

Hanging Out with Jesus

Stories about Jesus from the Gospels

How to Get Back At the Jerks Who Mistreat You

Unedited Transcript

John 18:13-24, Matthew 26:57-68, Mark 14:53-65, Luke 22:54

Good morning, men! Men's Fellowship of United Church of Bogota in Bogota, Colombia. 25 men who have been meeting monthly for 3 months using the Video Bible Study. Led by Harold Jensen. Please go in your bibles to John Chapter 18, Verse 13. We have some field staff in town this week for training and I would like to ask those 11 men if they would stand up, wherever you are. They weren't expecting this, and remain standing, and so Greg Wilkerson here from Chicago and then back there is Dave Goswitz from Tucson and Kent Schmitt. Kent, the name of the city that you're in is Lumberton, Texas, all right? Then in the back over there, Paul Neevel from Brandon, Wisconsin, and yes, let's see. Chris DeTombe from Foley, Alabama. Wayne Burroughs right here from Alexander, New York, and then Mark Prim from Brownstown Township in Michigan, and Steve Basht from Rising Sun, Maryland. Tim Burnett from Mason, Ohio. Peter Hone from down in Naples and Armand Paladino from, is it Lunenburg or Lunburg? Lunenburg, Massachusetts, and then also in town for helping to train them is Jeff Kisiah in the back, who is our national director of field staff so I wonder if you would welcome these men to the bible study this morning? All right, everybody shake somebody's hand there.

Okay, good, and then for those of you who are online in the online bible study, if one of these men is in your area and you would like some help, they are basically completing their training for consulting with churches this week and then also you can go to the website (maninthemirror.org) at the bottom and click on the link Find a Field Staff Near You if you didn't hear your area called out. All right, so that's a fun thing for us. We're growing, we're expanding, we're taking the things that we're learning here and we're spreading them throughout not only America but the world. It's pretty exciting!

We actually have thousands of names of people that we're working with around the world in addition to the people we're working with here in the United States. All right, let's go ahead and do a shout out this morning. We have a new group, speaking of the international community. There's a group in Bogota, Columbia, the Men's Fellowship at the United Church of Bogota. They're 25 men meeting together for the last three months using the video Bible study. Harold Jensen is their leader and so I wonder if you would join in giving a warm welcome to these men of Men's Fellowship in Bogota? One, two, three, hoorah! That hoorah, that's kind of like an American military thing. Anyway so that's that and then we're in the study Hanging Out with Jesus.

Everybody, everybody is mistreated all the time. It's like an elephant in the living room, right? And many of these mistreatments take place in our relationships and a lot of these mistreatments take place in our

transactions. As I've been thinking about it this week, I realize that there are different levels or different classes of mistreatment.

It's like in the criminal justice system. You have petty crimes, you have misdemeanors, you have three classes of misdemeanors and then you have felonies and you have different classes of felonies, so you have a class one felony that's a capital offence all the way down to these petty crimes, like jaywalking, okay, and everything in between. We have mistreatment at all kinds of different levels as well. There are people just rude, you know, but that is a kind of mistreatment and there's so much of it going around that if we as believers are not careful, we can get an attitude about that, okay, and we can give a little blow-back when somebody's rude to us. You know that.

People with snide remarks. I put honey in my coffee. Is that really such a bad thing, but I had somebody say to me one day, he said, "I can't believe how much honey you put in your coffee." He said it like as a snide remark, a judgmental thing like I shouldn't be putting that much honey in my coffee. Hey, it's my coffee, I like honey. Then there are just these next level ones, these kind of judgmental accusatory comments and questions. "Why are you late?" I'm suspecting unless a person is habitually late that definitely there's a very good reason that they're late. When I'm late and somebody asks me that in an accusatory tone of voice, "Why are you late? Where have you been?" Okay, well, I had a flat tire or there was a wreck and the interstate was backed up for 4 miles and it took me a half an hour. There are good reasons why these things are going on. "Why didn't you do what I told you to do?" Now this is okay, except if it's your wife, you know? Then we move on to mistreatment in the area of ethics, and so some of the examples are frauds and so forth, but it could be lying to your wife and then we move on to another level which would be verbal and emotional abuse of other people, and then we move on to the levels of things that are criminal. Violence, physical violence for example, fraud and sometimes these things are intentional, but sometimes they're unintentional as well, so there are all these different kinds of things.

