

CRASH SERIES PART THREE

Return for Restoration

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*Gen. 3 / 1 Peter 2:24-25***Intro:** (new bumper video playing)

We've been in this series CRASH – exploring some how to's on avoiding crashes in life, recovering from them and today leaning into God's power to restore us afterwards...not just how he can restore us, but how he set in motion a plan to restore and redeem all of humanity... truth is: only God can rebuild a life. Turn with me to Genesis 3

Q how many of you have ever experienced a crash – in a vehicle?

(there are different degrees of crashes – aren't there? some of you happy to walk away, or some of you suffered great loss / while others have exp. a crash that was a simple fender bender, mere bump)

Story: our Scout Crash

-when I was in my early teens, before seatbelt laws were enforced, we had this fun International Scout (no a/c)...I think back and it was funny seeing my mom driving this beastly machine. One day on our way to pick up some friends – turn the corner up their street – cut it too much, never saw the car that was sitting there ready to turn = CRASH! I remember seeing my brother fly – hit the dash, my mom hit the wheel, I propelled forward into the windshield – clump of my hair stuck in the windshield that has cracked in 10 big lines coming out of this star created by my forehead. I remember running to friends house... → but how you react after a crash matters...

T Now let's switch to a crash in life - the moments following a crash are critical – the choices, reactions and decisions we make will determine our direction in life -- if restoration is possible... or we drift off into hiding, swallowed up by shame, isolation, fear...

**That's what today is all about – this invitation for us to consider
how we respond following a crash...**

Recap: you'll remember some of the things Glenn has laid out for us – *good stuff*:

Wk 1: God creates us in his image (Imago Dei) – given dominion; God puts this tree in the garden –which affords us the opportunity to have a genuine relationship of love/trust with God. He says I've allowed you, given you so much (but in this area: I'm going to hold onto this: God alone gets to determine right/wrong & good/evil)...this tree (of knowledge of good & evil) creates this healthy conflict – *b/c humanity is asked to trust God even when they could live differently*

Genesis 3:6-7a *suddenly everything has changed...*

This great CRASH occurs – as Adam/Eve choose to eat from the tree; they chose that they wanted to be the ones who determined right/wrong & good/evil...and SIN enters the world for all humanity...In this CRASH – their innocence is gone – their security, intimacy and trust is fractured, broken

*Sin isn't just breaking an arbitrary rule – it's a relational violation! It undermines trust, it's using my dominion to violate my relationship with God, with others, with myself.

Glenn unpacked temptation – temptation begins to allure us away toward a crash in life – we looked at how to push back against it... (**temptation invites us to fulfill legitimate desires in illegitimate and unhealthy ways*)

Wk 2: Last week we looked at how do we begin to recover -- this notion that as we SIN (crash in life) - we violate and create brokenness within our relationship with God and others...we are called to set it right.

-starts with actually having a relationship with God

-Don't get caught on either extreme of guilt: (*license to sin -----wallow in guilt*)

Today – as we finish up this series: I want us to explore the choices we have / the reaction needed following life's crashes... *b/c 2 realities: 1) we will all crash at times 2) how we react will determine if restoration is possible ...*

T this past week I was reading a scholarly journal – and something caught my eye...maybe you've read this journal *ESPN the Magazine?* Speed Edition – (now, I'm not a NASCAR guy like Glenn, but I thought I'll try to understand his world, which is dominated by left hand turns)

Article called: HOW TO CRASH

**Read portions*

T We may not be able to react as we're going into a crash – we're not professionals, but listen: how you and I react coming out of a crash is vital & important. And Genesis 3 seems to give us a peek into the choice that is before each of us – these 2 responses we can choose b/t...2 paths we can take...

Genesis 3:7-9

→ law of 1st reference – 1st question God asks in Scripture is relational question: *Where are you?*

In Hebrew, the original language the Bible was written in, this question is only one word—*ayeka*. "Where are you?" → it's denoting that God's presence is here: "*I'm here, where are you?*" This longing within God to connect with His creation...and now separation has entered the picture, *never been there before...*

Illust: we know what separation feels like:

- Whether it's a new parents leaving their baby for the 1st time
- Or you're on a trip and wanting to get home to your kids, family
- Soldiers and their family separated by battle – that longing that is in their gut to reconnect

God has this longing – but SIN/this crash has sent fear, shame into the picture – separation exists and *Adam & Even can react 1 of 2 ways:*

1st response: Retreat (Hide)

Just as we are predisposed to crash – we are prone to retreat & hide...

Illust: → we see this with the kid that stands in the kitchen surrounded by the pool of milk that has spilt everywhere...hearing footsteps of his parents coming down the stairs – so he runs/hides

Instead of confessing and owning up to our mistakes / sins → we camouflage them!
 → **We may try to: minimize, rationalize or accessorize them...**

We live in the world of concealing and the cover-up... we all do it. We don't want our sins broadcast for all to see.

