

December 10, 2023, Pastor Jason Smotherman

Testimony by DJ Moore with Pastor Chase Smotherman

SERMON NOTES:

Caves

Psalm 142:4

(When he was in the cave)

Look to the right and see, there is no one who takes notice of me, no refuge remains to me, for NO ONE CARES FOR MY SOUL.

David was in a cave:

No one cares for me!

The echo of pain in our world can deafening.

It reminds me of the pain of Isaiah's generation.

Isaiah 1:6 (describes a generation of hurt)

From the sole of the foot to the head, **there is no soundness in it**, but wounds and bruises and putrefying sores: they have not been closed nor bound up neither fixed with ointment.

If you try to figure out our world with the soundness of common sense, it will make no sense. Hurt and Pain make it impossible to make any sense to our generation.

1 Corinthians 2:14 (NKJV)

14 But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.

70-80's Prayer, ten commandments, reading the Bible in the classroom were outlawed

Decision of Roe V Wade = 50 million abortions

Decision of same sex marriage = The fabric of our morality is unraveling

People trying to survive will do **anything** to just make it another day.

We are living in a world that hears the echo in the cave.

They Cry out: No one cares for me!

They in the midst of their despair are often the loudest voice they hear.

And it echoes to them:



You're not good enough.
You will never amount to anything.
You've made too many mistakes.
There's no hope!
It screams that there is no way out.

But there is another echo if you will listen.
Between the loud chaos of our generation there is an echo rising.
It's the echo of the cross!
It declares that freedom and liberty from your cave is just a prayer away!

You have to see this world through the eyes of compassion. This is one of the biggest challenges we face in our culture.

Matthew 9:36 describes how Jesus saw His world

When He saw the crowds, He had **compassion** on them because they were confused and helpless.

Compassion -a feeling of deep sympathy and sorrow for another who is stricken by misfortune, accompanied by a strong desire to alleviate the suffering.

When Jesus interacted with crowds his heart broke.

When Jesus interacted with individuals their chains broke.

John 8 tells the story of how Jesus treated people.
There was a woman caught in the **actual act of adultery**.
She found herself in a dangerous situation.
The mob had assembled.
The stones had been gathered.
The anger had intensified to a murderous fever.

Then 3 things happened:

- Jesus showed up (what a moment when that happens)
- Jesus became a place of safety
- Jesus broke the chain (Go and sin no more)

Didn't excuse her sin or try to justify her sin.
Gave her the love to never be found in that situation again.

Jesus saw the caves people lived in.
He saw the lives that were created out of hurt and pain



His compassion led him to break chains.

You must never allow your compassion for people to blind yourselves from delivering the truth of the gospel that will set them free.

Our excuses and compassion for people will never truly set people free. Only the power of the gospel can do that.

Jesus saw the caves.

Newsflash: He still sees the caves. He knows exactly where you are today!

He went in the cave and conquered so you wouldn't have to live in your cave defeated!

3 caves that try to stop you:

1) The Cave of your own decisions

Everyone of us have **HAD** those days in our lives, where if we could, would buy them back as though they never happened. There is not enough money in the world to buy back those days.

In this cave the echo is loud:

Regret: I'm so stupid for trusting

Shame: No one will ever love me again

Guilt: I've messed up so bad...I'm stupid

The Replays of those decisions in our minds are often more powerful than the actual playing of those events in real time.

2. The Cave of other's decisions

I'm sorry you parents split up.

I'm sorry that boyfriend used you.

I'm sorry that girlfriend broke your trust.

I'm sorry that someone spoke those words over you.

I'm sorry no one knows the pain they caused you.

I'm sorry to the youth pastor who has been hurt by senior pastors.

I'm sorry to the senior pastor who finds it hard to trust.

I'm sorry for the untold hurt and pain that others have cause you



In this cave the echo gets louder:

Bitterness/hatred: Hurt people Hurt people - The cycle is vicious - I Don't want to be like....

questioning/why: Why me?

insecurities:

This cave is louder because we often are more forgetful of our own mistakes than we forgive others of theirs. We hold most people in our lives to an expectation that we ourselves do not live up to.

BUT there are moments in our lives when people genuinely wrong us.

Abuse of any kind, words that are spoken, abandonment, and many more Those kind of life events are almost impossible to go through.

ALMOST - God has a way of making the ugly situation an unstoppable one.

That thing that has come to take you out is the very thing that will drive you forward!

3. **The Cave of circumstance**

In this cave the echoes make no sense:

Confusion: Why did it happen to me?

Doubt: If God loved me why did this have to happen?

Deep in these caves you find a companion. He whispers to you lies. He comforts your pain by adding fuel to the hurt. Im hurting so everyone should hurt. This companions name is un-forgiveness.

Proverbs 13:12

Hope deferred makes the heart sick. But **when the desire** comes it become the tree of Life.

There is a desire rising.

A desire that calls to every person who is living in a place of despair.

Again you must know:

Jesus Conquered his cave so you would not have to live defeated in yours.



Some Questions?

- What brings the desire to forgive someone who has wronged you?
- What brings the desire to forgive yourself and the foolish decisions you've made?
- What brings people to the place of using their story for good and not bad?
- What takes despair and turns it to destiny?
- What takes hurt and turns it to happy?
- What takes broken and turns it in to new?

The bible says that God doesn't just fix your broken heart it says He gives you a new one!

**The Echo of the Cross brings the desire.
Only Jesus can bring you out from the cave you are in.**

When you cry "I'm not good enough"

It cries "I think you are"

When you cry "no one cares"

It cries "I do"

Listen to the echo.

It sounds like a beating so you wouldn't have to take one

It sounds like it will leave a scar so you wouldn't have to have scars.

There is NOT ONE THING He can't restore you from.

There is NOT ONE THING He can't deliver you from.

No drug, no shame, no complacency, no compromise, no hurt,

There is ONLY ONE THING He can't do.

Help Someone who hasn't asked!

Acts 18:24-28

The most dangerous cave to live in, is the cave of almost.....