



*You came near when I called on you; you said, 'Do not fear!' You have taken up my cause, O Lord, you have redeemed my life.
– Lamentations 3:57-58*

Have you ever felt like something inside you keeps getting in the way of the life God desires for you?

Our sermon series, Self-Sabotage: From Ruin to Redemption, explores the subtle and sometimes not-so-subtle ways we can undermine our faith, damage our relationships with others and distance ourselves from God.

Through guided devotionals and honest reflection, we'll listen closely for what God has to say about the habits, beliefs and patterns that impact our spiritual lives. Together, we'll learn how to recognize these struggles, bring them into the light and ground ourselves in God's promises, truth and vision for who we are becoming.

This series is an invitation to move from ruin to redemption, to let God reshape what's been broken and lead us into deeper faith, healthier relationships and a restored walk with Him.

We hope you'll join us and take this journey of renewal together. Prayers of blessing as we move from Ruin to Redemption.

Week One

Wednesday, February 18 – Tuesday, February 24

What to expect this Week:

This week is fairly straightforward. New topics will be introduced on Wednesdays and Sundays, and those themes will be expanded on in the devotionals throughout the rest of the week. Tuesdays, Fridays, and Saturdays are "Free Days," giving you flexibility to catch up on reading, explore another devotional, set an intentional goal, or simply take a day to rest.

Suggested Week One Schedule:

Wednesday, February 18

- Attend worship at 6:15 p.m.
- Read Devotional: Compromise in Secret – Justify Private Sins that Erode Public Strength.

Thursday, February 19

- Read Devotional: Hold on For Dear Life - Cling Tightly to Everything You Don't Want to Lose

Friday, February 20 – Free Day

Saturday, February 21 – Free Day

Sunday, February 22

- Attend worship at 9:30 a.m. or 10:45 a.m.
- Read Devotional: Be Nihilistic - Believe that Nothing Really Matters

Monday, February 23

- Read Devotional: Believe Every Thought You Have – Don't filter Anything Through Truth or Scripture.

Tuesday, February 24 – Free Day

Self-Sabotage: From Ruin to Redemption February 18, 2026 – Ash Wednesday

Compromise in Secret – Justify Private Sins that Erode Public Strength

Ephesians 4:18 - They are darkened in their understanding, alienated from the life of God because of their ignorance and hardness of heart.

FROM RUIN...

If you want to slowly destroy your integrity, damage your intimacy with God and live with constant inner conflict, start here:

Compromise in Secret – Justify Private Sins that Erode Public Strength. Keep your sin hidden, justify it privately and tell yourself it's "not that big of a deal." Say vague things like "I'm struggling" or "I'm working through stuff," but never name the sin.

When you feel the nudge from the Spirit to turn away from sin, ignore it, push down the guilt. Avoid prayer and skip the verses in the Bible that speak too directly to your struggle. Never get honest with someone who will challenge you. The more you resist conviction, the quieter it becomes, the more numb you become and the easier sin feels.

Create two versions of yourself. Be clean, composed and godly around others but act entirely differently when no one is watching. Put on a spiritual face while covering up spiritual decay. Care more about what people think than what God sees. As long as you look good, assume you are good. Over time, the mask gets heavier and your soul gets darker. Eventually, the double life will catch up to you and the weight of pretending will crush your peace. Hidden sin as a tendency to poison everything, even if your image remains polished.

...TO REDEMPTION

What does scripture have to say?

Secret sin creates two versions of us, one seen by others and one known only in private. Over time, this division drains peace, integrity and spiritual strength. When we repeatedly resist the Holy Spirit's nudging, conviction grows quieter and sin feels easier. What once troubled us can eventually leave us spiritually numb.

God never intended us to heal alone. **James 5:15-16** links confession and community as a source for healing and restoration, **15 The prayer of faith will save the sick, and the Lord will raise them up; and anyone who has committed sins will be forgiven. 16 Therefore confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another, so that you may be healed. The prayer of the righteous is powerful and effective.**

- Why do you think God connects confession with healing?
- What keeps you from being fully honest about your sin with God or others?
- Who is one trusted person you could confess to and pray with?

