

“YOU MAKE ME CRAZY!” Breaking Free From Abuse
Lesson from Psalms, Adapted from Rick Warren Sermon Series
October 14-15, 2017

Over the last 3 weeks, we've been looking at the condition of dealing with difficult relationships. Each one of us has those individuals in our lives that know how to push our buttons to make life crazy for us. It's often the ones closest to us, the ones we love, but often it's those around us that we deal with on a regular basis. Week one we looked at these crazy makers and talked about the wisdom needed to deal with them. Week two I shared the ways people relate to us and make us crazy, and we looked at ways of disarming those button-pushers by controlling our anger and intentionally looking at influencing their lives. Week three we saw the problem of conflict in our lives and worked with seven steps of resolving conflict in our relationships in order to bring about reconciliation of those difficult relationships.

Today I want to deal with a very, very sensitive issue. It's a silent subject nobody wants to talk about, but it's an issue we need to address when we deal with broken relationships. That's the issue of abuse – physical, verbal, sexual and emotional abuse. The Bible tells us in 2 Timothy 3:1-5, *“Remember that there will be difficult times in the last days. People will be selfish, greedy, boastful, and conceited; they will be insulting, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, and irreligious; they will be unkind, merciless, slanderers, violent, and fierce; they will hate the good; they will be treacherous, reckless, and swollen with pride; they will love pleasure rather than God; they will hold to the outward form of our religion, but reject its real power. Keep away from such people.”* As in all other prophecy, we see this taking place all around us and abuse is growing rampant as an acceptable way of treating people. Just watch the news or the latest sit-com, or even the talk shows. Bashing people seems to be the in thing and abuse is at an all-time high.

Let me give you some really sobering statistics:

- * The leading cause of injury to women now in the world is domestic violence – from someone she know; someone in the family. It's more than the next three causes of injury combined – accidents, muggings and rapes.
- * Every nine seconds in the United States a woman is assaulted or beaten – EVERY 9 SECONDS!
- * Around the world, one in every three women has been beaten, coerced into sex, or abused in her lifetime. That's incredible!

- * One in five teenage girls have been in a relationship already where the boyfriend threatened violence or self harm if they broke up.
- * In a recent survey, 92% of all women surveyed listed reducing domestic abuse and sexual assault as their top concerns.
- * This one may surprise you – A survey done by the University of New Hampshire on a 32-nation study found that women now commit ½ of all partner violence. It's not one sided anymore. Women are just as likely to “commit emotional abuse” but male victims report it even less than women because women don't tend to report it.
- * America has three times more shelters for animals than for victims of domestic violence.

Physical and sexual abuses are pretty easy to identify, but emotional abuse is harder to pin down. How do you know if it's emotional abuse or not? It's much more subtle, and people make far more excuses for emotional abuse that goes on because you can get away with it a whole lot easier.

The Bible is literally filled with examples of abuse – sexual, physical, verbal and emotional. Let me give you a few examples: 1) Genesis 16:6 tells us that *Sarai (Abram's wife) was abusive to Hagar and so she ran away.*” (MSG) Sarah was so abusive to her handmaiden, Hagar, because she was pregnant and Sarah was not, that Hagar ran away. 2) In Samuel 25:25 we hear Abigail describing her husband, Nabal, pleading with David, “Don't dwell on what that brute Nabal did. He acts out the meaning of his name: Nabal, Fool. Foolishness oozes from him.” Nabal was an alcoholic, and was drunk when he had refused to help David after he had protected all of Nabal's animals and property from enemies. 3) In Job 19:1-3, Job talks about his tormentors (friends who had come to counsel him), those who were abusing him. He says, “Why do you keep tormenting me with words? Time after time you insult me and show no shame for the way you abuse me.”

The reason we need to deal with the abuse in our lives is because the damage done is a lifetime damage. Unless you learn to deal with it, you will carry that damage all of your life. So this message today is one of hope given to all of you so that you might break free from the abuse you might have experienced and recover from it. A recent U.S. government study revealed that those people in their twenties in the survey who had been abused as children, 80% still carry that pain and have had one or more emotional dysfunctions because of the unresolved pain from the abuse they experienced. It's like Job saying (30:27) “The churning inside me never stops; each day confronts me with more suffering.”

With these statistics, either you have experienced some kind of abuse in your own life or you know someone who has experienced abuse. That's why it is important to know the steps to break free from abuse and recover from the pain of it. There's no single passage that says, "Here are all the steps," but there are literally dozens and dozens of Scriptures that deal with the principles of what we must do when we have been abused by someone else. So I want to share these seven steps with you today.

