

Turning Obstacles Into Opportunities

We have to remember how it all started:

Acts 23:11, Acts 9:1-2

How our past changes our present and future:

Acts 23:11, Acts 9:1-22, Mark 12:28-31, John 15:1-17, Ephesians 2:8-9, 1 John 4:19, James 2:15-17

True love has a _____, and it isn't _____.

Our response to God's love is measured by our _____ and how we _____.

Christian love is an _____, not a _____ or an _____.

True grace and mercy are things we can only _____ once we have _____.

The difference between an _____ and an _____ is found in our _____.

Courage is a _____ based on knowing God can work _____.

Our opportunity to be God's answer today:

Reminder: If you would like to give a special offering to support the work being done in Ecuador that Pastor Chris mentioned, donate online at northcoastchurch.com/ecuador. Thank you!

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True love has a **SOURCE**, and it isn't **US**.

Our response to God's love is measured by our **OBEDIENCE TO HIM** and how we **TREAT OTHERS**.

Christian love is an **ACTION**, not a **FEELING** or an **EMOTION**.

True grace and mercy are things we can only **PASS ON** once we have **RECEIVED THEM**.

The difference between an **OBSTACLE** and an **OPPORTUNITY** is found in our **PERSPECTIVE**.

Courage is a **DECISION** based on knowing God can work **IN ALL SITUATIONS**.

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Life Group Study Questions

For the week of February 14, 2021

(Questions and Scriptures for further study & discussion)

QUICK REVIEW

Looking back at your notes from this week's teaching, was there anything you heard for the first time or something that caught your attention, challenged or confused you?

MY STORY

1. It's Valentines' week! What are seven things you love? How might this list be different if you wrote it ten years ago?
2. Can you think of a time you did something you thought you'd never have the courage to do or ended up enjoying something you thought you'd never like?
3. Can you think of any situations in your life (small or large) when someone else's courage to do what God was calling them to do (or not do) encouraged you to do the same? If so, explain.

DIGGING DEEPER

1. Joshua, the leader of the Israelites had an "obstacle-to-opportunity" encounter with God similar to what we heard about Paul in this weekend's message (Acts 9:1-22). Read about it in Joshua 5:13-6:21. What catches your attention in regard to "Turning Obstacles Into Opportunities?"

Imagine for a moment you are part of the army that marched around the city walls of Jericho for six days listening to horns being blown, but seeing no progress at all on the walls' destruction. On the seventh day, you are following God's direction, you are six and a half laps into a seven-lap march, and you still haven't seen one rock fall or even begin to move. You are tired, doubtful, frustrated and questioning if obedience is really worth it. Can you relate? If so, explain.

How do the following verses encourage you to keep going on the seventh lap of hoping to see the opportunity on the other side of the obstacle?

1 Corinthians 15:58 New International Version (NIV)

⁵⁸ Therefore, my dear brothers and sisters, stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain.

2 Timothy 4:6-8 New International Version (NIV)

⁶ For I am already being poured out like a drink offering, and the time for my departure is near. ⁷ I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. ⁸ Now there is in store for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day—and not only to me, but also to all who have longed for his appearing.

James 5:10-11 New International Version (NIV)

¹⁰ Brothers and sisters, as an example of patience in the face of suffering, take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord. ¹¹ As you know, we count as blessed those who have persevered. You have heard of Job's perseverance and have seen what the Lord finally brought about. The Lord is full of compassion and mercy.

Galatians 6:7-10 New International Version (NIV)

⁷ Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows. ⁸ Whoever sows to please their flesh, from the flesh will reap destruction; whoever sows to please the Spirit, from the Spirit will reap eternal life. ⁹ Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up. ¹⁰ Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers.

Which two verses are most helpful for you to keep moving forward and why?

2. Many times when we think about courage or turning an obstacle into an opportunity for impact, we think of over-the-top, "superhero/bigger than life" type of moments (saving someone in distress, giving a speech to a crowd to stand up for justice, etc.) and miss that opportunities for courage and impact may actually be more commonplace than we think. As you read the Scripture below, list what it's calling us to do and why courage might be needed to put what it says into action.

Matthew 5:21–24 New International Version (NIV)

²¹ "You have heard that it was said to the people long ago, 'You shall not murder, and anyone who murders will be subject to judgment.' ²² But I tell you that anyone who is angry with a brother or sister will be subject to judgment. Again, anyone who says to a brother or sister, 'Raca,' is answerable to the court. And anyone who says, 'You fool!' will be in danger of the fire of hell. ²³ "Therefore, if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother or sister has something against you, ²⁴ leave your gift there in front of the altar. First go and be reconciled to them; then come and offer your gift.

Matthew 5:44–45 New International Version (NIV)

⁴⁴ But I tell you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, ⁴⁵ that you may be children of your Father in heaven. He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous.

Hebrews 3:13 New International Version (NIV)

¹³ But encourage one another daily, as long as it is called "Today," so that none of you may be hardened by sin's deceitfulness.

1 Timothy 6:18-19 New International Version (NIV)

¹⁸ Command them to do good, to be rich in good deeds, and to be generous and willing to share. ¹⁹ In this way they will lay up treasure for themselves as a firm foundation for the coming age, so that they may take hold of the life that is truly life.

Which of these verses is the best reminder for you that you can make a difference?

Is there one you need to focus on more than the others this next week?

TAKING IT HOME

1. Which point from this weekend's message or Life Group study questions is most important for you to remember?
2. Are there any obstacles you sense God is trying to help you see as opportunities?
3. God has designed you uniquely to reach and impact others. Take a moment and make a quick list of some of your, talents, abilities, passions and possessions. Are there any God might be nudging you to use to reach, help and/or connect with others?

PRAYER REQUESTS

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SKILLED/TRADE PROFESSIONALS NEEDED:

We're excited to let you know we have an amazing volunteer opportunity coming your way starting April 11 called Serve Your City. During this three-week campaign, we will focus on helping others by the way we give, serve and love our community. More info to come.

If you have a **professional skill such as carpentry, painting, landscape etc.**, and are interested in working on a hands-on project during Serve Your City, please contact Chandler Pine at cpine@northcoastchurch.