

Easter Message Outline

Visuals of wasteland, broken pieces. What do you see in this picture? It's obvious to see that it's broken, it's not what it once was. And if you look even longer you might be able to picture what it was like before, or how beautiful it could be. There's potential in these broken pieces to be something really beautiful. As people, we have this almost like a super power, this ability to see something and know that it was meant for more. That just because something lays in ruins, doesn't mean all hope is gone, or that it's the end, but rather it can be a starting point for redemption. There's a longing in all of us, a desire for more, for healing, for wholeness and peace. It's because we were created by the God who redeems you and I were created in His image.

Ecclesiastes 3:11 Yet God has made everything beautiful for its own time. He has planted eternity in the human heart, but even so, people cannot see the whole scope of God's work from beginning to end."

God has planted eternity in our hearts. Which means we were designed, hard wired for peace, justice, wholeness, to be set apart, for beauty that things on earth just can't quite give us.

Have you ever just found yourself just looking to the next thing to satisfy you? It's like when you think to yourself, okay, once i get to this point in my life, to graduate, this scholarship, this person to notice me on the way from math to english, make varsity, fill in the blank, then I will have made it, then I'll have peace. But it's never enough. Like when you finally hit a PR in the gym, and you just want to keep working for more. For me, I think that if I can have the perfect routine, if I can just please the right people, if I can work hard enough to be successful then I'll be good. But when life hits, and hard work runs out, things don't turn out like I hoped, or even when they do, it has a tendency of leaving me feeling unfulfilled, unsatisfied and thinking surely we were made for more. If you've felt this way, you aren't alone, you were made for more, lean in and we are going to unpack this together.

Quote from C.S. Lewis, a famous theologian and author, says, "If I find in myself desires which nothing in this world can satisfy, (like we just talked about) the only logical explanation is that I was made for another world."

What were we made for? We were made for Shalom. What is Shalom? It's complete wholeness, peace, unity, in our own spirit and in creation. It's the joining together of God, humanity, and all creation in justice, fulfillment, and goodness.

And that's exactly where the creation story begins. **In perfect Shalom.** You and I were created by God, in His image created and called to do good works that he prepared in advance. To love God, love others and make a difference. And at the time of creation, in the garden, creation and humanity with God could be described as Shalom.. But, because of pride, putting ourself first, and wanting to literally be God, we sinned. And when Adam and Eve disobeyed God in the garden, sin enters the picture. and along with it comes shame, brokenness, death and separation from the goodness of God. That's when we lost Shalom.

And because Shalom was disrupted, we, humanity, have been desperately grasping, trying to get back what we lost, by taking matters into our own hands. On our own we keep coming up short. And we find ourselves looking for answers, or direction specifically from the people around us. And that's not a bad thing! There are some incredible leaders in your life, pastors, influencers, teachers, coaches who can point us to Jesus. Today, as we read in the Bible, God's chosen people, Israel, are looking for a king to give them that direction, to bring restoration to come and fix what they got going on.

The problem was, they didn't need one, because God was their King, but history has a tendency of repeating itself and just like in the beginning of the story, God wasn't enough for them.

Now, a little bit of context, in the ancient world, kings played a vital role in overseeing their nation's religion, military and their economy, i.e. money. So Israel thinks that sounds pretty good ... they ask God for that.

4 Finally, all the elders of Israel met at Ramah to discuss the matter with Samuel.(the prophet)
5 "Look," they told him, "you are now old, and your sons are not like you. Give us a king to judge us like all the other nations have." Samuel was displeased with their request and went to the Lord for guidance. 7 "Do everything they say to you." the Lord replied, "for they are rejecting me, not you. They don't want me to be their king any longer. 1 Samuel 8:4-7.

So the people of God, request a king. The crazy thing is, even though they didn't have great motives, God still gave them what they wanted, a king. But God is just that kind to listen to his people and consider their request.

And now we see Saul step onto the scene and he is the first of 3 kings we are going to look at today. And you are going to see a common theme with all of them. See if you can catch it.

Saul - the first king of Israel, just the kind of guy that you would think would be king. Like if you looked up King in the dictionary, Saul's picture would be there. The bible describes him as a wealthy influential man, "the most handsome man in Israel-head and shoulders taller than anyone else in the land." 1 Samuel 9:2 NLT Saul had a lot going for him, and he started off strong as a great king. He took the worship of God seriously. But, as time went on, Saul's disobedience and impatience got the best of him.

Saul was supposed to wait for Samuel before making sacrifices to God and marching into battle, but after seven days, he saw his troops getting impatient and in order to keep his troops happy. He disobeyed God and made a sacrifice in his own time and his own way. I like to think he was more concerned about people's approval than obedience to God.

"You have not kept the command the Lord your God gave you. Had you kept it, the Lord would have established your kingdom over Israel forever. But now your kingdom must end, for the

Lord has sought out a man after his own heart. The Lord has already appointed him to be the leader of his people, because you have not kept the Lord's command." 1 Samuel 13:8-14.

Saul's disobedience and impatience actually cost him the kingdom. Yikes.

Hooks: Have you ever taken the easy way out, or done something impulsive just to please the people around you? You really want this group of friends to like you, and you know it's not right, but you choose gossip, or talk down on someone, just to make yourself look better. This happens more than we realize.