1 John 1:8-10 points out that honest confession is foundational to a healthy relationship with God. Denying sin leads to self-deception, but acknowledging it opens the door to forgiveness and cleansing. **8 If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. 9 If we confess our sins, he who is faithful and just will forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness. 10 If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.**

- In what ways might you be deceiving yourself about your sin?
- Do you truly believe God forgives and cleanses when you confess?
- How does honest confession protect your relationship with God? Others?

We are often tempted to hide rather than repent. Read the warning from **Proverbs 28:13 - 13 No one who conceals transgressions will prosper, but one who confesses and forsakes them will obtain mercy.**

- How has concealment affected your spiritual growth?
- What might repentance and turning away look like right now?

There is truly a weight of hidden sin. As part of **Psalms 32:1-5** David describes the physical, emotional and spiritual toll of hidden sin and the freedom that comes when confession replaces concealment. **1 Happy are those whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. 2 Happy are those to whom the Lord imputes no iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no deceit. 3 While I kept silence, my body wasted away through my groaning all day long. 4 For day and night your hand was heavy upon me; my strength was dried up as by the heat of summer. 5 Then I acknowledged my sin to you, and I did not hide my iniquity; I said, 'I will confess my transgressions to the Lord', and you forgave the guilt of my sin.**

- Have you experienced the heaviness or unrest that comes from unconfessed sin?
- What changed for David when he stopped hiding?
- What freedom might God want to give you through confession?

Take a moment to read **Luke 12:2–3 2 Nothing is covered up that will not be uncovered, and nothing secret that will not become known. 3 Therefore whatever you have said in the dark will be heard in the light, and what you have whispered behind closed doors will be proclaimed from the housetops.**

Jesus reminds us that nothing remains hidden forever. What we keep secret today will eventually be exposed, making repentance now an act of wisdom and grace.

- What are you trying to keep hidden, and why?
- Would you rather deal with this now through repentance or later through exposure?

Small compromises may seem harmless, but they quietly damage spiritual fruit. **The Song of Solomon 2:15** warns us to address sin early before it destroys what God is growing. **15 Catch us the foxes, the little foxes, that ruin the vineyards—for our vineyards are in blossom.**

It's the "little" compromises that eventually destroy the fruit God wants to produce in your life.

- What small compromises have you been excusing?
- How might these "little" sins be harming spiritual fruit in your life?
- What practical step can you take to address them early?

Note to self: Which of the statements below speak to you? Why?

- A rash can be hidden under a shirt but don't let it spread.
- A beautiful vessel can hold deadly poison.
- A garbage can may look clean from the outside, but the question is, 'What is it holding on the inside?'
- It's colder in the shadows than facing towards the sun.
- The heart doesn't deteriorate through explosions; it erodes one small crack at a time.

Here's the Truth:

Secret sin grows in the dark but dies in the light. Compromising in secret may feel like control, but it's captivity. You'll never experience freedom while you're still hiding. Jesus died to free you from the power of sin and true freedom begins where honesty begins. Sure, general confessions may ease your guilt, but only specific truth brings freedom. God is not interested in your image; He's after your heart. It's the "little" compromises that eventually destroy the fruit God wants to produce in your life.

Self-Sabotage: From Ruin to Redemption

Thursday, February 19

Hold on For Dear Life - Cling Tightly to Everything You Don't Want to Lose

Job 11:13-15 - 13 'If you direct your heart rightly, you will stretch out your hands towards him. 14 If iniquity is in your hand, put it far away, and do not let wickedness reside in your tents. 15 Surely then you will lift up your face without blemish; you will be secure, and will not fear.

FROM RUIN...

If you want to live in fear, anxiety, and constant disappointment, start here: **Hold on For Dear Life - Cling Tightly to Everything You Don't Want to Lose.** Seek to control outcomes. Grasp relationships. Guard your plans with a white-knuckled grip. Refuse to surrender anything, especially what God is asking you to release. Make control your security blanket and assume everything depends on you.

Work harder, worry longer and micro-manage every detail.

Let fear convince you that surrender equals loss. Tell yourself that if you release that dream, that person or that outcome that everything will fall apart.