The first step in breaking free from abuse, no matter what kind of abuse it is, **#1 DON'T KEEP IT A SECRET**. Nothing is going to change until you take step one. Don't keep it a secret.

It's natural for us to be secretive about the abuse we've experienced. But the Bible tells us that we have to share our pain with somebody we trust who can help us break free from it. Don't hide it; don't conceal it; don't pretend it's not there; don't fake it; don't ignore it; don't close your eyes to it. What you need to do is to talk about it.

One of the sayings in recovery is "You're only as sick as your secrets." Our secrets make us sick, so the way to deal with that illness is to let it out. "Revealing your feeling is the beginning of healing." Whatever emotion you've got inside – it may be worry, or fear, or boredom, or anger, or loneliness, or depression, or anger, or resentment, or jealousy or envy or whatever is dominating your life – revealing your feeling is the beginning of healing. If you can't talk about it, it's already out of control in your life. If you're afraid to talk about it, it's already dominating and controlling your life. The starting point is don't keep it a secret. You've got to share it with somebody, somebody who can help you break free from it.

Jesus said in **John 8:32, "The truth will set you free."** The way we get free from it is to first face it by admitting it and opening up. Abuse is the silent epidemic because it's the big pink elephant in many, many marriages that nobody wants to talk about. It may have been in the family you grew up in, it may be in the family you're in right now, but we just don't want to talk about it. And people suffer in silence. In fact, between 55% and 95% of women who have been abused by their partners have never told anybody. **NOBODY!** And it's even greater in men. We just don't want to talk about it.

You see, abuse does a crazy thing in our minds – it creates shame in us, and we don't want to talk about it. But the most important thing you need to hear if you've suffered abuse as a child or a teen or an adult, it's

not your fault. IT'S NOT YOUR FAULT. "Yeah but I..." **It's not your fault!** You are not responsible for the wrong, sinful actions of somebody else. It's not your fault! The abuser must accept responsibility for their own actions – his or hers – It's not your fault.

We're going to look at King David today because if anybody understood abuse it was King David. In the Old Testament, King David was the king who wrote most of the book of Psalms. He spent much of his life dealing with abuse, because there were people who wanted to hurt him, Kill him, and abuse him. There were people who wanted to defame him, ridicule him and discredit him – all different kinds of abuse. In over 100 passages in the book of Psalms, David expresses his hurt, his frustration, his fear, his depression, and his anger at his enemies. He used the word "enemies" over and over – at least 92 times in the New International Version. He talks about the abuse that they heaped on his life for most of his life. I'll show examples in just a minute.

But one of the things we learn from David right off the bat for modeling in the Bible is this: Don't hold it in. It's so important that you talk about it and let it go. Get that secret out! In **Psalm 39:1-4** David explains what happened when he tried to keep it a secret. **David: "I said, 'I will not say anything while evil people are**

near.' So I kept quiet, not saying a word...but my suffering only grew worse, and I was overcome with

anxiety. The more I thought, the more troubled I became; I could not keep from asking, 'Lord, how long will I

live? When will I die? Tell me how soon my life will end.'" (TEV) (Keep on screen for the next part, please)

This is a classic response to abuse, so notice 4 things that happens when you hold it in. 1) He's afraid to talk about it in the presence of his abusers. He says, I don't want to say anything "while the evil people are near." He was afraid to talk about it in front of those who were causing the abuse because they might hurt him even more. 2) His silence makes it worse. "I kept quiet...but only grew worse." When you keep abuse a secret, the suffering only grows worse. 3) The pain internalized into panic. "I was overcome with anxiety." If you find yourself having panic attacks, or you're overcome with worry, or you're anxious all the time, or you are fearful or afraid, chances are that all of these things are from the pain of abuse pushed down, again and again. When you deal with the root issue and you deal with the pain from abuse, the anxiety vanishes. It goes away. 4) David says, "...the more I thought, the more troubled I became and I started asking, 'How long will I live? When will I die? How soon will my life end?'" He begins to be obsessed with death. So many people consider

suicide because they think it's the only way out. They're trapped, abused and can't get out of it and they have no power over the situation. The only way out they think is to take their life.

