

NOT EASILY BROKEN: CONNECT!

Scriptures used: [Ecclesiastes 4:9-10, 12B \(NLT\)](#), [John 19:25-27 \(NLT\)](#)

OVERVIEW

Pastor Hurmon kicked off the new year with a new series “Not Easily Broken.” He prayed over the holidays, asking God what the message should be for our church as we enter 2024. What came to him is the challenges that we will all face. This year will force us to rely on God and also each other like never before. We will face a divisive election season, economic troubles, climate disasters, war, terrorism, as well as personal issues. We will need faith-filled people around us to surround ourselves with. They will help us not only to survive 2024’s challenges, but also to thrive despite them! We need to be like redwood trees. These massive trees stand 350 feet tall, weigh 500 tons, and can live 2,000 years, but they have very shallow roots. Every redwood would fall down in the first storm but fortunately these trees grow together. Their roots overlap, which strengthens them so much that they can withstand challenges. Pastor Hurmon saw this in action recently when multiple cancer survivors from NBCC prayerfully supported another member of the congregation as she went through her own cancer treatment. This is the kind of connectedness and togetherness that NBCC is here to provide. As we connect with each other, we find a strength that none of us can enjoy individually. This kind of faith-filled connection is the crucial ingredient to thriving throughout the challenges of 2024.

KEY POINTS

1. **We cannot live a perfect life in a broken world.** Even someone like Taylor Swift has daily struggles! We may have easier or more difficult seasons of life, but nothing is ever perfect. There are always challenging dimensions of life, whether they are financial, social, or physical. Thankfully, God promises a bountiful harvest and abundance despite hard pathways, as it says in [Psalm 65:11 \(NLT\)](#).
2. **We can live faithfully in a broken world, but not alone. There are no perfect people in a broken world, but there are helpful people.** None of us is strong enough to withstand life’s challenges. While Jesus was dying on the cross, He was not alone. Three Mary’s plus the apostle John surrounded Him and were praying for Him. Our church can play a similar role for us. In fact, NBCC was placed here especially to provide this kind of support across the entire community.
3. **Love is a rugged commitment to be with and to be for others.** Jesus commanded Mary and John to be with and for each other. This shows just how essential human relationships are – if a “spiritual” relationship with God alone were enough, Jesus would not have needed to provide concretely for Mary in this way. In the same way, we should recognize that our hesitation to engage in deeper relationships with others (and sometimes with God) often comes from a fear of being hurt or disappointed. And yet, relationships with others are necessary, and they are worth it. Jesus created the model for the church two thousand years ago. This is how NBCC strives to operate today. We love each other in a practical and rugged way, showing up in deeply connected ways. This faith-filled support will get through the darkest times, and allow us to support others in their own struggles.

DISCUSSION

- 1) **HEAR** - There will be times when we feel like God has forsaken us and even the whole world. This is the kind of grief Jesus felt on the cross. Thankfully, He could look down and see four people who were full of love and faith. They were connected to Him just like we are today in our own church. This is the “redwood power” that we need to strengthen our roots and thrive even in the worst storm! Who are the people in your life who are both faithful to you and faithful to God (those who help you in your faith journey?) Do you feel well connected at NBCC? Why or why not?
- 2) **UNDERSTAND** - We tend to be reluctant to form and deepen connections. Many of us have been hurt in the past and we worry about being hurt again. This is a powerful fear and it holds us back from the connections that are so critical to surviving and thriving. Reflect on your own life. What specifically are you afraid of? What trauma or past experience holds you back from connecting with others at NBCC? Is God inviting you to take a next step to invest in connection and relationships at NBCC this year?
- 3) **DO** - NBCC will play a critical role to help each of us in 2024. There are plenty of life groups with open spots, and the church is launching a men’s ministry in February then a women’s ministry in March. These are all great opportunities to connect. Prayerfully declare “In 2024, I will go deeper in my connection with others and with God.” Take a next step of connection, and join us next Sunday at our Gatherings!