What's the best way we can get back at somebody when they mistreat us? That's what today's title is: How to Get Back at the Jerks Who Mistreat You. That's what we want to do today, is we want to look at how to get back at these people.

How was Jesus mistreated?

We're going to look at how Jesus was mistreated as the beginning point for this discussion at John Chapter 18, Verse 13. Now in Verse 12, he's arrested. Verse 13, they bound him and brought him first to Annas who was the father-in-law of Caiaphas, the High Priest that year. Caiaphas was the one who had advised the Jews that it would be good if one man died for the people.

Then there's the section about Simon Peter's first denial. Go down though to Verse 19. The High Priest questioned Jesus about his disciples and his teaching. Now here they are calling Annas the High Priest. He's not really the High Priest anymore. He's the High Priest Emeritus. That's the best way to think about it. We still call President Bush President Bush but he's Emeritus. He's not in office. He's not in office, but he questions. Jesus has been arrested and he has been bound and now he's being questioned in a kangaroo court. He said, "I have spoken openly to the world." Jesus replied, "I always taught in the synagogues or at the temple where all the Jews come together. I said nothing in secret. Why question me? Ask those who heard me. Surely, they know what I said," and when Jesus said this, one of the officials nearby struck him in the face. "Is that any way to answer the High Priest?" he demanded. Jesus

replied, "If I said something wrong, testify as to what is wrong, but if I spoke the truth, why did you strike me?"

Then Annas sent him to Caiaphas, bound. Go ahead and turn to Matthew Chapter 26, turn back to your left to Matthew 26, beginning at Verse 57. Now most of the reading I've done seems to assume that Annas lived over here and Caiaphas lived over there and that may have been the case. I've been to Brussels and I've been to the compound where Erasmus, one of the teachers of Luther, Martin Luther, I've been to his compound so I think it's possible that these two men, Caiaphas was his father-in-law, I think it might be very likely that they were in a compound somewhere and there was a father-in-law apartment somewhere and they ... but we don't really know.

Matthew, Chapter 26, Verse 57 though picks up the action. It says, "Those who had arrested Jesus took him to Caiaphas, the High Priest." Where did they take him? I'm just saying, I think it was probably possible at least, maybe probable that it was in the same compound where the teachers of the law and the elders had assembled. Part of the mistreatment of Jesus here is that they're bringing him before a kangaroo court. This is an illegal court. They're doing it in the dark of night. They're not doing it under the normal due process. They're violating due process. Peter followed him at a distance right up to the courtyard of the High Priest.

He entered and sat down with the guards to see the outcome. The chief priests and the whole Sanhedrin were looking for false evidence against Jesus. There's another mistreatment. You've had that happen. You've been falsely accused before. Hopefully you haven't been slapped in the face but probably you have been that too but you've been falsely accused and then in order to support those allegations, you have people telling lies. They were looking for people who would tell lies. That's what's going on with Jesus, so that they could put him to death but they did not find any, though many false witnesses came forward.

Finally two came forward and declared, "This man said I'm able to destroy the Temple of God and rebuild it in three days." Then the High Priest stood up and said to Jesus, "Are you not going to answer? What is this testimony that these men are bringing against you?" He remained silent, and then the High Priest asked him to swear under oath and then Jesus said, "Yes, it's as you say," and then in Verse 65, then the High Priest tore his clothes and said, "He has spoken blasphemy." There's another mistreatment. "Why do we need any more witnesses? Look, now you have heard the blasphemy yourself. What do you think?" "He is worthy of death," they answered.

The mob has taken over. Reason has left them. If you keep saying a lie over and over long enough, eventually you come to believe it's true. "He is worthy of death," they answered, and then watch this, they spit in his face. Another mistreatment, struck him with their fists, another mistreatment. Others slapped him, another mistreatment and said, "Prophesize to us, Christ, who has hit you?" A lot of mistreatment going on here with Jesus. Now, how do we see this treatment from a human perspective? It was a mistake, it should never have happened. It is a false arrest, false imprisonment, injustice, a miscarriage of justice, and so how could such a mistake be made? How could these men have gone so mad?