Now if you're feeling this right now, God cares about it. This church cares about it. I care about it. And there is hope. You don't have to stay in that cycle of pain, anxiety, or fear, thinking that it's the only way out. **THERE ARE OTHER WAYS TO DEAL WITH THIS ISSUE!** But you have got to speak up. Stop being silent! Get it on the table! You've got to deal with it and bring it into the light.

The second thing the Bible teaches us to do is **#2 NAME THE ABUSE**. Name it! Identify it! Be specific! You need to recognize it and call it what it is. You've been sinned against; you've been abused! You may need some help with this from somebody whom you can trust, someone who's wise. All too often you're too close to the situation so you can't see what's really going on, particularly in emotional abuse. If you've been emotionally abused by parents or peers or somebody over and over again, you may not get it because you might begin to believe that this is the way that life really is. So you aren't going to see it. Someone else needs to help you spot it from an objective standpoint.

There are over a hundred references to different marks of emotional abuse. I want to lift up just 8 today to show you 8 common characteristics of emotional abuse. I want you to write a word next to each of the sentences, since these are hallmarks of emotional abuse. If these are in your life, you're being abused. Here's what David says his "enemies" do:

1. **Psalm 102:8 says, "My enemies taunt me day after day. They mock and curse me."** Circle the word "taunt." That means they are always picking on you. They're always provoking you and they won't leave you in peace. They're constantly taunting you. Here's the word to write down – **Aggravation**. You just get aggravated at people because they're taunting you all day. They mock you, they curse you, they taunt you, they pick on you, they provoke you, and they're always after you. That's aggravation.

2. **Psalm 109:20 says, "They tell lies about me and they threaten me."** Circle "they threaten me." That's **intimidation**. When you have people in your life who are always making threats, that's intimidation. They threaten you with violence, or with leaving you, or giving you a lawsuit. It can happen at work, at school,

in your neighborhood, or in your home. This is emotional abuse! Its intimidations – always making threats in order to scare you into compliance. That’s intimidation.

3. The third mark is **denigration**, when they’re always putting you down. **Psalm 22:7 says “They make fun of me and they ridicule me.”** Circle “they ridicule me.” Now I’m not talking about good natured teasing here. Teasing can be a sign of love because it’s good natured and you know that person loves you or wants your attention. I’m talking about mean spirited scorn and derision. They intentionally ridicule you and belittle you and put you down and constantly attack you and heap scorn on you. That’s denigration.

4. **Psalm 69:19 says, “I’ve been insulted, put to shame and humiliated.”** The fourth mark of emotional abuse is **humiliation**. Shame is a favorite tool of abusers. They demean you, they dishonor you, and they disgrace you. So we have aggravation, intimidation, denigration and humiliation.

5. **Manipulation**. Manipulation is when they’re trying to control you. They’re bullying you around. **Psalm 73:8 says it clearly, “They jeer, they use words to kill; they bully their way with words.”** Have you ever been bullied with words? They’re trying to manipulate you by what they say. That’s emotional abuse.

6. Psalm 118:13 gives us the sixth mark of emotional abuse. **“They push hard to make me fall.”** This is **domination** - they push hard. Domination is trying to control you in every kind of way. They are always pushing at you. It’s a power play. Everything is about control, or who’s in charge, who’s number one, who’s pulling the strings. They turn everything into a power play. They’re trying to make you fall so that they can be above you, and in control of you. That’s domination.

7. In **Psalm 31:13 David says, “They spread rumors about me, and conspire against me.”** That’s **defamation**. They’re trying to make you look bad at everything so they defame, they gossip, they spread rumors so that they might embarrass you. It happens on the internet all the time. People are emotionally abusing others by defaming them and despoiling them and disgracing them and embarrassing them. All of these are happening on the news nightly to our president. Just listen to how the press treats President Trump. There’s a lot of fake news being told in order to defame him and make him look bad. Anyway, that’s defamation.

8. The last emotional mark is **condemnation**. **Psalm 35:16 states it well, “They mock me with the**

worst kind of profanity; and they snarl at me.” This means they use vulgarity and profanity and cursing for shock value. They like to drop the “f” bomb. They like to drop other cuss words. They like to use crude slang about a part of your body or about who you are or they call you this or that, some crude name they picked up by watching MTV or something. Its condemnation – they mock with the worst kind of profanity.

Friends, if any of these words describe the environment that you are in, let me just tell you real clearly **YOU ARE BEING EMOTIONALLY ABUSED**. This is not good natured stuff here, and what you need to do is to admit it (1) and you need to name it (2). You need to call it for what it is. You need to point out that’s exactly what it is. It’s not playfulness. It’s meanness and meant to harm you. It’s malicious, emotional abuse.

