



Sacred Echoes
Part 2 – His Echo, My Life
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Quickest five pounds I ever lost. It's an amazing diet. You can eat what you want and lose five pounds. You have to laugh at life sometimes, don't you? I've already got one foot in heaven. Yesterday, I went and got a pedicure; she charged me half price. My grandson says, "Pops is all right." Everybody's like, "How are you doing?" I go, "Fine." He goes, "Pop's you're all right."

You know the fun thing about going through pain... Honestly, if the whole ordeal was just for this one morning, I would say it would be worth it because as I was thinking through my thoughts about the Sunday morning, I thought about this dear church that I absolutely love. This church... If we had a billboard, it would say, "The Craziest People On Sunday Morning Go To Woodland Hills." I love doing events. I love speaking to kids. But I don't like speaking to churches, except for this church because this church is like an event. I mean we have every kind of crazy critter in the whole wide world that comes to this church. It's just so fun, so wild. You can just smell the marijuana in the air. It's an incredible place.

As I started thinking through my thoughts this morning, I knew that everybody in this church is hurting. When you're hurting, you can feel the pain. Everybody in this church is or will suffer loss, great loss. When you're hurting, you can feel the pain; you know how to care. Through all those dark, painful nights over the summer and a couple of years ago with all the heart issues and lungs and all the other surgeries and stuff, something happened to me. Folks, in the hospital, I had no idea what was going to happen until I sat through the darkness those long hours at night when everybody leaves the hospital. It's just you and you're watching the clock. You're in so much pain that all you can do is watch the clock go around until morning. But there was this sacred echo.

It's interesting that Ted talked to me about doing Sacred Echoes. I was like, "Ted, I know what you're talking about." There's this sacred echo through the night. I will tell you, men and women, in the future, there is pain for everyone in here. Jesus said, "In the world you'll have tribulation, but take courage because in me, you'll have peace." I want to tell you, men and women, night after night after night when the phantom pain was so bad you couldn't sleep and pain medication had no place in your life, wasn't even the least bit helpful, this echo of these Psalms just kept ringing in my mind. I will tell you there was peace every single night. I had many, many horrible days, but I didn't have one bad day and I hadn't had a bad day since. I mean at age 71, honestly, this has been one of the greatest adventures of my life. It's like climbing a 14,000 ft mountain. And you don't get to climb it; don't you feel sad? Y'all are out there with two legs and bored as all get out. Your extra leg is like a spare tire; you don't even need it. One is all you need, man.

The Psalms kept ringing in my mind at night. **1 The Lord is my shepherd...** You know the echo in your mind controls your mood and your attitude and your emotions. **...I shall not want. 2 He makes me lie down in green pastures.** I kept hearing it at night. **He leads me beside still waters. 3 He restores my soul. He leads me in paths of righteousness for his name's sake. 4 Even though I walk through the valley...** I thought about this a thousand times. **...of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil...** Men and women, we teach our children, but we teach our children how to die.

When there is a sacred echo in your heart, you suffer well. What is it about the echo? What you think about in your mind that brings such incredible peace in times of such incredible turmoil? When you lose your mom and dad and you had no idea it was time for your mom and dad to pass on. When you lose your wife unexpectedly. When the doctors come into your room after the exam and they say it's cancer of your breasts, it's cancer of your prostate. What is it about the sacred echo when you can close your eyes and hear the words of Psalm 91 – **11 For he will command his angels concerning you to guard you in all your ways. 4 He will cover you with his pinions...** Those words just kept coming in my mind. **and under his wings you will find refuge; his faithfulness is a shield and buckler.**

They can take your wife, they can take your leg, they can take your reputation, they can take your job, but they can't take your heart. And it's the sacred echo of the heart that rules in your life. A sacred echo is holy. A sacred echo is godly. A sacred echo is divine. A sacred echo is heavenly. Yet out of the darkness, there's that other voice that speaks, isn't there? The voice of worry. The voice of fear. The voice of anger toward your dad and bitterness toward your mom. Bitterness toward your boss. When things happen life that are difficult. That other voice which speaks so loudly.

There was a little guy that I saw this summer in a movie that I could relate to. You probably haven't seen the movie *Lion King*, but it's a movie no one knows about; it's very discrete. Not many people go to see the movie. But in case you didn't know, it's about a lion who is king. That's why they call it *Lion King*. Has anybody else seen it. I think I might be the only one that might have seen it. Anybody see it? The rest of y'all are liars; I know everybody has seen it like five times. I'm a grandfather with 15 grandkids, so I've seen it. I saw something in there after I talked to my daughter who just sees things that other people can't see.