Our sense of fallenness can bring a deep sense of shame. And notice what shame does in this Genesis story: shame separates! → It builds walls of fear and hostility. It drives us toward inadequately fixing what is wrong—and cover what has been exposed.

John Powell wrote a book called *Why Am I Afraid to Tell You Who I Am?* In it, he writes about how we are afraid to tell people who we are because if they saw "the real me," it might not be good enough. We would be exposed as defective, broken, and inadequate. So it's better and safer to put on fig leaves and hide. → we might call it 'wearing a mask' (but all of it is hiding)

We're prone to hide:

Q do you know people who hide? (*Does this describe people you know?*)

- People hide behind denial – “**it wasn't me**” is their mantra about everything; no personal connection to reality or to the people around them – live behind emotional walls – so distant and disconnected.
- People hide behind failures // and it defines them - can't seem to forgive themselves, or except God's forgiveness – they are in a constant defeated state, lost the exp. of joy in life...
- People hide behind shame (over shadowed by shame; it seems to filter their entire view of their future) – *they wear the scarlet letter* of their decision and can't escape it...struggle to feel any sense of value/worth...difficulty receiving compliments...
- People hide behind fears – live their life trapped by these emotional, self-imposed prison bars...never taste freedom, they live in the captivity of fear...limited, timid & caged.

*Hiding – what seems so natural, what seems to promise escape – really isn't an escape at all. It never brings a lasting security and freedom we long for...

T Retreating will never lead toward freedom, will never help anyone experience restoration... → to experience that: you have to choose another reaction: *CHOOSE TO RETURN*

2nd response: Return

T what's interesting: is that God waits, he doesn't hunt down.

Cut? → dog training – we're told – go hunt down the dog that has violated a rule – we'll drag them back to the mistake, rub their nose in it and yell...NO,NO

We serve a God who awaits our return (*Prodigal Son's Father example*)... because a relationship has to be chosen – God longs for a genuine relationship of love and trust with you, with me.

Trust can only be activated upon the return...trust takes the proximity of the heart

→ so Adam returns to God ...then we see another reaction (returns, but still has one last hurdle) He doesn't return and claim (own up too) – he returns and begins to BLAME

Genesis 3:10-12

v.10 – first time fear is mentioned in the Bible – it now shades all relationships...

v. 11-12 the Blame Game burst forth...

illust: how many of you have kids/grand kids? (*You've watched this game unfold haven't you?*)
– **How many of you have pulse? Then you've played this game...**

- My job performance is affected by my boss – b/c he/she is so...
- My grades are stalling out b/c the teacher I have is so...
- My anger outbursts are only because the stress at work...
- My relational withdrawal is due to my spouse not meeting my needs...*she/he should know*
- "I'm only doing this because so & so did _____"

We blame because we don't want to admit our short-comings – we don't like to own up to our brokenness – so we camouflage, we cover-up, we blame...

*Blame allows us to falsely feel like we remain in a power position – stay in some sort of control
→ To admit to the failure/the crash takes humility and that is something we struggle with...

But the Bible says "God opposes the proud, but gives grace to the humble" (James 4:6 Prov. 3:34)

Truth: *Restoration is only possible when we return - *stop hiding and stop blaming...*

When we claim our crash – lean back into a trust relationship with God, trust him to bring the right and necessary restoration work needed...

Returning is the reaction God longs for most - (not retreating, hiding or blaming)

1 Peter 2:24-25

- It's the work of Jesus on the cross (on our behalf) that makes returning the right response after our crashes
- Genesis 3:15 – God gives 1st insight to the plan he's now setting in place to bring restoration and that culminates in the life, death and resurrection of Christ
- Genesis 3:21 – God provides covering – as he does for our sins through Christ...
- God is the one who initiates the answer to the problem humanity created...God's still in the business of setting in motion restoration for the crashes we create, we face today...

T A few other thoughts on the restoration that God longs to bring...after our crashes...

-- Bookmark here for a moment --

ADDICTION caveat

--God longs for a heart to return to Him – so he can begin restoring/rebuilding our lives. But there is also this call in the Bible – that God uses others to help in that rebuild (James talks about confessing your sins one to another, praying for each other – that community is a necessary component often in restoration following life's crashes

Some of you might be in a crash sequence that is repetitive – (**addiction**: you plan your days, your life around these destructive choices – *it's owning you...* dominates your life -- and you can return to God for forgiveness; but he wants to put others around you to help you overcome this pull to continually crash in this way (i.e.: pornography, addiction to people's approval, relational carousel - where no is good enough and you seem to wreck most friendships/dating rel. / maybe it's compulsive shopping, gambling, drinking excess, etc) → seek good counsel – to help break out of repetitive crash sequence, you can't do it alone! You need God's help, but you will also need the support of others around you – it's partly why we value COMMUNITY around here...

Truth about returning to God: Restoration is a process

In our world – we don't like a process – that's time consuming; we like instantaneous. We are obsessed with speed, while God is more interested in strength and stability.

