

# Walking with Jesus in a Weird World

## Becoming The Man People Turn To When Life Gets Too Weird

Unedited Transcript

Patrick Morley

Well, good morning men. If you would, please turn in your Bibles to 1 Peter Chapter 2. And as we get started this morning we want to welcome a group, actually they have been meeting for four years, they are eight men and they meet at different members' houses, 7:30 a.m. on Fridays. They are led by Alan Hay. They are called the Blythewood Men. They are part of the Trinity United Methodist Church Blythewood, South Carolina and actually these men live in a subdivision or neighborhood, a large neighborhood together, and they know each other from work and golf and they are from many different denominations and so they have come together and, let's see what it says: "To grow together in Christ, but we also wanted to learn from each other because we all come from different denominations." I thought that was a pretty exciting thing. And so I wonder if you would join me in welcoming the Blythewood Men. 1 ... 2 ... 3 ... Hoorah!

We're really glad that you men are with us and part of this study. So session, the series "Walking With Jesus in a Weird World". This morning I want to shift gears a little bit and talk about becoming the man that people turn to when life gets a little too weird. So in the first three messages we have been more or less focused on how you can walk in a world that is getting increasingly confusing and weird. We talked about the idea of being a thermostat, not a thermometer, and then Brett came in and talked about living a life of integrity and then David came in and talked about living by the truth of God's Word, live in the Word or die in the world, I think were the only two options as David was presenting that.

So today we want to transition to a passage, why are we doing all of that? Well part of the reason we will see here today. You know, the world is weird. We all know that, that's no big surprise to us and I think we have talked enough about the attributes of the weird world ... that's hard to say. Okay, everybody say "Weird World" ten times together. Weird World. Weird World. Weird World. Weird World. Weird World. Weird World. Weird World. Weird World ... okay.

But we're not surprised that the world is weird. Because we have the doctrines of the fall and the doctrine of sin, this is the world we expected. We weren't expecting a Utopian world because of our doctrine, this is the world that we expected. It's turning out exactly like the Bible said it would. So we shouldn't be surprised and we're not surprised by that. But it's a little overwhelming sometimes because so many people are getting tripped up, so many people are stumbling. Do you know what I'm talking about? So, you know, people are all around you going day by day, you're watching people's lives and then all of a sudden they stumble. That's my favorite joke with my kids growing up.

Actually it was my favorite joke with Jim Seibert too. So those of you who knew Jim Seibert, he was the administrator until he went to be with Jesus, and now Jim Angelakos is our administrator but for 17

years Jim Seibert was our administrator and Jim and I started going to lunch and a movie every Friday. After Bible study we would go to lunch and then we would go to a movie. Almost every week, wherever we were, you go to the Coke machine or the pop machine or whatever and get your drinks and Jim would usually be seated first, I guess he was aggressive in the getting of his sodas, and not putting others before himself, you know, not looking out for my interest, looking out for his own interest getting his soda first.

And so he would go and sit down and then I would go get my soda and then I would walk over and every week I would go "Oops!" like that with the soda. Now I had been doing that for over 40 years and I have never, ever had an accident. I have never, ever spilled a single drop of anything on any of my family members, any of my friends or Jim Seibert. But every week he said "Someday you're going to make a mistake." Well this whole idea of stumbling, people are stumbling all around us every day and, of course, we too ourselves are stumbling. And we see so much of this going on, you can't help but wonder. You can't help but wonder. I'm just one man. What can I do? I'm just one man. What can I do? How can I help? I'm just one man. I'm just one person.

Let's take a look at the scriptures and see what it lays out for us that we can do. 1 Peter Chapter 2 beginning at verse 4: "As you come to Him, to Jesus, the living stone rejected by men but chosen by God and precious to him you also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ." There it is. There it is. Let's take a look at this. And so we, it says, are like living stones. We are like being built into a spiritual house. We are being built into a spiritual ... well what is a spiritual house? What's a spiritual house? What would be a spiritual house? That would be a temple, that would be a temple or today that would be a church, a congregation of people and we are being built into a congregation of people. We congregate here, and as we will see, we congregate here so that we can go there.