I saw this little guy and I could relate to this little guy. His name was Simba. Simba was the little guy. He was heir to the throne. He was the son of the king, but in his heart, he didn't know it. Along comes Scar. Scar, the voice of the enemy, the voice of darkness, speaks to the little guy. "Your dad doesn't know what he's talking about when he tells you not to go out with that guy." "Your dad doesn't know anything." He speaks to you when you're sixteen years old. "Where's your dad?" "Come to the canyon with me. I'll show you things your daddy doesn't want to show you. If you'll come to the canyon..."

Scar begins to speak to his pride. Have you ever been spoken to by the enemy about your pride and you stood up and you took the occasion to look proud? He goes to the canyon and he says, "You can hear your voice in the canyon, and you can hear how big you are." Just like the devil, he takes him into the canyon. Scar knows if he can take out Simba and Mufasa comes to the rescue, he can take him out and then Scar gets the throne. That's the way it goes in the Bible, isn't it?

He goes to the canyon and Scar stirs up the hyenas and they stir up the wildebeests. And then 10 million wildebeests come stampeding through the canyon. I never knew there were that many wildebeests in Africa. They stampede the little guy. They are trampling him under their feet. He jumps up on a log and he hangs on for dear life. Of course, his dad hears about it because every time you are in distress, your dad in heaven knows about it and your dad in heaven comes to the rescue, and Mufasa comes to the rescue. But just like Jesus on the cross... Mufasa saves Simba's life and then he tries to climb out of the canyon, but Scar pushes him off the top and he tumbles into the stampede and he dies saving his little boy.

Then Scar goes after his echo: "You're a failure. It's your fault." Have you ever heard that? "He'll never forgive you." You ever hear that? "God will never forgive you. Your sin is too much for God to forgive. You've fallen too many times. You're a failure." And Simba goes, "What do I do?" Scar says what Satan has said to you and he's said to me. "Run. Run from God. Run from your destiny. Run and never come back."

The little guy runs. He has no idea where he's going. He runs across the desert and he runs and runs until he passes out. The vultures gather around him to eat the little guy. But along comes the warthog, Pumbaa, and along comes Timon, the meerkat. "Who are you, Simba?" He looks up and he says, after all the spoken words of darkness and shame and guilt, "I'm a nobody."

Have you ever felt like this little guy? I've felt like him so many times. "I'm a nobody. God couldn't love me." Timon and Pumbaa said, "Welcome to the land of Hakuna Matata. There're no worries anyway. Life's not a circle. It doesn't matter what you do. You live and then you die, and that's all that matters. Eat, drink, and be merry because tomorrow we die."

So, in the land of Hakuna Matata, he grows up and he becomes a big boy, but he doesn't know that he has the image of his father in his face. Somehow, as he's living a life of "I'm a failure, but I don't care anymore," a little piece of his fur... Do you remember the scene? A little piece of his fur comes traveling across the desert. And through a series of circumstances, Rafiki, his buddy, finds the fur. Oh, men and women, when you're in darkness, how great is it to have a wife who encourages you? How great is it to have a husband who encourages you? How great is it to have children? When my children come to see me in the hospital, I weep because they encouraged me.

Rafiki comes alongside to encourage the little guy. He says, "Simba, I want to show you your dad. I want to show you your destiny." Little Simba shakes his head and says, "My dad is dead. It was my fault; I killed him." Rafiki says, "Come to the water and I'll show you a picture of your dad." He takes him to the water and Simba, now grown and mighty himself, looks in the water and he sees himself. He says, "That's not my dad; that's me." Remember when Rafiki stirs the water and water ripples and he sees the image of his father? Do you remember what it looked like, men and women, the first time you believed? You saw the image of your father. And this voice comes out of the darkness, "Simba, you forgot who you were, so you forgot me."

Church, you forget who you are when you are in darkness and sadness and pain and sorrow and the world hurts you. And sometimes you forget who you are and so, you forget him. You're like, "I'm an

addict. I'll always be an addict." "I struggle with porn." "I struggle with weed." "I struggle with alcohol." "I struggle with lust." "I struggle with a bad attitude."