Tie your identity and stability to how things turn out and only feel secure if your plans work, your goals succeed or people approve. Keep telling God what He should do and make your prayers a list of demands rather than an act of trust. Cling to your version of the story, even if God is writing something better.

...TO REDEMPTION

What does scripture have to say?

Letting go can be difficult, whether it's control, worry, past hurts or our own plans. Scripture repeatedly calls us to release our burdens to God, trust His plan and find peace in His presence.

True peace doesn't come from gripping tighter; it comes from letting go. Sure, control may feel like safety, but it only suffocates your soul, leaving you unstable and anxious as your peace rises and falls with every outcome.

Letting go is not a sign of weakness, but an act of faith acknowledging that God is in control. In fact, let **Psalm 46:10** sink in for a moment "10 'Be still, and know that I am God! I am exalted among the nations, I am exalted in the earth.'

- What areas of your life need stillness so you can recognize God's authority?
- How might being still help you release anxiety or control?

Letting go of our own understanding allows God to lead us. Faith requires trusting His wisdom even when we don't see the full picture. **Proverbs 3:5-6** reminds us to, **5 Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not rely on your own insight. 6 In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths.**

- Where are you relying on your own understanding instead of God's?
- How can you actively acknowledge Him in daily decisions?

Letting go often means surrendering personal ambitions, comforts and even worldly attachments for the sake of following Jesus. In **Matthew 16:24-26** we hear this call and challenge from Jesus, "24 Then Jesus told his disciples, 'If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. 25 For those who

want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake will find it. 26 For what will it profit them if they gain the whole world but forfeit their life? Or what will they give in return for their life?"

- What personal desires or comforts might God be calling you to let go of?
- How can surrendering them lead to greater satisfaction, peace, contentment?

Where we place our trust matters. In fact, **Isaiah 26-3** paints a wonderful picture of the impact that place our trust in God has on our lives, 3 **Those of steadfast mind you keep in peace—in peace because they trust in you.** 4 **Trust in the Lord for ever, for in the Lord God you have an everlasting rock.**

Trusting God allows us to rest secure even in difficult seasons, rather than withering under stress or disappointment.

- Where do you need to shift your trust from people or circumstances to God?
- How does trusting Him help you find peace even in challenging seasons?

Did you know that we can release worry through prayer and gratitude? Letting go of worry and anxiety happens as we bring everything to God in prayer with thanksgiving. His peace replaces our fear. **Philippians 4:6-7** is a powerful verse on trust, 6 **Do not worry about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God.** 7 **And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.**

- What worries are you holding onto that God is inviting you to release in prayer?
- How can cultivating gratitude help you let go of anxiety or control?

In **John 14:27** Jesus offers a wonderful word of peace to strengthens us to let go and trust. 27 **Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled, and do not let them be afraid.**

- What is one thing you need to release to God this week?
- What steps can you take to cultivate trust and peace in your daily life?

By releasing control, trusting God's wisdom and bringing every concern to God in prayer, we experience God's peace, bear fruit, and grow in the freedom of trusting God's ...

Note to self - Which of the statements below speak to you? Why?

- Control says, "I know best." Faith says, "God, I trust You even when I don't understand."
- Fear may be the loudest voice, but it doesn't drown out God's
- Fear makes you hold on too long. Faith frees your hands so you can receive what's next.
- You can't receive peace if your fists are clenched in control.
- Control will give you the illusion of peace until it shatters.
- The more tightly you hold on, the more peace will slip through your fingers.

Here's the Truth:

Holding on to what God asks you to release doesn't protect you, it poisons you. When you're rooted in God and place all that you have, all that you are in His hands, you don't need to cling to outcomes, because your soul is anchored in something deeper. Following Jesus requires releasing control: holding on tightly may feel responsible, but it reveals a lack of trust. God isn't asking you to hold it all together, He's asking you to trust the One who already is.

Self-Sabotage: From Ruin to Redemption Sunday, February 22

Be Nihilistic - Believe that Nothing Really Matters

Psalm 14:1a - 1 Fools say in their hearts, 'There is no God.'

FROM RUIN...