But we congregate, we are being built up. You come here, you come to your churches. We are being built up as a spiritual house. And Jesus Christ is the cornerstone of this house. He is the foundation. 1 Corinthians 3:11: "No one can lay any foundation other than Jesus Christ." Listen! If Jesus Christ is not the foundation, then you are going to be building with wood, hay and stubble. That is what the scriptures say. He is the foundation of the spiritual house and you and I are being built into a spiritual house. Now, I want to pause here and talk about a world view problem. 70 to 75 percent, according to something I read on the internet so we know it's true, 70 to 75 percent of the world's cultures are shame and honor cultures. The Oriental and the near and far eastern cultures tend to be shame and honor cultures. Now I have studied quite a bit on shame and honor cultures and I don't understand them at all because I am part of a western culture.

Western cultures are individualistic. So when I read the scriptures and I read this text, when I read this text, when it says "as you come to him" I'm thinking as I come to him. Is there anybody here who actually when they read that, when we read that together, thought about us collectively coming to Him? Probably not. So as I come to him, the living stone rejected by men but chosen by God and precious to Him, I also, like a living stone, I am being built into a spiritual house. That's not what this is all about. That's not what this is about at all. All of the letters that are written by Paul, and Peter here, all of these letters, they are not written to individuals. They are written to groups of people. And so the whole idea here is that we together, it's you and I together, we are being built into a spiritual house. We are being built into a temple. Now each of our bodies is a temple of the Holy Spirit but altogether we are being built into the larger spiritual house and the larger temple of God.

It's very important to understand that you are not in this alone. When it says "I'm just one man" you're not. You're never one man. When you are out and you see somebody who has stumbled, guess what? You're not the only one who saw them stumble. You're not the only one that God has called out or given the opportunity to help that person. There are lots of people who see that and are also feeling called to help that person who just stumbled. So when you are on an airplane and you're feeling all alone when the plane starts shaking, there are Christians all over that plane. When you go to work and you see somebody stumble and you think the weight of the world is on your shoulders that you have to solve ... you're not alone. God has all kinds of Christians at your place of work. In your neighborhood, that's what they found out in Blythewood, South Carolina just north of Columbia. They found out that in their large community there were lots of Christians.

So when a man in the community starts cheating on his wife and gets caught, that's not all on one guy to help him, there's a community, there is a spiritual house in that community that God has placed there to help. When you are at a restaurant and you see a waitress or a waiter and you read their eyes and you just realize that they have the weight of the world on their shoulders, and you're thinking what can I do, I'm just one man. You're not just one man. If there are 100 people in the restaurant there are probably several dozen Christians in that restaurant. But what's the problem? But what's the problem? A lot of times those other Christians are lukewarm. They are cultural Christians. They are not thinking of themselves as being part of the spiritual body. They are not thinking about how God has called them to be part of the solution for that. And so you do sometimes tend to feel alone but we are going to talk about how to solve all that this morning, at least for ourselves, we are going to talk about how to solve all that.

So for what purpose is God building this spiritual house? Well, let's read on. "You also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house ..." Now do you see that? You will never read that again and think that it is "I" who am being built into a spiritual house. Right? From now on when you read that you will always understand that it is the plural "you", it's not the singular "you". We, also like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house, and for what purpose? To be a holy priesthood, to offer sacrifices, spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. He's turning us into, as He builds us up, you notice it's building, it's not "He built us" He is building us into this spiritual house so we are a work in progress, we are under construction.