Kahlil Gibran has a parable called the Wise King. I'm going to paraphrase it a little bit. There was a king who was revered because of his great wisdom and his mighty power, and in his kingdom, unfortunately there was only one place to get water, one well in all of this kingdom, in the center of the capital city, and so all the people came to the city center to get water. One night, a witch put poison into the well.

The next morning, the people came and they drank and as they drank, out of the poisoned well, they all went mad. Everybody drank from the well that day in this entire kingdom except the king. By the afternoon of that very day, the murmurings began against the king. "The king has lost his mind. The king has gone mad. We can't let the mad king rule us. We have to get rid of the mad king."

Later that evening, the king, hearing of the people's unrest, sent a steward down to the well to dip in and get a goblet of water which he then drank and the people rejoiced because the king had regained his reason. People around us, people around Jesus, they had gone mad. They had lost, they had abandoned their mental faculties and they had done this terrible, terrible thing and it rationalized this mistreatment. You've had this happen as well.

Now the question is, was this mistreatment of Jesus really a mistake? No. Actually, this mistreatment of Jesus was no mistake at all. It happened exactly as the scriptures predicted it would, exactly as Jesus himself had said it would happen. It's part of God's inscrutable will, and so if this would not have happened, then scriptures would not have been fulfilled. Nevertheless, all of these people doing this mistreatment still stand in this mysterious way, so God lets these mistreatments happen for his greater purposes. The big idea today is this. **Mistreatment for you and for me, as it was for Jesus, is God teeing up opportunities to show the world there's a difference.** When you get mistreated, this is God teeing up opportunities for you and for me to show the world that there really is a difference. You see this here. For those of you who haven't been here in the series before, we've been looking at Jesus and his suffering in the Garden and struggling with God's will. Jesus struggling to accept God's will and we said that the big idea that day was that the key to embracing God's will is to fully surrender any will of my own.

Then we looked at the betrayal of Jesus by Judas the last time that we were together, and we said that when God allows you to be betrayed, ask how can I bring glory to Jesus Christ through this betrayal, and now this week is the mistreatment of Jesus, and we see how God is teeing up an opportunity here for Jesus to show the world that there really is a difference. Look back to what he says, the part I skipped over at Verse 64. "Yes, it is as you say," Jesus said. "But I say to all of you, in the future, you will see the son of man sitting at the right hand of the Mighty One and coming on the clouds of heaven."

What do we learn from Jesus about handling mistreatment?

All right, so next let's talk about what do we learn from Jesus here about handling mistreatment, about how to handle mistreatment? We're done in this text, and I want you to, if you would, turn to Acts Chapter 2, Verse 22, and again as always, if you don't know your way around quickly, that's fine. You can just listen or look on with somebody else. Acts Chapter 2, Verse 22. This is Peter addressing the crowd and he says, "Men of Israel, listen to this. Jesus of Nazareth was a man accredited by God to you by miracles, wonders and signs which God did among you through him as you yourselves know." This man was handed over to you, watch this, by God's set purpose and foreknowledge.

It was part of the plan, and then so Jesus knew the plan. Jesus knew the plan and Jesus chose to be mistreated for God's greater good. Jesus chose, and you and I have the opportunity also to choose to allow ourselves to be mistreated for the glory of God's greater purpose which we often don't know. To look into this further, turn to First Peter, Chapter 3, Verse 13. First Peter, Chapter 3, Verse 13, and in this text, we start to drill down now on how the example of Jesus is supposed to roll over on to us, so who's going to harm you if you're eager to do good?

It really means who should harm you if you're going to do good, because we know that you can do good and be harmed, but watch this. "But even if you should suffer for what is right, even if you should be mistreated for what is right, you are blessed. Do not fear what they fear. Do not be frightened, but in your heart set apart Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have, but do this with gentleness and respect."

If you're mistreated, conduct yourself according to the manner of Jesus Christ. People will ask you what's going on. They will be curious about why you're not yelling at them like all the other customers are yelling at them. They will want to know. They'll be curious. They may ask it verbally or you might just see it in their body language. "I wonder what's up with this guy? Is he on drugs? I mean, why isn't he yelling at me like everybody else does? Is he on a high?"