If you want to ruin your life from the inside out, start here: **Be Nihilistic - Believe That Nothing Really Matters.** Tell yourself that life has no meaning, no purpose and that your choices are insignificant. Mock hope. Decide that right and wrong are just opinions, that morality is subjective and that nothing you do, good or bad, really matters in the end. So why try? Why care?

Treat all beliefs as equally meaningless or irrelevant and stop seeking truth. Silence your conscience urging you toward goodness and love. Ignore it. Numb it. Laugh it off. Float through life without anchoring to anything solid; believing that life is meaningless and that there's no real purpose, value, or truth to anything.

...TO REDEMPTION

What does scripture have to say?

Life often brings uncertainty, questions and even fear about the future. Scripture calls us to anchor ourselves in God's truth, trust His plans and live faithfully in His Word. These passages guide us to understand hope, judgment, conscience and the sustaining power of Christ.

- Where have you found yourself feeling discouraged, distant, empty or finding meaning and purpose in life?

Here's the deal, God offers real hope, not wishful thinking, but a living anchor in the midst of chaos. When you mock hope, you harden your heart and rob yourself of the very thing your soul needs to survive. Without hope, life becomes survival, not transformation.

God sees and weighs every action. When you deny that, you lose both accountability and hope. In fact, **Romans 15:13** reminds us that we have a hope that sustains, **13 May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.** God does not offer hope as a vague wish, it is a living, sustaining promise through faith and the Holy Spirit.

- How does knowing that God fills you with hope, joy and peace impact your daily life and perspective on the future?
- Where can you rely on the Holy Spirit to strengthen your hope this week?

According to **John 8:31-32** we find freedom through God's truth, **31 Then Jesus said to the Jews who had believed in him, 'If you continue in my word, you are truly my disciples; 32 and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free.'** True freedom is not the absence of responsibility, it is the liberty to live rightly under God's truth.

- Where do you need God's truth to bring freedom in your life?
- How can you intentionally "continue in His word" this week?

Even when circumstances feel uncertain or overwhelming, God has a plan for our good and a hopeful future. Trusting Him allows us to move forward without fear. Read **Jeremiah 29:11 - 11 For surely I know the plans I have for you, says the Lord, plans for your welfare and not for harm, to give you a future with hope.**

- What areas of your life require trusting God's plans over your own understanding?
- How does this verse encourage you to move forward with confidence rather than anxiety?

Jesus is the ultimate authority and sustainer of all creation. Nothing exists outside His knowledge or control. This gives confidence that life, even with its chaos, is held securely in His hands giving us peace amid uncertainty. **Colossians 1:16-17 teaches 15 He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation; 16 for in him all things in heaven and on earth were created, things visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or powers—all things have been created through him and for him. 17 He himself is before all things, and in him all things hold together.**

- How does the Lordship of Jesus over all creation give you peace amid uncertainty?
- In what ways can you surrender control and rely on Him as the sustainer of all things?
- Where do you need to align your life more closely with God's truth?

Nihilism tempts us to live a life of despair and distrust, but Scripture calls us to anchor in God's hope, living with integrity and trust. True security comes from faith, not fear and from relying daily on God's Spirit to guide, sustain and strengthen us.

Note to self: Which of the statements below speak to you? Why?

- God wired eternity into your soul. Dismissing it won't erase it; it just leads to deeper confusion.
- When you mock hope, you harden your heart and rob yourself of the very thing your soul needs to survive.
- Without hope, life becomes survival, not transformation.
- Life has meaning because God gives it meaning.

Here's the Truth:

God made you with intention and purpose. Your actions matter, your life matters. No moment is wasted in God's hands and life finds its true meaning in Him. Rejecting this truth isn't freedom, it's despair disguised as independence. In Christ, meaning isn't something we invent; it's revealed. Your life, your actions and every moment matter because God holds them in His hands. Nihilism may seem bold, but it slowly erodes the soul, leaving you adrift and numb. God offers real hope, a living anchor amid life's chaos, embracing it gives your life significance, responsibility and lasting hope.

God sees and weighs every action. When you deny that, you lose both accountability and hope.