The old saying, "Please be patient, God is not finished with me yet." So we are under construction but what God is building is that we will increasingly be able to go out and help people when they stumble. He is increasingly turning us into a royal priesthood. Priests. God is making us together into an army of priests. A cathedral of priests. So I don't know how you could come up with a stronger case that we are called to live in community with each other. I just don't know how you could come up with a stronger case. We are not in it alone, that's the whole point. I'm just one man, what can I do? That's the whole point of the first part of this text, is that we are not alone. He is building us into a community. We are a community.

When you are out and about in the restaurant, on the airplane, at the intersection and you're looking around, at that intersection, all those drivers, there are Christians everywhere among them. There are! They are looking at you and thinking the same thing that you're thinking about them. I'm going to beat you! You know traffic does tend to bring out the worst in Christians, but anyway that is another story for another day. So the question becomes, why does God want a community of priests? Why does he want to have this spiritual house of a holy priesthood offering these spiritual sacrifices? Well we've already gone quite a bit of the way into it but let's read on in verse 6. "For in the scripture it says, see I lay a

stone in Zion, a chosen and precious cornerstone and the one who trusts in him will never be put to shame. Remember, this was written to a shame and honor culture. So shame, being shamed in front of your family, in front of your peers. That was a big thing. But the person who puts their trust in Jesus will never be put to shame.

There are many people out there who have done bad things and in our culture they feel guilty, in other cultures they would feel ashamed. They probably feel some shame here too, right? They have stumbled. They have stumbled and they need somebody to help them get back up again. They need somebody to help them get back up again. Read on ... "Now to you who believe, this stone is precious. For us, this gospel of Jesus that we have put our trust and faith in, it's precious to us. But to those who do not believe the stone the builder has rejected has become the capstone and the stone that causes men to stumble." See, the reason that people are stumbling out there, when you see them at the gym, when you see them on the golf course, when you see them at work and they have stumbled. They have messed up. They have stumbled for this is the reason why they have stumbled. A stone that causes men to stumble and a rock that makes them fall. "They stumble," reading on, "because they disobey the message" or the word, the logos. Jesus is the logos.

So they stumble because they disobey the message of the gospel, which is also what they were destined for. Now let's be careful here, that's what they were destined for. What this means is that it was inevitable that it would happen this way. It doesn't mean that it was predetermined that they were going to stumble, it means that it was inevitable that if you disobey the message you are going to stumble. And, of course, that works inside the spiritual house as well as outside, we know that, right? But we're talking about those outside right now. So there you have it. So there you have it.

And this next two or three verses as we go into it, this is the foundation for what is known as the doctrine as the priesthood of all believers. So as we read it, if you've ever heard of that term before and not known exactly where it came from, this is where it comes from. Let's read it together. So we've got all these people out there stumbling, "But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God that you may declare the praises of Him who have called you out of darkness into His wonderful light. Once you were not a people but now you are the people of God. Once you had not received mercy but now you have received mercy." And so there you have it. There you have it. We're going to walk out of here today, we're going to go into all our different venues, the different places that we will be today, and God has brought us here today and to the other places where you come for this to grow as disciples to turn us into a spiritual house to build us up and to appoint us as his priests.

You are a vicar of Christ. You are a vicar of Christ. You are an ambassador. You're a servant, a steward, all these things. Today it is put in the context of a priest. You are a priest! Oh my goodness! You are a priest and you live in a weird world! So here's the Big Idea for the day: **Walk in the world like a priest. And there are many of us.** Walk in the world like a priest. Don't forget that there are many of us out there. You are not alone. You don't have to, I'm just one man, what can I do? You're not alone. You're not one man. Oh get over yourself. We are a kingdom of priests. Now it would be nice if more of us executed on that but that is a different message for another day. So let's just talk a little bit about this priesthood of all believers, I want to make sure you understand it. So this idea that you are chosen people, this is written to all Christians, Jews and Gentiles both.