The third step in recovering and breaking free from abuse **#3 DON’T MINIMIZE IT! DON’T**

RATIONALIZE IT. Ephesians 5:6 says, “Don’t be fooled by those who try to excuse these sins, for the anger of God comes upon all those who disobey Him.”

To not minimize the abuse you **HAVE TO STOP SAYING**, “He/she was just having a bad day.” Or “I brought it on myself.” Or “There are so many good things about him/her.” You don’t minimize it, you don’t rationalize it. It’s not your fault so don’t take the blame for it or make it less than it is. **ABUSE IS ABUSE!**

When you think about abuse, sometimes it seems like the abuser is the person who is strong. It’s important to remember that when somebody is practicing abuse it’s always because they feel deep insecurity and a deep sense of being powerless in their life. That insecurity, that powerlessness in their life, is causing them to want to abuse other people in their life.

I never knew my grandfather on my father’s side. Although he died only a few years ago, I never knew him because he was abusive to my father when he was growing up. My Dad was the oldest child in his family with 3 other brothers and one sister. When my grandfather would come home at night, he was often drunk, and he took out his anger on my grandmother and my Dad. Dad became a favorite whipping boy. That happened up to the point when my Dad was old enough and big enough to stand up to his father and protect his mom from the abuse. My grandmother went to the police and my grandfather was forced to leave the house and move to another community. Neither my grandmother nor my Dad minimized the abuse; they named it, they exposed it beyond the house, they told the authorities, and peace came to the family. Though the lasting effects of that

abuse changed the lives of each person in the family, calling it out, naming it and refusing to rationalize the abuse began the healing process of the abuse on my Dad. My grandfather continued to drink throughout his life so my Dad protected my brothers, sister and I by never taking us to see him. My Dad broke the cycle by calling it as it was – abuse – and dealing with it. And although I never got to know my grandfather, I am so glad and proud of my Dad and grandmother for them standing up to the abuse and getting out of it so that peace could endure.

If you're in a relationship filled with abuse, don't minimize it or rationalize it away. Deal with it. It's not fun to talk about abuse. We don't like to admit that it's there. We don't like to face it, because everything in us wants to deny that it's happening. I pray that God would give you the strength you need to make the steps to get out of that abuse. Remember how God feels about abuse. Read the twelve Minor Prophets at the end of the Old Testament and see how God's anger is toward those who practice injustice or abuse, especially to those who are weaker in society. They used their strength, physical strength or political strength, to abuse other people. God says "I am angry at this. I'm going to judge this." "...*the anger of God comes upon all those who disobey Him*" (Eph. 5:6). Don't be confused by people who try to excuse their sins, who try to rationalize it or justify it. God hates abuse and that makes Him very, very angry.

So the fourth step to break free from abuse is **#4 HELP THOSE IN IT TO A SAFE PLACE IF**

NECESSARY. People in abusive situations may need to get out of the situation. Help them to a safe place.

Let me say this as clearly as I can. As your pastor I love you very much. Read my lips if you have to: **If you are being physically or sexually abused, you need to get out NOW! Not tomorrow morning. TONIGHT! Not the next day. TODAY! You need to get out NOW!** There is not a single verse in the Bible that says a child or wife or husband has to remain in a situation where their life is threatened or they're sexually abused.

There's not a single verse in the Bible, and anybody who tells you that is perverting Scripture. It's just not there. **You need to get out of that relationship right now!** You say, "But Pastor Warren, I'm married!" I didn't say divorce him now. I didn't say that at all. The Bible says that God hates divorce. There have been miracles taken place in the lives of people where marriages were put back together after a major separation –

many, many times. I'm not talking about divorce here. I'm suggesting and encouraging a separation for the purpose of reconciliation. Sometimes a separation is needed to get the person's attention so that the reconciliation process can begin as the issues are dealt with and restoration of the marriage happens.

If you are in a situation where you are being physically or sexually abused, or a child is, you need to report it and you need to get out of it right now. Then you pray and you make other steps to renew your marriage. God is in the business of making new lives for those who seek Him. So to get a new marriage you have to start the process and God will begin the making of that brand new marriage - a whole new family where God has changed you and them.

So how do you help a friend? If someone tells you that they're going through abuse – physical, sexual, verbal, emotional, how can you help them? 1) You start by encouraging them to report it, talk about it. There are laws protecting people from abuse when it comes to children or spouse abuse. We have laws to protect us.

