

Walking With Jesus in a Weird World

It's Going to Be a Battle (But Jesus Wins)

Unedited Transcript

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Well, good morning, men. I want to just express my appreciation for getting a chance to be here. You know, these are precious opportunities for me because, many of you know, I'm going to be heading for a transition here soon before the end of the year. I won't be here that many more times so each one is like a little rare jewel to me to get a chance to be with you this morning.

I'm going to take a little bit of a privilege and just share with you a moment about what's going on with Man in the Mirror. This is going to be a little bit unusual. It's not something that I've done before in this way, but hey, I'm leaving. My filter's off so I can say things now. I will be transitioning to the board of directors for Man in the Mirror so let me speak to you maybe a little bit more as a board member and a little less as a CEO or an employee.

I don't know of any ministry that is having a bigger impact for the dollars that are being donated to it than Man in the Mirror. Man in the Mirror is literally changing the way that churches reach and disciple men all across the country. We now have 100 members of our field team across America engaged with 1000 or maybe a few more churches and those churches that engage with one of our field team members report that within the first year, they're discipling fifteen new men within the first year. As we begin to add more and more members to that field team, both paid staff and volunteers, reach more and more churches, more and more churches switch from a men's ministry mindset to a discipleship of men mindset. We're seeing lives being transformed, marriages being changed. It's just amazing the stories that are coming into our office. I could tell you a dozen just today.

Now, why am I mentioning this to you? I mention this to you because we had a financial hole right now that is very, very serious. As good as we are at teaching churches how to disciple men, that's almost as bad as we are at telling the story about God's doing. We don't want to talk about what God's doing. We want to keep doing more of what God's doing. We're trying to get better. We have a campaign for year end, a campaign for next year. It's getting some good traction, but that's not going to help in the next 60 days. I would just encourage you, if you're here, that you may feel like, "Hey, I'd like to make an investment in Man in the Mirror," this would be a great time.

I'm going to be bold this morning. I'm going to ask you to pray about that. Say a quick prayer. Some of you may not need to pray. You know what Man in the Mirror has meant in your life over the years and you know that God would want you to make an investment. If that's true, here's what I'm going to ask you to pray about. I'm going to ask you to pray about adding a zero. Some of y'all could write a \$100 check without thinking about it, wouldn't miss it. What would it mean to add a zero to that? How would the Lord lead you to do that? Some of you that are watching by video, you've enjoyed these Bible studies, you've gotten books by the box, you've read Pat's books. Is there a way that you could be a part

of this and would God ask you to maybe do something beyond what you would ordinarily be thinking about contributing or investing?

The reason I bring this to you is we've got a window of about 60 days that we need to get through. Things are kicking in from long term, things are kicking in for year end. We're going to be fine. In those 60 days, we just need to have some people step up and help us. You know, it can be, again, I'm talking as a board member now. I'm going to step out of my CEO hat and I'm going to let you see behind the scenes. It can be a little discouraging working at the kind of thing that we do at Man in the Mirror because we are trench work, systemic, no glory kind of stuff. You know, the folks that are putting on these big events, having a bunch of guys, they may spend \$100,000, \$200,000 to get 3000 guys together, 4000 guys together for one day. They have no trouble raising that money. There's a national ministry that essentially doesn't really do anything now, a few events, and I happened to check because of this board role, this idea of being a board member of Man in the Mirror. I happened to look it up. They raised more money than Man in the Mirror does with essentially no ministry.

For whatever reason, it is hard for us to get traction with people with the idea that, hey, coming alongside a pastor for the long term, coming alongside a leadership team for the long term, and actually changing the whole way they think about reaching and discipling men, not just for today but for five, ten, fifteen years, is a valid investment, a much better investment, most guys are more attracted to that big splash event. As a staff for our staff, it can be a little discouraging. What I'm asking is if you have benefited from this ministry, if you've been blessed by it, now would be a great time for you to come alongside us, but not only just that, but to maybe pray about doing something even more significant than you ordinarily might do. I'd really appreciate that.

