

## Discipleship series

### Breaking the power of the past

Pilgrim's Progress, written by John Bunyan, depicts the man, Pilgrim, with a weight of sin and other burdens on his back. He carries it to the cross where he is finally freed from that burden. We, like Pilgrim, carry the weight of our past on our shoulders which we can't remove ourselves. We need to get it to the cross to have removed from us otherwise we'll be carrying it with us into the future hindering everything that lies ahead. We need to be set free from our past to move into a fruitful future.

Philippians 3:1-16 Finally, my brothers, rejoice in the Lord. To write the same things to you is no trouble to me and is safe for you.

<sup>2</sup> Look out for the dogs, look out for the evildoers, look out for those who mutilate the flesh. <sup>3</sup> For we are the circumcision, who worship by the Spirit of God and glory in Christ Jesus and put no confidence in the flesh— <sup>4</sup> though I myself have reason for confidence in the flesh also. If anyone else thinks he has reason for confidence in the flesh, I have more: <sup>5</sup> circumcised on the eighth day, of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; as to the law, a Pharisee; <sup>6</sup> as to zeal, a persecutor of the church; as to righteousness under the law, blameless. <sup>7</sup> But whatever gain I had, I counted as loss for the sake of Christ. <sup>8</sup> Indeed, I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ <sup>9</sup> and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God that depends on faith— <sup>10</sup> that I may know him and the power of his resurrection, and may share his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, <sup>11</sup> that by any means possible I may attain the resurrection from the dead.

<sup>12</sup> Not that I have already obtained this or am already perfect, but I press on to make it my own, because Christ Jesus has made me his own. <sup>13</sup> Brothers, I do not consider that I have made it my own. But one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, <sup>14</sup> I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus. <sup>15</sup> Let those of us who are mature think this way, and if in anything you think otherwise, God will reveal that also to you. <sup>16</sup> Only let us hold true to what we have attained.

#### 1) How the past affects us in the present and the future

- We all carry some kind of baggage from the past that affects us now and will affect our future if we don't deal with it
- Take marriages for example
  - According to prominent websites such as Forbes and Psychology Today 43% of first marriages, 67% of second marriages, and 73% of third marriages end in divorce
  - We would think that people who had been married before would have known what went wrong the first times and learnt from their mistakes, but instead they merely carried their undealt baggage with them into their next marriages, many times without recognizing that they were the problem
- How many men with alcoholic and / or abusive fathers say they'll never become alcoholics and abusive, yet do
  - Their intentions were good, but the generational curse was engrained in them
- Not all of our baggage is sinful. Some of it is merely past influences on the way we deal with present day situations
  - A businessman who is a deacon in a church has to contribute to a church's financial decision. As he grew up poor he'd rather let the church take a risk and quietly contribute financially to any shortfall.
  - A struggling businessman resists taking a financial risk for the church basing his decision on his personal financial problems
  - Someone was offended in the church and therefore doesn't want to support the decision that would benefit the church

- Someone who experienced some kind of trauma in the past can be bound up with phobias

## 2) Identifying bondages that have been carried from the past

- John 9:39-41 Jesus said, “For judgment I came into this world, that those who do not see may see, and those who see may become blind.” Some of the Pharisees near him heard these things, and said to him, “Are we also blind?” Jesus said to them, “If you were blind, you would have no guilt; but now that you say, ‘We see,’ your guilt remains.
- It’s so easy to be blind to the baggage that we carry and the effect that it has on our lives and the lives of others
- We need God to open up our eyes to be able to see what kind of baggage we’re carrying and how it affects our lives, so we can deal with it
- Types of baggage that we carry from the past that we need freedom from
  - Our own sinful habits and lifestyle
  - Generational sin that was passed down to us
  - Traumatic experiences
  - False ideologies
  - Broken relationships
  - Ungodly cultural traits

## 3) Breaking the power of the past

- Confess
  - 1 John 1:8-9 If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.
- Repent and Renounce
  - Proverbs 28:13 Whoever conceals their sins does not prosper, but the one who confesses and renounces them finds mercy.
  - Acts 2:38 Peter replied, “Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.
- Believe that you’re a new person in Christ
  - 2 Corinthians 5:17 Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here!
- Be accountable
  - 1 John 1:6-7 If we say we have fellowship with him while we walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth. <sup>7</sup> But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin.
- Commit
  - 2 Timothy 2:15 Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who has no need to be ashamed, rightly handling the word of truth.
  - 1 Kings 8:61 Let your heart therefore be wholly true to the LORD our God, walking in his statutes and keeping his commandments, as at this day.