

The love that Paul speaks about here is unbreakable.

When the conditions become difficult this love remains the same.

Instead of getting angry and impatient over something bad you did – this love remains the same as when you are doing good.

Instead of abandoning and giving up on you and your many mistakes – this love always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.

This unbreakable love never fails... even when you fail.

This love remains the same... from the crib, through grade school, through rebellious teenage years, through adulthood, through date 1, through engagement, through the wedding, through anniversary after anniversary, through success, through failure, through grey hair, through no hair, through a house full, through an empty nest, through retirement, through nursing homes, through sickness and weakness, through the grave and into eternity. This unbreakable love remains the same.

We look to scripture and the example of God's interaction with mankind to see how we should live our relationships. And we see that **God's love is unbreakable**

The Garden of Eden is a picture of God's ideal. He created the world just like he wanted it to be... He created the relationship between man and woman the exact way he wanted it to be. He created His relationship between mankind the exact way He wanted it to be. He placed mankind in charge of all creation – this was His plan... This was God's Ideal.

Love was present in the Garden. Between God, Man, & Woman. This was God's ideal.

It's a lot easier to live out love in perfect ideal conditions. But you'll never really know if your love is unbreakable until it is tested.

What happens when things aren't ideal? In the words of MTV's Real World... "What happens when people stop being polite... and start being real?"

What happens when God's Ideal meets Your Real? **God's Ideal Your Real**

We talked about God's ideal... His perfect environment... The best conditions for love

But what would happen after a conversation with a snake? What would happen after disobedience? What would happen after God's ideal for man gets shattered by sin?

Remember that the Hebrew word for sin is **HAMARTIA** and that word means – To miss the Mark.

To miss the mark of God's ideal is sin. If God's ideal is the target, to miss that target is sin.

Well what would happen after Hamartia, Sin enters in to mankind and we miss the mark of God's Ideal? What would change when God's Ideal meets Your Real?

God's Ideal Your Real

What if I told you very little changed. Other than Man's direct access to God nothing changed.

Mankind would still live by God's provision.

Mankind would still be in charge of creation.

Man & Woman were still created for each other.

And man's access to God changed because His Holy presence would have killed them... not out of anger but out of sheer nature. Sin and Holiness can't cohabitate the same space. (like fear and love from week 1)

God's love for mankind didn't change. Remember that an unbreakable love remains the same.

We are thankful for this... but... Love remaining the same doesn't really solve the problem...

Because of sin we are separated from God's ideal. With this scenario we are destined to always be separated... Because God must hold to His ideal... His holiness... His nature and we don't have the power to leave our real.

BUT watch God's example and learn how to heal a relationship.

God still holds on to His ideal but He steps into our real.

God has every right to stay in His ideal and leave us to our real. He has every right to play the "I told you so" card. He has every right to say "you made this bed, now lie in it."

But God's example teaches us that if we are ever going to reconcile a relationship we must step down from our ideal and into someone's real.

How many relationships were never healed because someone refused to step down from their ideal?

When you enter into a relationship with anyone you have an ideal condition for that relationship. Whether it is your spouse, your child, a friend, or a starbucks barista... you have an ideal.

Everyone has an ideal but we rarely live up to each other's ideal. So when we eventually don't live up to your ideal you can either let the relationship be broken or you can enter into my real.

God left His throne and stepped down into our reality.

There are relationships in disrepair because they need someone to humble themselves and stop keeping score...

Stop trying to win an argument and win a brother or sister back...

But I'm right... So what! But they're wrong... So what!

Romans 5:8 But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.(NIV)

God doesn't wait on the sidelines... waiting for you to change... He steps into your real...

God doesn't wait for you to admit your wrong... He steps into your real...

God isn't trying to win an argument... He's trying to save a relationship.

Are we trying to win arguments or save relationships?

God's Ideal Your Reals

God doesn't just sit on His heavenly throne and lecture us on His ideal and how we have fallen short... He steps down into our real.

Now get this... He steps into our real and loves us back to His ideal.

Jesus Christ is God wrapped in flesh... He is the full understanding of God's ideal in a human body...

He came up to drunkards and sick people and He loved them back towards God's ideal.

He came up to some outcast fishermen....

He stooped down to the ground and wrote in the dirt to rescue the woman caught in adultery...

He strongly rebuked the religious Pharisees... but it wasn't hatred... It was love... He was loving them back towards God's ideal.

This is what you should do in your relationships...

#1 The person did wrong but you decide you still love them even though they don't live up to your ideal...

#2 You humble yourself and step down into their real... (not prideful but humble)

#3 From this equal ground you love them back towards the ideal.

#4 The relationship is reconciled and you are both standing in the ideal again.

This is the picture of the Gospel. This is what God has always wanted for your relationships.

This is what He has always wanted for His Church... but the church hasn't been good at humility and stepping down into the reality of this broken world. We've been really good at lecturing from our ideal...

When missionaries go into a brand new culture that has never heard of Christ... Here is what they do...

They join the culture in every area they can... If the culture has some sort of festival or tradition the missionaries try to join in. There are even sometimes where it seems strange to us here in the states... like maybe the missionaries shouldn't be doing that... Like festivals honoring dead ancestors or dance celebrations... but the missionaries realize... WE HAVE TO STEP INTO THEIR REAL! They are willing to embrace people who aren't religions ideal.

They have to gain the right to be heard... they can't just lecture them about the God's ideal... they submerge themselves in the culture and love them towards the idea.

That's what Jesus did. That's what missionaries do. Redemption Church... That is what we will do.

You can do that in your home. You can do that in your friendships. You can even do this with your ex husband or wife...

There is like this cultural rule that says exes should hate each other... But we don't live by that rule.

Even those relationships can be reconciled. I'm not saying you will be restored back to husband and wife... but they can definitely be reconciled back to respect, honor, and care.

MUSICIAN

A Love that's not fragile

There is this notion that love is fragile and very breakable. But there is an unbreakable love. A love not based on condition. A love that says "I WILL DO ANYTHING FOR YOU."

And while humanity isn't always great at receiving and giving that kind of Love... God is great at it.

Do you understand God will do anything for you? Do you know He loves you with an unbreakable love?

You might be thinking... "But I don't know if I can love like that."

Do you understand that through His love, your love can be perfected?

Because of His love... you can forgive that person

Because of His love... you can step into their real

Because of His love... You can come to this altar today without fear that God is mad at you...