Always be prepared to give an answer for everyone who wants to know the reason for the hope that you have, but do it with gentleness and respect. Then watch this, keeping a clear conscience so that those who speak maliciously against your good behavior in Christ may be ashamed of their slander, and watch this in Verse 17. It is better, it is better if it is God's will for you to suffer for doing good than for doing evil, so sometimes it's God will for us to be mistreated. Why? So that he can put his glory on display as he did in Jesus Christ. God is going to be putting his glory on display through those of us who are willing to submit to this mistreatment.

One thing that's very interesting. This little text here is used as a proof text for apologetics and I appreciate that and it certainly is, but I noticed something here this week, so this is always being ready to give an answer for the hope that's in you. In other words, being ready to give a witness. That's the meat, but notice that it's between two slices of bread. The bread of suffering. There's suffering before it in Verse 14 but even if you suffer and then there's suffering after, it's better if it's God's will to suffer for doing good so it's really in the context of suffering that we give this witness.

I've had an interesting week. Some of you who have been here know that my wife and I bought a camper and so I'm trying to get it all sorted out. I had a brake light that wasn't working, so I took it in. Actually I called and they said they could see me in three weeks for a brake light that's not working. I said, "Okay." I went in, two Fridays ago, two weeks ago, I took it in and I sat there for three hours and they came out and they told me, "We need to replace your brake light but we don't have one in stock." I said, "Okay." I'm thinking to myself, "Okay, that's fine. How do we solve this problem?" They said, "We'll order the part and it will be in in a few days." One week later, I haven't heard from them. It's been a few days.

One week later, I haven't heard from them, so last Friday I called them on the phone and they said ... Now this is a great company. This is really just one guy. I said, "Is the part coming?" He said, "Oh, you know what, we need to get that ordered. We need to get that ordered." I had told them when I went in two weeks ago that I needed all of this fixed by Wednesday, giving myself two days. We're going to take a camping trip tonight, but I give myself two days of margin of error that I needed to have all of this completed by Wednesday. A week has gone by now. I said, "Okay. All right, how are we going to solve this problem?" "We'll call them and we'll ask them to send the part."

I said, "No. What you really need to do is you really need to call them and ask them to overnight the part to make sure that it's here. Would you do that and call me back?" "Oh okay, I'll do that." The end of the day comes. He hasn't done it. I call back over there. He said, "I'm sorry, I got real busy but I'll take care of it and I'll get back to you." Nothing happened, so I called back. It's after 5:00. Nobody's there. He's gone

home. I call him the next morning. He said, "I couldn't ... I wasn't able to get with the parts guys so we'll get on this on Monday."

All right, at this point, I check him off the list and I go back to the guy who sold me the camper who's a real getter-doner, and I said, "Hey, here's the situation. I'm trying to have the camper ready to leave on Wednesday. Now it's Saturday. Can you help me out?" He said, "I'll take care of it." He got on the horn with somebody at the Home Office and by George, they had on late Monday morning, there was a brake light there from the UPS. This was like, it was happening. I took the brake light over to the RV store and I walk up to the counter and I say, "I'm here about the brake light."

He goes, "Oh, oh you know, I really, we need to get that in here." I said, "No, you don't. I have it right here." He goes, "How did you get that?" I said, "I did what you should have done when I first brought this up to you" and so in a nice way I let him know that I had done his work for him, and so, and I said a couple of other things, but all the right ... All the things that are okay to say when you have a conflict like this. In a right way. I conducted myself in a proper way, so it was interesting though. There was a young man sitting next to him and he was drinking all this in, and I think he was interested, he was curious.

And so we went ahead and made arrangements to put this brake light on. The young guy, he's following me around. He's trying to figure out what's going on, and actually everybody at the dealership now is trying to figure out what makes me tick because I had made a decision that I was going to do this. Now my mistreatment, oh, I mean, we're not even talking in the same league. It's just my mistreatment, I call the inconvenience of affluence, okay. It's a brake light on an RV for crying out loud. It's not really a mistreatment per se. It's like if we talk about these different levels, Level One, Two, Three. The petty things and misdemeanors and felonies ... This is way down, way down below, petty even, but I'm not going on my vacation that I've had planned for a couple of months unless I get this brake light, so yeah, there is an element of it, but you see the point. The point is that you know that I've had nothing but problems since that brake light went out because I also had to have the hitch, weight distribution hitch, whatever the heck that is, worked on and I had to have a hitch receiver put on my truck. I didn't know there were different classes of hitch receivers, so I put this hitch receiver on the truck.