Jesus said, in John 8:36, ***If the son of man sets you free, you'll be truly free.*** Not just on a Sunday morning with this incredible worship, but 24/7/365. You want to live. He says you can live in freedom. You go, "I'm a nobody. This morning, I don't know where I'm going. I'm not sure of my eternity." The sacred echo of 1 John 3: 1 says you're a child of God. You're a child of the king. And just like Simba, Romans 8: 17 echoes in your mind that you are destined for the throne. As a believer in Christ, you are co-heirs with Christ for the throne.

You have an attitude of hatred and bitterness towards your mom or your dad or towards your spouse. But the sacred echo of Matthew 6: 14-15 echoes in your mind and it changes your attitude to forgiveness. Christ says if you forgive others of their transgressions, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive others, he will not forgive you. Your forgiveness of others is supposed to sacredly echo the way God forgives you. So, you walk in freedom, without bitterness in your life.

Why is the sacred echo so powerful? Why can you lay in the hospital bed or be in the marriage where there is difficulty and trials or in the job where the boss is difficult to work with and you could lay there or sit there or work there day after day with joy in your heart and watch your boss eventually transform over the years because of the way you live your life. Because of the darkness, this sacred echo... I'll tell you the one for me, men and women. It stated off the leukemia about 20 years ago. And then through 25 surgeries over the years of the spine and back and the lungs and the heart and all this crazy stuff, I lay there on the table and they put needles in my arms. I know I'm going to go to sleep in a minute.

The other day, I was going to do a heart thing. They were going to shock my heart because my heart is a mess. I had this sweet Korean doctor and he says, "We're going to make you sleepy." I'm like, "I don't know what it means in Korean, but I don't want to be sleepy, I want to be asleep." Just before I go in, he's like, "We're going to make you sleepy." Again, I go, "Dr. Sam..." By the way, this guy is fabulous. He's one of the sweetest men I've ever met. He says, "We're going to make you sleepy." I'm like, "Dr. Sam, don't say sleepy. I want to be asleep. I want to go out." They squirt me and I'm still awake. I go, "Squirt me again. I want more of that; whatever that was." He squirts me a second time and I'm still awake. And I know the paddles are coming on my heart. I go, "Dude, you've got to give me more of that stuff." Finally, I was out. Every time I go out, I just go, "Jesus, I'm coming to you."

The sacred echo in 2 Corinthians 12: 10 tickled my mind so many times. Paul said, ***Most gladly, therefore, we will boast about our weaknesses that the power of Christ might live in me.*** Men and women, we teach our children, but teach our children how to die.

In 2 Corinthians 4: 10, that sacred echo takes over in the night again. ***...always caring in the body the death of Jesus, so Jesus may also be manifest in our bodies.*** The more I die the more he lives. I tell you, folks, it changes everything.

Here's the fun deal about coming to a sermon like this. The sacred echo of your mind becomes the sacred echo of how you live. How your mind echoes, whether it's sacred or unsacred, whether it's light or whether it's darkness, that becomes your attitude and your attitude becomes your behavior and your behavior becomes your reputation. It's the shadow you leave behind when you die. It's the shadow you leave behind when you go to work and you and your spouse won't see each other for eight hours. It's the shadow. It's like Scope when your married and you kiss. Without Scope, you have an unsacred echo. Dumb illustration.

This is a good illustration. Your echo become the words that go out of your mouth. The kids I counsel long for a dad who speaks wisdom because the sacred echo in his mind is scripture and you can trust him because he's a church man, he's a follower of Christ. Kids long for a dad who is their biggest cheerleader even when he's guiding them along the way. Wives long for men, husbands whose sacred echo is encouragement and praise and adoration. You can't tell her enough how beautiful she is. You can't tell her enough how lucky you are, the big dog that you are, to marry somebody as incredible as her. I'm the tramp; she's the lady. That's the way I feel with my wife. People look at my wife and go, "Is your daughter dating anyone?" It's a true story. They look at her and go, "Debbie Jo, you are so beautiful." They look at me and they go, "Oh my gosh, how did you get her?"