Chosen people, sometimes you might think of that as being the, well it's really the elect and you might think of that as the Jewish people alone, but it goes on a holy nation that is ethnos, so basically it is

anybody who has made a profession of faith in the gospel of Jesus is part of this group. It says that you belong to this. Why? So that you may declare the praises of him. Proclamation: To proclaim. Earlier up in verse 5 to offer spiritual sacrifices accept the will of God. So you have been appointed as a priest to offer spiritual sacrifices - we will talk more about that in a minute - and you have been made a priest so that you may proclaim the excellencies of the gospel. Showing people how you got out of the darkness. When you stumbled, how did you get out of the darkness. You're walking around in the dark? What happens if you're walking around in the dark? You stumble! You stumble. Right?

So how did you get out of the darkness? How did you get into the light? You know how to help those people in the darkness get out of the darkness and get into the light. You see these people stumble, you know why they stumbled. They stumbled because they were walking around in the dark. You've seen the light, you know how to get them out of the light. Okay, let's do this! Everybody! It says every do that. There is another passage that should be understood to also complete the meaning of this concept and that is Ephesians Chapter 4, Verses 11 and 12. Listen, it was He, Jesus who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists and some to be pastors and teachers. So there is a teacher class, if you will, a leader class, if you will. And why do they exist? Verse 12: "To prepare God's people for works of service so that the body of Christ might be built up." There's that building up again.

So your pastors, your teachers, people like me we are here to help build you up so that you can do the works of service that are being talked about here of the Holy Priesthood. Offering spiritual sacrifices, proclaiming the gospel to the people you see who have stumbled in the darkness. You see? You see? So these two things have to be looked at as working together. Now, why do we need this doctrine? The Priesthood of All Believers. Why do we need this? Well we need this because there are too many stumbling for us to be able to delegate it to a group of professionals to take care of that. There are so many people who have so many problems, you can't see somebody stumbling and dial one of your pastors and say "Hey pastor, I've got this person, they've got a problem, you need to come help them." How is that working? It's not working! It was never intended to work that way.

We are the priests and there are people who God has also appointed to further equip us to be effective as priests. You see how it works? You see why we need it? When Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead he said "Okay everybody, all you people standing around, take off his grave clothes." He didn't do everything. He never intended to do everything. He intended to involve us. One reason we need this doctrine is there are too many people stumbling to delegate it to the professionals. The second is that this is the method of Jesus to involve us in the activity. The third reason is that when we help somebody whose life is broken, shattered, coming apart, it gives us purpose. It gives us meaning. It gives us a reason to exist.

So how does it work? The Big Idea today: **Walk in the world like a priest - and there are many of us.** Walk in the world like a priest. The way it works is that we go out into the world. There are many congregations. There are many congregations where you will be today. God has called you and placed you in many different congregations: In your golf club. In your hobby group. In your small group. In your church. In your neighborhood. In your marriage. With your kids. At your place of work ... And on and on and on and on and on and on. And each of these are congregations. And occasionally in these congregations life gets a little weird. People stumble. God, in his wisdom, has distributed us across all of these different venues. Not alone, there are other Christians there too.

So let's take a look at what priests do. What do priests do? Well we know that they offer spiritual sacrifices so this means that they pray Romans 12:1 "Offer your bodies as living sacrifices." And so there

is this intercessory kind of thing that we do. So one thing that priests do, when you're walking around ... How am I doing on time? I'm doing pretty good. When you're walking around it is good to know, it is good to know that most of those people feel the weight of the world. Most of those people are burdened down with cares. The other day, this last Sunday morning, my wife sleeps a little later, a lot later, than I do and so usually at the time she gets up, she gets up at 8 o'clock, okay? So about 8 o'clock on a Sunday morning we like to fool around, kid around, most couples do. And so I walked into the bedroom, and I usually make her some coffee, and I walked into the bedroom to see if she was awake, and she was awake, and so I said, "Good morning!" And I said that like I didn't have a care in the world.