Turn to 1 Peter 5. We're going to jump right in. We're closing out our series on Walking With Jesus in a Weird World. It is a weird world. Can you imagine? If you would have scripted what we've seen in this presidential campaign and put it into a book or a movie, people would have thought you were doing a farce and they would have said, "That's ridiculous. You'll never sell that. Nobody would ever believe it. That could never happen." I mean, think about what we've been seeing in this campaign, the types of language that's been used, the history of the candidates, I mean, on and on and on. It's just amazing. We live in a weird world.

The reality is it's always been a weird a world. It was a weird world in Peter's day, probably weirder than it is for us today. Peter was writing this book to help us understand how do we deal with that. How do we move forward when we're in a world that we don't fit in, in a world that's not really our home? 1 Peter chapter 5 verse 8. Let's read together. "Be sober-minded, be watchful. Your adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. Resist him, firm in your faith, knowing that the same kinds of suffering are being experienced by your brotherhood throughout the world. After you have suffered a little while, the God of all grace who has called you to his eternal glory in Christ, will himself restore, confirm, strengthen, and establish you. To him be the dominion forever and ever, amen." May God add understanding to the reading of his Holy Word.

The title of this message today is that It's Going to Be a Battle but Jesus Wins. I want to start by just talking about the big idea. I don't know, Brian, if you could come up or somebody could come up. My Power Point is stuck for some reason. Talk about the big idea. The big idea for this message, we're going to lay it out right at the beginning, is fighting against sin allows Christ to do for us what we could never do for ourselves. That's the idea. All of us, as men, have dreams about what we want to accomplish. We have ideas about the type of men that we want to be, our families, our workplaces, our friendships, our

church involvement. How do we get there? Well, Peter here says one of the integral parts of what it's going to take to see that happen in our lives is we have to be willing to fight against sin. We have an enemy. The reality is that we are being hunted. That's what this passage says.

You know, the serpent came into the garden and spoke to Eve. Adam was there and he distracted and lied and deceived and tempted and Adam and Eve gave into that temptation. Well, the serpent, just like he found a way into the garden, is looking for a way into your life constantly. The serpent is out there. The scriptures are clear about this. Satan is real and is at work. Ephesians 4:26, for example, "Be angry and do not sin. Do not let the sun go down on your anger," verse 27, "And give no opportunity to the devil." "Don't give a foothold," other translations say, "to the devil." What does that mean? Don't open the door a little, a crack, and let the devil in. He's seeking a way to get in. That serpent is trying to come in. James 4:7, "Submit yourselves, therefore, to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you." The devil is real. Satan is real. His demons are real. We have a real enemy.

How does a lion hunt? This passage compares Satan to a lion. How does a lion hunt? He stalks his prey. Which prey does he typically choose? Choose the weakest, the oldest, the most isolated, the sick, the youngest. Why does he pick that particular animal? Because that's the animal that is the least aware and is going to be the slowest to react. Right? I mean, if you are a predator, you're going to try to go after the prey that's going to be the slowest to react and the least able to defend himself. Well, guess what. Satan does the same thing. He's looking for men who are the least ready to react and who are the least able to defend themselves.

Some of y'all are dealing with ongoing sin, you're dealing with the consequences of that, you're struggling with temptations that you just can't seem to overcome, you've got anger issues or you've got addictions or you've got distractions that are out of control, your marriage relationship is messed up, you're too involved in your work. Whatever these things are, why is that happening? Part of it is that Satan has found a place of temptation, he's found a way into the garden, he's gotten a foothold and he's found a place where you're least able to react and least able to defend yourself.