I'm driving down the road. Fortunately I'm only going three miles an hour and the hitch falls off the truck and the trailer goes to the ground. I have to get a 50,000 pound tow-truck, I didn't really have to but that's what came, to take it back over to the dealership where I have conducted myself in a right way and now these guys are all over this to get me right, and they were wonderful and they got this thing ... I went over and got another hitch. We came over and put it on. They wished me a good trip. I went over to ... I was on my way, I went over to weigh the trailer, to get it all balanced out and everything. I'm pulling off the ramp at the public scale one mile an hour. The new hitch, guess what? The whole trailer went to the ground again, so this is yesterday and the day before, the trailer hitch fell off my car. Nobody told me that they have different classes of trailer hitches. Nobody told me this. There's another mistreatment and that, just think about it, I could have been going 65 miles an hour down the interstate, I could have killed somebody. Again, the idea is just when you're mistreated ... Now these are funny illustrations, but when you're mistreated, it's serious at the moment, right?

This is the way we answer them, right here. This is the way we answer them, and guess what? I've told you if you have been here any amount of time, you know that I have more problems with my home than most people have, and I believe it's because God knows that when he sends a workman out, I'm going to share my faith with him. Okay, guess what? This trailer hitch incident this week, has let me give out 15

books this week. 15 men. This is like a world record week for sharing. Unbelievable. Mistreatment is God's teeing up an opportunity to show the world that there really is a difference.

How should we handle it when we're mistreated?

All right, so how should we handle it then when we are mistreated? We've been talking about it already. I think step number one is don't drink the Kool-Aid. Don't drink the Kool-Aid. All those people in the king's kingdom, they drank the witch's Kool-Aid and they lost track of their senses, and you may be the only one left who's not a madman. Don't drink the Kool-Aid. Drink the scriptures. Let's look at them. Here's what the Bible says. Acts 14:22, this is our expectation. Acts 14, Verse 22. This is what we can expect. We must go through many hardships to enter the kingdom of God. Philippians, 1:29. For it has been granted to you on behalf of Christ not only to believe in him, but also to suffer for him.

Now that word granted, it's from the root word. The root word there is the word that translates grace. In other words, it's a favor that God is doing for us. It has been granted or given as a grace, a special favor to us on behalf of Christ, not only to believe on it but also to suffer for him. Anything else is drinking the Kool-Aid. I'm not doing very good on time, so I'm going to give you some other verses you can read. 1 Peter, Chapter 2, Verses 18 to 21, and 1 Peter, Chapter 5, Verses 12 to 16 which says, "Do not be surprised at the painful trial you are suffering as though something strange were happening to you."

I think the point of all this is if Jesus can die for us, then we can live for him. If he can go so far as to be mistreated to the point of death for us, then we can turn around and be mistreated in a way that shows that we are living for him, and that's one of the reasons, it's certainly not the only reason but that's one of the reasons that mistreatment comes into our lives because it's God's way of teeing up opportunities for us to demonstrate to the world that there really is a difference. They get to see the way the other customers responded to their problems at the RV store and then they get to see the way a Christian responds and the curiosity that comes from that which is the witness that we have. Let's pray!

Closing Prayer

Our dearest Father, Lord, first of all, thank you for these field staff who are here. We pray your special blessing on them and they'll be commissioned here at lunch today. Lord, we pray that you would send them forth to make disciples and to help solve the men problem that we so desperately face in our country. Lord, for the mistreatment they and all of us will experience today and every day, all the time, but in many different ways, big and little. Father, give us the mind of Christ. Give us the mind of Christ, as it talks about in Philippians Chapter 2. The example that he set for us, who set aside all of his rights so that he could become a servant. Let us become that servant in Jesus' name and for his glory. Amen.