We want the quick fix, the shortcut – we want the 1 sermon, seminar or experience that will suddenly resolve all problems, remove temptation and release us from growing pains.

But real maturity in the faith is never a result of a single experience, no matter how powerful = Growth is gradual... (God's timing is not our timing, his ways, not our ways Isaiah says)

- God took 40 years to shape Moses for leadership, shaped his people in the land in between before entering the Promised Land...
- The book of Exodus (in the bible) literally means = **The Road Out**. It provides deep insights about moving out of captivity – the crash and toward a freedom as God refines, restores and rebuilds. It's not an easy process, but God's activity and power begin to work in the hearts of those who look to him.
- The message of Jesus himself – is a story that embodies the promise of a God who will go to any length to get his family back. He proved it on the Cross, when he said "it is finished" ...he meant it.
 - The plan God set in motion right after humanities' initial crash has been accomplished in Christ. Redemption and restoration is available to those who look to Jesus.
 - Salvation is an instantaneous reality, but us being fully restored to how we were originally created to be: that's a process (on-going **2 Cor. 3:18**) and one day complete (Phil. 1:6)

T Restoration is a process – as God rebuilds our lives...we've got to cooperate with His artistry, His work...

I love how the Apostle Paul captures this in a simple reminder to the church in Philippi

Philippians 1:4-6

v.6 – he who began a “good work” in you → this language / word here, harkens back to creation type language (Gen. 1 & 2)...remember that pattern

salvation is an instantaneous reality, but the rebuilding of our lives, restoring our lives is a process that God continues everyday – it’s that growing into (as Glenn mentioned) that VBY – (Very Best You) – it’s what biblical scholars refer too as: sanctification – simply becoming more and more like Jesus...and one day he will complete this work fully as you pass from this life, to be with him – fully restored in Heaven.

God is a Master Artist – He’s the Creator of the Heavens and the Earth...and he didn’t just stop all his creating work; He is still into creating, recreating, redeeming, restoring lives...

Truth: **We return to God, who is a master at bringing beauty out of brokenness**

-I wish I could share the stories of those I meet, that God brings beauty out of restoring people from their crashes; (crash of derailed by drugs, shattered marriages mended, brokenness of abuse healed up, a soul that was wandering and lost - now found and home; etc)

Conclusion:

God is the ultimate artist – Creator of not only the Heavens and Earth, but also of every soul and re-creator of every heart that returns to him. He can take the brokenness of your life, my life and re-create beauty from it. *It’s His specialty!*

T I want us to engage in this video and worship together in a song...take a moment to ponder some of the brokenness that God has restored, redeemed in you. Maybe you’re here today in a pretty broken place – a place where your heart is searching for hope – may these next few moments meet you where you are...

*Set up video ****(if you’re in our chapel service – I want you to watch this with us, then your worship team will lead you...)*

T We serve a God who is wired to restore – it’s His deep passion. The Scriptures overflow with his demonstration of longing to bring restoration and redemption into the lives of those who will return to him.

Video: Beauty out of Brokenness (www.potsc.com is where video is available)

→ Flows right into BEAUTIFUL THINGS (Gunger) by worship team...

Closing:

I hope this series has been helpful for you... we serve a God who shows up at our CRASH scenes in life b/c he loves us – he wants to help us avoid them – to trust Him, his guidance // but He longs to restore when we do crash... He can bring beauty out of brokenness.

That's the main theme of the biblical narrative – God loves us, we walked away, He still calls to us to return – he made a way for us to be restored through Jesus' life, death and resurrection. God proved His love, his power and his grace in Jesus.

Today – I'm not sure where this series – these truths find you? But if you've never returned to God – you've been hiding, running, blaming, retreating – today is your day to RETURN TO JESUS. I'm going to pray a prayer of blessing over us as we leave, but if that's you today – don't you leave, you meet me over at the prayer ministry room immediately following this service – I want to help you come home to God!

EXTRA STUFF:

A CEO has taken on a new job, and the outgoing CEO says to him, "Sometimes you'll make wrong choices. You will. You'll mess up. When that happens, I have prepared three envelopes for you. I left them in the top drawer of the desk. The first time it happens, open #1. The second time you mess up, open #2. The third time, open #3."

For the first few months, everything goes fine. Then the CEO makes his first mistake, goes to the drawer, opens up envelope #1, and the message reads, "Blame me." So he does: "This is the old CEO's fault. He made these mistakes. I inherited these problems." Everybody says, "Okay." It works out pretty well.

Things go fine for a while, and then he makes his second mistake. So, he goes to the drawer and opens up envelope #2. This time he reads, "Blame the board." And he does: "It's the board's fault. The board has been a mess. I inherited them. They're the problem." Everybody says, "Okay, that makes sense."

Things go fine for a while, and then he makes his third mistake. So, he goes to the drawer and opens up envelope #3. The message reads: "Prepare three envelopes."

John Ortberg, in the sermon "Guide," PreachingToday.com