2) You strive to understand the pain that they're in and put yourself in their shoes. Empathize with them. Hebrews 13:3 tells us that we are to “*remember those who are in prison AS IF we were there in prison with them.*” We're to pray with them and care for them and love them as if we were right there with them. And the second half of verse 3 says, “And look on victims of abuse as if what's happened to them happened to you.” So you're to take the abuse of another person as seriously as if it were happening to you. You're not to stand by and do nothing or say nothing. You are to act as if it were happening to you! In Galatians 6:2 God commands us “Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ.”

Abuse doesn't just happen at home – it also takes place at work, in the office, at school and in the neighborhood. As Christians we need to be ready to stand up, to defend and protect the abused and the victims wherever they are. If anybody is to be on the right side of love and the right side of the law, it is to be Christians on this issue. Not “It's none of my business.”

It is our business. If we care, if we love, if we call ourselves a Christian, IT IS OUR BUSINESS! If you see anybody abused anywhere, step up and take action. Domestic abuse is rampant. Human trafficking is big business. Abuse in our world today is at an all-time high, AND WE NEED TO DO SOMETHING ABOUT IT! We can't stand back and watch as people are destroyed by injustice and abuse. We've got to stand up for it

and confront it and report it and do something about it. How will it get better if WE don't step up and confront it and begin the process of reconciliation? Rescue the victims! Work with the abusers! Show love by getting involved! The abusers are often victims of abuse themselves. They are hurting, and often that's all they know. We have to begin to make the difference both for the abused and the abuser..

But a very important step that the Bible teaches is **#5 DON'T CONFRONT AN ABUSER BY YOURSELF**. Don't leave here and say to yourself, "I'm going to go home and confront this issue" by yourself. That's not healthy or wise. You're in trouble if you confront the abuser by yourself. You need someone with you to corroborate your words and to protect you from even more abuse.

King Solomon, the wisest man that has lived on the earth, talks about the wisdom of doing the difficult things together. He says that it's better to work as a team to face an abuser. **Ecclesiastes 4:12 says, "By yourself you are unprotected. With a friend you can face the worst. Can you get a third person? A three-stranded rope is not easily snapped."** In other words, sometimes you need a group intervention to bring about the best result. But don't go in with guns blazing. Go in and deal with the situation in a humane and loving manner, as you would want another to confront you. But you deal with the truth of the abuse. You turn the light on in the midst of the darkness of the abuse. You expose the secrets, because when you turn the light on and expose the evil, all of a sudden healing starts taking place. It's not going to happen when it's hidden in the dark. Healing takes place in the light.

Ephesians 5:11-13 says it like this: "Take no part in the worthless deeds of evil with darkness; instead, rebuke and expose them. It is shameful even to talk about the things that ungodly people do in secret. But when the light shines on them, it becomes clear how evil these things are. When your light shines, it will expose their evil deeds." So you expose the abuse, you shine the light in the situation with a team of people with you. Don't try to do it by yourself.

The sixth step in recovery from abuse is **#6 BEGIN THE HEALING PROCESS**. This can be referred to as the recovery process and is often done in twelve step programs. When you look at them, the Beatitudes of Jesus in Matthew 5 are the twelve steps of recovery summarized by Jesus. There are local programs available

for you to find recovery to help you out, and if you don't find anything that fits, contact me and we'll get something started here at Fountain Park UMC. You are important enough to find healing.

In the Bible, Job had some advice given to him by one of his friends about five thousand years ago. It still makes sense today if you're struggling with the pain of abuse. Job was in a lot of pain from the abuse he'd been through. His friend said, **“Job, put your heart right. Reach out to God. Put away any evil and wrong from your home. Then face the world again, firm and courageous. Then all of your troubles will fade from your memory, like floods that are past and remembered no more. Your life will be brighter than the sunshine at noon, and life's darkest hours will shine like the dawn”** (Job 11:13-17 TEV). That's what I want for your life right now, for all of your troubles to fade away, remembering them no more. I want those memories of abuse to fade from your memory like the receding waters of a flood, to be remembered no more. I want your life to shine like the sun at noon. I want those darkest hours of your life to be replaced with the dawn of new life.

But for that to happen there are steps that need to be taken. To **put your heart right** means that you make the courageous decision to do what's right, exposing the secret, speaking up and letting others help you. I pray that you will have the courage to begin to speak up.