Peter here, in this passage, is going to explain to us how do we actually learn to fight and to resist the devil. You see, not fighting is not an option for the Christian. It just assumed that we're going to fight and giving up is not an option. You can try to pretend like there's not a battle. That doesn't work. If there's a lion out there, walking around like there's not a lion is not really going to help you. Laying down and saying, "Hey, lion, come over here and eat me," that's not really going to help you. The only option we have is to fight. Peter says, "Look, when we live in a weird world, when we live in a world that's got this influence of the evil one, where the world, the flesh, and the devil is aligned against us, we have to learn to fight." He gives us four commands about fighting here, four commands to show us how to fight.

The first one is to be sober-minded, to have self-control. He says, at the beginning of this passage, be sober-minded or have self-control. What does that mean? It's talking about discipline. Now, think about the people in your life that you have known or read about who had a lot of discipline. What are some of types of people who have a lot of discipline? Anybody, tell me somebody. Who has a lot of discipline? Military. Military and athletes. Those are the first two I heard. Those are the first two things that came to my mind. Why does a guy in the military have such discipline besides the fact that he's going to get screamed at by his drill sergeant if he doesn't wake up? Why is he motivated to do it? Because you know

you might be in situations where your life is on the line and the life of your buddies is on the line and you've got to be able to be a team and you've got to be able to carry your weight and you've got to be able to get it done. There's a bigger goal that you're aiming for and so you have discipline because of that calling that you have to this bigger goal. The same thing with somebody like a marathoner or a person who does Iron Man or weightlifter or whatever it is. They have discipline because they have this goal.

As men, we need to remember that God has called us to something higher than sitting around watching Netflix and college football or hunting on the weekends or building a great business so that we can retire at 55 with a beach house and a boat. God has called us to something greater. When we grab hold of that, then it too will give us the discipline to read the scriptures, to pray, to be involved in relationships and small groups and Bible studies and all those kinds of things. It will give us the ability to have self-control.

The second thing he says is to be watchful, to be alert, to stay awake, don't let the culture seduce you. There's a famous book called *Amusing Ourselves to Death* by Neil Postman that came about 30 years ago now. Some of you are probably familiar with it. In that book, he contrasted the ideas of George Orwell's 1984 novel and Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World* novel, both of which came out at about the same time in the 30s, 40s, whenever that was.

The difference in these two novels is very striking because in Orwell's 1984, he predicted a future in which there would be a totalitarian state that would control all of your behaviors, that would watch you all the time, that would punish you with pain whenever you got out of line. That was 1984. If you remember, Apple computer used it, that theme in one of their first ads for the Macintosh computer.

Now, in contrast, when Huxley read that, he said, "That's not what the future's going to be like at all." He wrote this book, *Brave New World*. In that book, there was also a controlling force of a government, but they didn't control you by pain, they controlled you with pleasure. There was this drug called Soma that people took. They went to these pleasure viewing palaces to watch these movie things and they had all these experiences. Because they had all this stuff, everybody was so happy, there was no rebellions, everyone was just in this zombie-like pleasure state so that there was no need to have a totalitarian government stamping down on everything because nobody cared.

Now, which do you think is more of a reality for us today? I think it's the *Brave New World*. We've got Netflix and air conditioning and golf clubs and new shotguns and whatever. Hey, we're good. We're good. Most people have been seduced by their college football team or their career or whatever into this sort of slumber about the reality of their life. We lack spiritual power, we lack the ability to really make a difference in somebody else's lives because we're not alert, we're not watchful, we're not aware of where Satan is getting us. We're way more concerned about who's going to be on the Supreme Court than about the actual young woman who cleans our office and who has an unwanted pregnancy with two kids at home and no father. We're not alert. We're not watchful. We've been distracted by all this other stuff instead of the real lives of people that God has placed us into contact with.

To resist is the third command. It's going to be difficult, Peter says. It's not easy. It's a fallen world. You should not be surprised when work is difficult, when your marriage is difficult, when raising children is difficult. Of course it's going to be difficult. We're a bunch of sinners and it's a fallen world. You should be shocked when it works out. I deal with these guys and I tell you what. They get trapped in these things and I hear this all the time. "Well, you know, my wife is ... I don't know. She's just been so busy with the kids and she hasn't paid any attention to me," or, "I'm under so much stress at the office. It's so

hard," or, "I didn't really mean to click on it. I thought I was clicking on something else and it came up and she was just ... I don't know. I just ended up looking at it." I mean whine, whine, whine, whine, whine. Man up. Man up.