Self-Sabotage: From Ruin to Redemption Monday, February 23

**Believe Every Thought You Have
– Don't filter Anything Through Truth or Scripture.**

Isaiah 55:8-9 - 8 For my thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways my ways, says the Lord. 9 For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts.

FROM RUIN...

If you want to sabotage your peace, distort your identity and spiral into confusion, start here: **Believe Every Thought You Have – Don't filter Anything Through Truth or Scripture.** Don't pause to question, filter or seek God's perspective. Treat every thought that pops into your head, every fleeting idea, every harsh judgment, every fearful prediction as an absolute truth. Let your mind become a relentless judge instead of a faithful servant. Let your inner critic drown out God's voice and allow negative, anxious or sinful thoughts to go unchecked. Let toxic thoughts loop endlessly in your mind, replay failures, rehearse worries and dwell on shame until they shape your emotions and actions.

. If you think you'll fail, believe it. If you think you're unlovable or worthless, accept it. Replace "I am loved" with "I am alone." Swap "I am forgiven" with "I am condemned."

...TO REDEMPTION

What does scripture have to say?

The thoughts we dwell on shape our hearts, influence our actions and determine our spiritual health. **2 Corinthians 10:4-5** calls believers to take every thought captive and focus on what aligns with God's truth. **4 for the weapons of our warfare are not merely human, but they have divine power to destroy strongholds. We destroy arguments 5 and every proud obstacle raised up against the knowledge of God, and we take every thought captive to obey Christ.**

- What does it mean to "take every thought captive to obey Christ"?
- Are there recurring thoughts, doubts or fears in your mind that need to be surrendered to God?
- How might bringing your thoughts under Christ's authority transform your actions, words and emotions?

Taking our thoughts captive involves surrendering fears, doubts and distractions to God who provides the truth that frees us from destructive thinking. In fact, throughout scripture God calls us to reset our focus. Take a moment to highlight what we are called to think about in **Philippians 4:8-9 - 8 Finally, beloved, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is pleasing, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence and if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things. 9 Keep on doing the things that you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, and the God of peace will be with you.**

- When we set our minds on what is true, honorable, pure and praiseworthy, what kind of results can we expect in our hearts and lives?
- What practical steps could you take today to intentionally focus on these things in your thoughts?
- How might keeping your mind on these things invite God's peace into your current circumstances?

Yet let's face it, sometimes it's hard to shift a mindset. Take a moment to reflecting on the question and promise that is asked in **Psalm 42:5-6a – 5 Why are you cast down, O my soul, and why are you disquieted within me? Hope in God; for I shall again praise him, my help 6 and my God.**

- What is causing you to feel anxious or disquieted right now?
- How can you begin to shift your mindset toward hope in God instead of fear or worry?
- How does this hope (even in difficult moments) change your perspective?

Thoughts are powerful and they shape our peace, our faith, our actions and interactions. As you read **John 8:31-32 – 31, allow verse 32 to speak into whatever season of life you find yourself in. 31 Then Jesus said to the Jews who had believed in him, 'If you continue in my word, you are truly my disciples; 32 and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free.'**

- How can staying rooted in God's Word help you discern which thoughts to believe and which to reject?
- What lies or deceptions have crept into your thinking that need the truth of God's Word to set you free?
- How might knowing and believing the truth bring freedom in your current season of life?

Take Psalm 119:10 to heart. 11 I treasure your word in my heart, so that I may not sin against you.

What would it mean to allow this God's word to speak into your life and direct your mindset?

Note to self: Which of the statements below speak to you? Why?

- You are what you eat! You have the power to choose what you feed your mind, don't let negative thoughts starve your hope.
- Just like cars, thoughts can make a u-turn when going in the wrong direction
- Negative thoughts are echoes bouncing in a canyon, if you stop shouting them, the canyon falls silent.
- When you believe your thoughts over God's promises, you live under a shadow instead of in the light.

Here's the Truth:

Your mind is a battlefield, but your identity and worth are rooted in God's unchanging truth, not in every passing thought. Believing every thought isolates you from the wisdom and perspective God offers through others. Learning to take every thought captive and testing it against Scripture brings freedom, peace and clarity. You don't have to believe every thought, choose to believe God's truth instead.