So God started to raise up another king, **King David**. And yes, this is the same David that took out the giant, Goliath as a shepherd boy with a slingshot and a stone. God was raising him up to be the next king of Israel. David was strong, courageous, and devoted to God. During his time as king, he would lead the entire nation of Israel to become a military powerhouse. He was super successful, he put God first and served him faithfully until he didn't..because starting well is a lot easier than finishing well. You might see the theme start to develop here.

2 Samuel 11:1-4 NLT. 1 In the spring of the year, when kings normally go out to war(David wasn't where he was supposed to be, should have been out fighting with his people, leading them, but he stayed home, and y'all he was taking a nap!)...David stayed behind in Jerusalem. 2 Late one afternoon, after his midday rest, David got out of bed and was walking on the roof of the palace. As he looked out over the city, he noticed a woman of unusual beauty taking a bath. 3 He sent someone to find out who she was, and he was told, "She is Bathsheba, the daughter of Eliam and the wife of Uriah the Hittite." 4 Then David sent messengers to get her; and when she came to the palace, he slept with her.

After this moment things start to snowball and it's just a series of unfortunate events. Bathsheba ends up pregnant, and David has her husband, who was out fighting, killed to try and cover up his mistake. Bad to worse. *I wonder if you can relate to David, where one mistake leads to another to another to another and you look up one day and wonder, how did I get here?*

Just like Saul, King David started strong, but didn't finish strong.

Starting to see the theme yet? Let's look at one more king. **King Solomon**. He's actually David's son. And the great thing about Solomon was that he was determined and had enough humility to recognize that Saul and David both screwed up, so he needed to ask God for help so he could succeed where they failed. So, he asks God specifically for wisdom.

1 Kings 3:7,9 NLT 7"Now, O Lord my God, you have made me king instead of my father, David, but I am like a little child who doesn't know his way around... 9 Give me an understanding heart so that I can govern your people well and know the difference between right and wrong. For who by himself is able to govern this great people of yours?"

God is pleased with his request, so pleased that he blesses him with wisdom but also gives him things he doesn't ask for like wealth, long life and a great reputation. Under King Solomon, Israel thrives and they enjoy a time of peace and prosperity. Again, great start, but unfortunately it doesn't end well.

God commanded the people of Israel not to get married to the people of the surrounding nations because they worshiped false gods, and engaged in wicked practices, and would lead people of Israel to do the same! **And unfortunately this was Solomon's downfall.**

1 Kings 11:1-3 NLT Now King Solomon loved many foreign women. Besides Pharaoh's daughter, he married women from Moab, Ammon, Edom, Sidon, and from among the Hittites. The Lord had clearly instructed the people of Israel, "You must not marry them, because they will turn your hearts to their gods." Yet Solomon insisted on loving them anyway. ³ He had 700 wives of royal birth and 300 concubines. And in fact, they did turn his heart away from the Lord.

Solomon was led away by lust and power, so much so that he allowed false gods to be worshipped, there were even times where that resulted in human sacrifices to these gods. At this point, I don't know about you but this is getting ridiculous. How does this happen? How could these kings fall that far?

Solomon, David and Saul, just like you and me, were infected by sin.

We started with King Saul, who let disobedience and impatience get the best of him, and then King David, a man after God's own heart, was not where he was supposed to be and one bad decision led to another to another and he ended up in a place he never intended, and Solomon who received wisdom from God, chose to lean on his own understanding and his heart ended up corrupt and far from God. Each of these kings started strong, but didn't end strong.

What do you see in this picture? it's broken, not what it should be. But remember, these are just the right ingredients for God to bring restoration.

And that's exactly what the Easter story is all about. Unlike Saul, Jesus didn't cut corners, or try to please people, He came to save them. Jesus entered the world, the disrupted shalom, fully God and fully man, completely obedient to God. Jesus was tempted in every way, but he never sinned. Unlike David, Jesus didn't use his power to take advantage of others, He came to serve others and to lay down his life as the perfect sacrifice for our sins, when it would have been easy for him to take another way, He chose to take the punishment for you and me. Something that no earthly king could have done. And he went to battle with sin and death. And Jesus didn't just start strong but he finished strong because, after three days in the tomb, he rose from the grave,, defeating death and sin forever, so that we could have forgiveness, freedom and redemption, and our broken relationship with God could be restored. And his invitation for forgiveness is available for you right now.

So, how do we respond to all of this? **Live like Jesus is King.** Because He is.

For some of you ... Time to actually make Jesus the King of your life. You've been believing the lie that you are too broken to come to Jesus, that you've done too much, you're too far gone and that's just not the case. Bringing your life and all your brokenness to Jesus and trusting him with everything, because he is the only one who has the power to redeem. And if you've found yourself looking for other things or people to satisfy you let today be the day that Jesus becomes your King.

For others of you ... You started strong, at some point you put yourself on the throne of your life, today is the day to get back on track, to put Jesus back on the throne. Maybe you've been lying to cover up mistakes, leaning on your own understanding, or compromising your values and your faith just to please the people around you, or you're asking yourself how did I get here, hope is not lost for you. It's time to **live like Jesus is King**.

Jesus is like no other king, he is the King of Kings, the Lord of Lords, he gives grace upon grace and he loves you and is for you today. And we have this hope, in our King who is coming again to finish what he started - to put the world back together and establish a Kingdom that will never end. Because Jesus is the perfect King of Kings. And He is making all things brand new.

Let's Pray.