We need some guys who are willing to say, "No, I'm in a fight. I don't care about my circumstances. I don't care about how difficult it is. Of course it's going to be difficult." At some point, you just have to admit that you love fooling around with this sin more than you love Jesus Christ. That's where some of us are. That woman that seems to be so nice at the office and understands you and you enjoy talking with her because she really gets you or whatever, give me a break. That's a joke. All that shows is that you love fooling around with sin more than you love Jesus Christ.

That leads to the fourth thing that he said which is to stand firm in the faith. To have self-control, to be watchful, to resist, and then to stand firm in the faith. What he means by the faith are the promises and the truths of God. It's real, it's armor, and it's protection. Peter's saying that the truth of the gospel is what anchors us. It's a fortress for us. It gives us a solid foundation. When we start wavering from what the Bible teaches to be true and we start going off on our own opinions about things, that's when we start to get an unsure foundation and we can be knocked from side-to-side as the scriptures say. If you're not involved in church, if you're not involved in Bible studies, if you don't have men speaking into your life about the truth of the scriptures, then you're setting yourself up for failure. That's what Peter says. We need to stand firm in the faith.

Now, why should we do this? The first thing that he says is that everybody else is going through this too. Look at this in verse 9, "Knowing that the same kinds of suffering are being experienced by your brotherhood throughout the world." Now, he doesn't say it's the same suffering, but the same kinds of suffering. In other words, he's saying that what you're experiencing is not unique and unusual and the most special thing that anybody's ever gone through in the world. No, there are all kinds of people suffering all kinds of different trials and temptations and you're just going through the same kinds of things that they're going through. We can take comfort in knowing that this is a common experience. There are no perfect men with perfect families and perfect marriages and perfect jobs and perfect everything. I mean, we sometimes like to portray that. We put on our little game face, but the reality is that all of us have got things that we're struggling with. We've got areas of our lives where we're stuck. We need to admit that we need one another.

Then the second thing that we see with this is that Jesus wins. Why should we fight? Because Jesus wins. It says here, "The God of all grace," in verse 10, "who has called you to his eternal glory in Christ." We know the outcome of this story. It's like a thriller. I saw the Bourne movie recently. Some of you guys probably saw that. You've seen other thrillers. They always try to set up tension, right? I mean, they're always chasing the good guy and they've got him trapped somewhere. At the deepest level while you're watching that, what do you know? The good guys' going to win. You're not going to see a movie where James Bond gets killed and they just fade to black. That's not how the movie ends. You know that. There's a limit to how much tension they can really create given that you know, at the end of the day, that the good guy's going to win. Guess what. Jesus wins and he's going to bring us with him. We're going to share in the glory. That's what it's saying. We've been called to share his glory. In the midst of this suffering, in the midst of all the difficulties we have, there's a limit to how much tension that should really create for us because Jesus wins and we know what lies beyond this suffering.

Man, I have had a week this week. It's been brutal. I've had troubles with a vendor. We're spending a lot of money for us on a database CRM system, and I have had, I don't know, it would be hard to express

and I'd get all emotional and mad again and all that. I don't want to deal with that this morning. Let's just say I've spent hours and hours this week trying to straighten some things out on that. I've had a couple of other personal situations that have been difficult. I had a situation with our house here, trying to sell our house here that was getting twisted. I found out, after a long way into this process, that, for many companies, you can no longer, move, switch jobs, and still get a mortgage. I didn't know that. Some of you that are in mortgage business, you're like, "Well, of course you can't." I'm thinking, well, if I switch from IBM to Dell and I move, I got be able to buy a house. I mean, it's 2016 in America. Apparently not. I just found this out.