But it was interesting because immediately I realized that betrays how I really feel right now. Because I have a lot of cares, I have a lot of burdens right now. I have a lot of things that are weighing me down. You know you go through seasons and so forth. Usually for you and usually for me things are going well, cares are kind of in balance and we are feeling pretty good but you have this thing that is kind of like humming in the background like a turbine engine, this care that is over here, this long-term thing or short-term thing. Everybody has these cares. So we are walking around today and Jesus is telling us "Hey look, you guys are my priests today and you are to leave the congregation and I am going to distribute you out into the community and you're going to be walking around and I want you to offer spiritual sacrifices."

Now one application of doing that would be when you see all these people today, just honestly, and I do this, well not completely every person but almost every person, I just say a prayer for everybody. I say "You know, I don't know what's going on with that person Lord but they look like they have it all together but You and I know that they don't, so help them." And by the way, just having that mindset means that when I do meet somebody now, I guess different people have different abilities to read eyes, I understand that, I guess I have the ability to read eyes somewhat and when I talk to somebody and ask them how they are doing and so forth, and they say "Oh I'm doing great." I know when they're lying. Maybe you do too. Say a little prayer for that person. You might even engage them in a conversation because the second thing that we do as priests is we proclaim. We proclaim. It says right here in the text: "That you may proclaim the praises, the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light."

So what do priests do? They pray for people. They talk to people. Could I just put it this way? Do what your gifted to do. If your gift is service, serve people. If you have a speaking gift, speak. If your gift is administration and somebody is all messed up, help them get organized. Just use your gift, whatever it is. Watch this little video. I'm going to run this over I guess because I just realized we've got this video that I want to show you. One of our men, Rod Clark, goes to Starbucks. Is it every day, or every week, or once a week or what? Often? Often. And so he has a ministry. He is a priest to Starbucks. Watch this video.

Rod Clark: 'So I buy these in bulk. Some people buy them one at a time. And then I go to Starbucks because that is my baby, so I talk to them and I explain to them the importance of this. See this goes to all denominations because Pat Morley wrote it right there, it's a name that you are aware of. "Oh yeah, we know him, we know him." So that goes and then I said "If you want the book that would be great, but you've got to promise me that you'll read it and digest it. And so if you don't read the book then would you please pass it on to somebody else?" It has helped me in my days of being retired so this is the time that I spend to be able to help others and to be able to guide them and to lead them and to

pray with them, even at Starbucks in College Park. They were weeping because they were so joyed to know that somebody cared for them and also they wanted to know about Christianity, so I talked about that right there in Starbucks. Actually here just recently I had somebody here with me and I could tell that they had something on their heart. So right there at Starbucks I went to them and I put my hand on their arm and I said "God is leading you and I love you." Amen.'

All right, so that's how it's done. You can do it in an organized fashion if you want to go on a missions trip, that's great. But just along the way just be a priest wherever you are. Do what you can do based on the way that you're gifted, whatever that might be. I have three young people right now, 32, 36 and 26 that I am zeroed in on. God has got me locked onto these three young people. The reason why, I don't know. But I know that I am not in it alone with them. My job is to be faithful, it's not to produce some particular outcome. I know that God has surrounded these people with other Christians. I am guessing that each of these three probably has somewhere a grandmother or a mother who has been praying ... Who knows? ... Maybe for decades, that God would bring someone into the life of their child, to be the priest who would pray for them, who would talk to them, who would proclaim to them the gospel.

And so, men, unless you are planning to have a quiet day that you spend alone at home, wherever you are today you are going to be running into people who have been overcome by weird. They have stumbled. And the big idea is this: Therefore walk in the world like a priest. And remember there are many, many of us. Let's pray:

Our dearest Father, thank You for this doctrine of the priesthood of all believers. Lord I pray that if men would not be convinced by human logic that the power of your Holy Word would convince them and give them confidence that they really are your priests. Most of these men already are and I thank you for that. We pray in Jesus' name. Amen.