People long for men and women, for parents, for children that have a sacred echo. Kids, when you leave the house for school or for college, instead of cheering, your parents are weeping because your shadow was so loving and so caring, and you were so obedient and you were so wonderful to raise. You weren't fighting them all the time. You go to college and they weep and they cry and they miss you so desperately. A buddy of mine, Dennis Rayne, called the other day and I said, "What was it like when you took your daughter to college?" He said, "I told her I'd pray for her, but I tried to pray for her again and again. I cried so hard when I prayed for her, so I called her and said, 'Pray for yourself, I can't pray for you.'" That's your sacred echo when you leave the house. So many kids I meet leave a sacred echo.

Do you know the secret? I'm not a phycologist, but I believe that all the phycologists that I've read through different pages of history, agree on one thing and that is that you become what you think about. Ralph Waldo Emerson says, "*A man becomes what he thinks about all day long.*"

Norman Vincent Peale says, "*If you think negative thoughts, you'll be negative. If you think positive thoughts, you'll have positive results.*"

Jesus said in Mark 9: 36, ***All things are possible to him who believes.*** Attitudes, moods, emotions, forgiveness, peace, whatever it is that's wonderful, the sacred echo, believing in Christ, you can achieve. This is your heart and inside your heart, men and women, there is a sacred place that only Christ can fill.

As I've counseled men and women over the years, I see these substances that look so sparkling and so tasty and because my heart is not filled with Christ and I depend on substances because my heart is not filled with Christ, I depend on bitterness. Because my heart is not filled with Christ, I think I can fill lit with more stuff: bigger houses, faster cars, more clothing. Because my heart is not filled with Christ, I begin to fill it with self-defeat. And because of all those, my heart is filled with shame. "Run," Scar says, "Run." And your heart ends up looking like a substance that you couldn't taste.

Men and women, you've got a cup in your hand; take it out. Church, in all honesty, that cup is a picture of your heart and how you fill your heart. Because out of the heart, the mind speaks, and out of the mind, the body behaves. You can look at the cup and you can say, as you look at your heart, what do I fill my cup with? Really and truly, do I fill it with guilt after Christ has died to forgive the guilt? Psalms 32 – Even the shadow of guilt. Do I fill it with shame? Do I fill my heart with bitterness towards my spouse or towards my parents? Do I fill my heart with anger and hatred? Do I fill my heart with self-defeat and live in a pity party when there is pain in my life?

This morning, I'm going to ask this church to create a sacred echo as we sing. As we start off this wonderful song, you can just start off with a prayer. And when you decide that you can't clean this up... I was with a man the other day who works for us. He talked about how his life was filled with alcohol and cocaine and failure. He said, "Christ, one night, came into my life and I gave Jesus my whole heart," and he crushed the cup of his old self.

I had lunch the other day with one of the most successful basketball coaches in America. In fact, he was coach of the year. He was filling his heart with alcohol and then behavior that followed. His children said to him, "Dad, you're going to hell." And he crushed the cup and he asked Jesus for a brand-new heart and he gave it to him. Yours may not be profound and it may be little things that have leaked in. As the words of the psalm start singing to you, I want to hear the church, all over the church, crush the cup and ask Jesus today for a brand new heart with a sacred echo that will carry you through whatever happens on this side of heaven. Take your hand, when you're ready, and just crush the cup. "My whole heart is yours, Jesus, I want a brand-new heart."

Enjoy the words of this powerful song:

*I keep fighting voices in my mind that say I'm not enough
Every single lie that tells me I will never measure up
Am I more than just the sum of every high and every low
Remind me once again just who I am because I need to know
Ooh oh
You say I am loved when I can't feel a thing
You say I am strong when I think I am weak
And you say I am held when I am falling short
And when I don't belong, oh You say I am Yours
And I believe (I)
Oh I believe (I)
What You say of me (I)
I believe
The only thing that matters now is everything You think of me
In You I find my worth, in You I find my identity
Ooh oh
You say I am loved when I can't feel a thing
You say I am strong when I think I am weak
And you say I am held when I am falling short*

*And when I don't belong, oh You say I am Yours
And I believe (I)
Oh, I believe (I)
What You say of me (I)
Oh, I believe
Taking all I have and now I'm laying it at Your feet
You have every failure, God, You have every victory
Ooh oh
You say I am loved when I can't feel a thing
You say I am strong when I think I am weak
You say I am held when I am falling short
When I don't belong, oh You say I am Yours
And I believe (I)
Oh, I believe (I)
What You say of me (I)
I believe
Oh, I believe (I)
Yes, I believe (I)
What You say of me (I)
I believe*