I mean, it's been a week. I mean, one thing after another. I'm so beaten down. I'm getting home, I'm talking to Ruthy, I'm like, "I cannot believe what happened today," and she's nice enough to listen to me for a few minutes. The next day I get home, I'm like, "I cannot believe what happened today." I mean, it's just been one of those weeks. You know, when you're going through that kind of stuff, the reality is that we know how the story ends. We don't know when. It may not even be in this life, but we know that one day we're going to share in the glory that Christ has earned through his obedience and his triumph.

One of the quotes that I read in a commentary when I studying for today, it says, "The Christian waits not for the end of suffering, but for the goal of suffering." In other words, we're not just trying to get rid of the pain, get rid of the suffering, get back to the kind of life that we want to have. That's not what should be taking place when we're dealing with trials and temptations and suffering. Instead, we should be saying, "I want to get out of this whatever God wants to see happen through this suffering and I'll suffer as long as he wants me to for His glory."

I know a number of years ago, it had an incredible impact on me, a man that I knew that had cancer. He said, "If this is how God wants to get glory in my life, then I know that in the end, this cancer will be worth it." That's a man who's looking beyond his own good, his own circumstances, to the glory of God. That's why Peter is telling us that fighting against sin allows Christ to do for us what we could never do for ourselves.

Now, Peter then shares with us the results that occur in our lives. Peter is uniquely qualified to do this. Think about the guy writing this book. He is the man who was Jesus' most outspoken follower, the guy that was always aim, fire, ready, that kind of thing. I mean, just going off at the mouth, all out of order, all out of control, but he was the one who said, "I'll do anything for you," and then what did he end up doing? He ended up denying Jesus three times. Jesus restored him on the edge of the sea there, at that fishing expedition and he told him three times to feed his sheep. Peter then goes on to have this ministry in the church and here he's talking about the restoration and the power that Jesus can give us when we submit to him, when we fight against sin, when we depend on his strength in our lives.

There are four results that he says he's going to get. We're going to, first of all, be restored and then confirmed, strengthened, and established. These are kind of all four words that are around the same idea here. This is in verse 10. It says, "He will himself restore, confirm, strengthen, and establish you." The idea is that Jesus will do for us what we can't do for ourselves. Spiritually broken men cannot heal themselves. He says here that he is going to restore us. That's what he did for Peter. He says he's going to confirm us, to encourage us, to let us know that we are his. What is a confirmation? It's that marking of something. A confirmation in the church is that marking of a child, that they are now a child of God. He is confirming that reality of our sonship in our hearts as we submit to Him, as we fight against the evil one.

He's going to strengthen us. He's going to be the one who provides the strength for us to obey, not our own self effort, but it's going to be Christ who does this as we worship him, as we love him, as we trust him. Think about what that meant for Peter. Here's a guy who denied Jesus to a servant girl, who, just a few weeks later, is telling the officials, the same officials that executed Jesus, he's telling them, "I have to obey God rather than men. I cannot stop speaking about what Jesus has done." Then, history, tradition, tells us that Peter was eventually crucified upside down because he told the people who were executing him that he did not feel worthy to die in the same way that Jesus did. Now, how does that kind of courage happen? Because Jesus strengthened him. Jesus gave him the power to do what He wanted him to do. Then He says here finally He'll establish us, He'll give us that firm foundation to endure the things that we are going through.

Why is He going to do this? He's going to do this because He's demonstrating here, at the end of verse 11, "To Him be the dominion forever and ever." God is the one who's Lord. God is the one that's the Lord of our lives. Every day we're facing this choice: Am I going to submit to God now or am I going to allow the evil one to distract and tempt and control me? Am I going to allow him to sedate me, anesthetize me with entertainment or distractions or hobbies or whatever so that I don't take seriously the calling that Christ has placed on my life, that I'm satisfied just being nice or whatever? Or am I really going to submit to God, worship Him, ask Him to do in me what only He can do, and give me the power to make a real difference in this world for Him and for His glory? That's the choice we each face every day.