Then **reach out to God**, turn to Jesus, for He is your Savior. He came to save you from your abuse. He came to save you from your sins, not just the sins against you, but from your sins too. He came to save you in every area of your life.

Then **put away the evil and wrong from your home**. Get away from the evil. Get it out of your house, and get it out of your life. Clean house if you have to, and that means relationally, emotionally, whatever is necessary to make your home clean and safe again. You've got to get away from the abuse.

Then **you get help** and you gain hope. The hope is that the troubles will fade from your memory like floods that are past and remembered no more. There's no reason for you to suffer in silence one moment longer.

Finally, there's one other thing you have to do to get healed: **#7 LET GOD SETTLE THE SCORE**. Don't you get even! Don't you retaliate! Don't try to hurt them back. Don't get resentful and try tit for tat – they hurt me so now I'm going to hurt them. That's not going to work. Let God settle the score.

When you have a relationship with somebody, you've got three potential positions. You can be beneath them morally. You can be on the same plane as they are morally. Or you can take the moral high ground and actually be better than them.

You see, I want you to be better than them. If they hurt you and you've done nothing to them, but they hurt you, they are worse than you. If they hurt you and you hurt them back, then you just get even and you are their same level. Whenever you get even, you are no better than the perpetrator. You're no better than the abuser, you're just even – you're at their same level, and you're no better than they are. But when you forgive them, you're better than they are. You're on the higher plane. You are morally better because you forgive them. Jesus tells us to forgive them and have mercy on them.

[Peter 3:9 tells us, "Never pay one wrong with another, or one abusive word with another; instead repay with a blessing. That is what you are called to do, so that you inherit a blessing."] If you want God's blessing, you've got to be different. You can't do what they did; you've got to be different.

Let me explain: If you have been abused physically or sexually or verbally or emotionally, and maybe you're in a situation right now, there's one person in the entire universe who understands you completely. He understands abuse more than anybody else. His name is Jesus Christ. The Bible says that "*He was wounded and crushed for our sins. He was beaten and bruised so that we could have peace. He was mocked and whipped so we could be healed.*" (Isaiah 53:6)

If you've never met Jesus, your healing starts here. May I introduce you to your healer? His name is Jesus. Nobody has been abused more than He was. He knows the pain because He took the sin of the entire world including the guilt for the abuse that was done to you. That guilt He took on Himself and died for the punishment of that sin. He took every abuse ever done and took it on Himself and He died for that so that I could be forgiven, so that you could be forgiven, so that we could have peace, so that we could be healed. You've got to meet the healer to be healed from the abuse. You're not going to get healed on your own. Only Jesus can heal you of that verbal, physical, emotional, spiritual, and sexual abuse. He understands! He knows! He feels the pain! Psalm 34:18 says, "*The Lord is close to the brokenhearted, and He saves those who have been crushed.*"

So the starting point in your healing is you need to get to know your healer. You need to say, “Christ Jesus, I don’t know how You did this but You took the guilt for every sin in the world – the ones done to me and the ones done by me. And you took it on Yourself. You took that abuse, and You took that beating, and you took that bruising – You took all of the mean, evil things that were said throughout history and you took them all on Yourself on the cross. I want to learn to love you, and I want to ask You to come in and heal my heart and heal my mind and heal my body.” AND HE WILL!

Jesus never retaliated against those who abused Him. He forgave them. 1 Peter 2:23 says, “Christ never

verbally abused those who verbally abused Him. When He suffered, He didn’t make any threats but left

everything to the One who judges fairly. One day God is going to balance the books and settle the score. One day He will right all of the wrongs. He can do a whole lot better job at settling the score than I can. So we are to leave it in His hands because He is God and we are not.

So we are to forgive and get our lives back in order and let God settle the score. BUT we are to break the cycle of abuse because it is inherited from one generation to another. People who are abused tend to abuse their own families. Somebody’s got to break the chain. May it be you! You start right now, by the power of the Holy Spirit, to find healing and new life, and break that cycle of abuse so you don’t pass it along.

Let’s pray. Father, I want to thank you for each person here today. I pray a blessing on each of them. I pray a blessing of courage that this week, many will say “I’m not keeping it a secret anymore.” I pray that they will name the abuse, that they don’t minimize it, that they won’t rationalize it, and that they will find a safe place to escape from it. Help us to get the courage to deal with other people who can help us make a plan to grow to health and healing. Save my life, Lord Jesus! Save my relationships. Let the healing process begin right now. And God, let us let YOU settle the score. We pray this in Jesus holy Name. AMEN