The reality is we can either submit now or we can submit later. Everyone, if God has the dominion, that means nobody else has the dominion. He is Lord and He will be Lord. Everyone else is going to bow their knee to Him. It's either going to be now or it's going to be later. If we do it now, we get these blessings. That's what Peter's saying. This is what Christ will do for you when you submit and when you fight against the evil one. If we bow later at the judgment day, it's going to be in judgment and in cursing. There won't be any blessings at that point, but everyone eventually will submit to the dominion of God.

Let me give you a couple of applications before we go onto talking about this at our tables. A couple of questions for you to think about, a couple of applications.

First of all, where are you fighting and enduring against temptation and the evil one? What's been hard for you this week? Where is God challenging you to change? If you can't think of any areas of your life where you feel God's conviction, then maybe you're coasting. If you're coasting, that's dangerous because it means you're leaving that door open a crack for the evil one to get his foothold, for that lion to come and to attack. Where are you sensing God's work in your life today?

Secondly, where are you placing your hope? When you get in a crisis, are you just looking to get through it or are you trying to see ways where you can help God receive glory? Are you more interested in stopping the suffering and pain or are you more interested in what God is trying to do? Think about that the next time you're in a period of suffering or crisis. A situation's going south, is your first reaction to fix it so that you don't have to have the problem anymore?

I know that this happened a lot with my kids. Whenever my kids, my wife would get angry with my kids, what's the first thing I want to do? I want to fix it. I want to get even madder at my kids because why? Because they're making my wife mad. I don't want my wife to be mad. I want a happy wife. It's not from some righteous thing about, "Oh, I want to help my kids learn to obey and love God." No, I want my wife to be happy and you're making my wife mad. Stop it. Why do I want my wife to be happy? Because I like

having a happy wife. The reason I'm sitting there yelling at my kids is really all about me when you get to the bottom of it. I don't want to have to deal with an unhappy wife who's dealing with disobedient children.

The next time you're in something, traffic jam, vendor's not doing what they should, customer's upset, whatever, ask yourself the question: Am I just trying to get out of this or do I really want to let God get whatever glory and let him do whatever it is he's trying to do here?

Number three, can you point to places where God is using you in powerful ways? Where has He given you the opportunity to speak into someone's life or into a situation and there's real transformation taking place? Can you point to a couple places like that? Not that you just made a stand on Facebook, "I'm against all these things. Stop being for them," or whatever. But you actually made a real difference in people's lives. If not, maybe you're lacking spiritual strength because you're not fighting with the power that Jesus provides. Christ wants us to be powerful men. He wants us to be men that actually make a difference, where the people around us are changed because they came in contact with us. That doesn't happen because of our right views or how persistent we are or how eloquent we are. It happens because the power of the Holy Spirit is working in and through us as we submit to Christ and as we fight against the evil one.

There's some food for thought. Let's pray and then we'll move to our discussions at our tables.

Father, we thank you so much for today. We thank you for your Word. Lord, we recognize that we often forget about our enemy, that we just take for granted that we can just be nice guys and we can kind of coast along doing what we think you told us to do and everything's going to be okay. If we're not careful, we end up giving the devil a foothold and sometimes we don't recognize that until there's all kinds of consequences. Lord, I pray that you would make us men who fight, men who resist, men who are self-aware, who have self-control, men who are strong in the faith, so that you can do in us what we could never do for ourselves. We want to be whole men. We want to be complete men. We want to be men who are established and confirmed and strengthened and restored. Lord, we know we can't do that in ourselves. That has to come through your hands and by your power. Lord, we pray that as the God of all grace, that you would let us share with your glory, not only in the age to come, but now as you work in us through the power of the Spirit, to help us become not only the men that you want us to be, but the men that we have always wanted to be. For your glory, we pray in Jesus' name, amen.