

Special Messages From 2017

Do You Feel Like the Pressure is Getting to You?

Unedited Transcript

Patrick Morley

Good morning, men! And, now, I want you to say, "Hey, man. Good morning." Awesome! Awesome. If you would, please turn in your Bibles to 2 Corinthians 1.

I need a volunteer, somebody hopefully that does not have a quick temper and somebody who does not mind being pushed around a little bit. How about you? Would you come and be my- Tell everybody your name.

Dan: My name is Dan.

Patrick Morley: Okay. Dan's going to be a volunteer, and, Dan, I'm taking some masking tape now, and I'm putting it on the floor, and I'm making an X here, and this is where I would like you to stand. Dan, what this represents, that position, that represents Christian behavior, Christian response. Okay?

Dan: Do you want me to stand here?

Patrick Morley: Yeah, yeah. I am. I am. I am. Dan, over here, I'm going to put another X. This represents the behavior of let's just say a cultural Christian or somebody who is not responding in a Biblical way to whatever is going on. Okay?

Dan: Got it. Oh, geez!

Patrick Morley: Dan, I want you to hold your position right here ...

Dan: All right.

Patrick Morley: ... where the Biblical Christian should be. What prompted today's message, and this is a one-off. Next week, we'll begin a new series. I'll tell you about that later. What prompted this is that, for the last couple of years, I have been under an enormous amount of pressure, and so I want to talk to you about that.

Before we get started, let's do a shout-out. We have a shout-out today to four men who are meeting in a barbershop on Monday nights at 6pm, and Terrence Favorite is the barber, and it says, "Barbershop." They're part of Fisher of Men Tabernacle in Port Allen, Louisiana. Those of you who are online as well as you who are here, I wonder if you would join me in giving these men a warm, rousing, Man in the Mirror welcome. 1, 2, 3! Oo-rah! Okay.

As I said, I have been under quite a bit of pressure for a couple years. The normal thing is you handle it, but then, last Fall, it just seemed like the load was getting bigger and bigger and bigger. We had leadership transitions at the ministry last year. They're going great, but we still had them, and it still creates pressure. Cash flow pressure at the end of the year because we put a building into place last year and so more money for that. Even though we raised more money last year than we ever have, it still was less at the end of the year, you know that whole deal. Then, all kinds of personal things that I don't feel comfortable telling you about, but, some personal things that I have told you about, a new air conditioning system that not only it got installed but then it had to be taken out and a new one put in, a long, long story there. Just a whole lot of pressure. Just a whole lot of pressure.

Then, after that, the camper thing. By the way, the camper thing is still going on. Let's see. Over two weeks ago now, I sent them a follow-up email and listed everything out, and so it actually started moving the needle for about a day, and then, this week, I had to send another email. That was on Tuesday. Today's Friday. I still haven't heard back. It's astonishing to me. I'm actually now going to go, I'm going to go take that to the factory in Ohio. That's what I've decided to do. I'm so frustrated I'm going to take it back to the factory. I'm going to drive it to Ohio. It's going to take me two days to get there.

Anyway, there's that kind of pressure going on, and then did I mention that a septic drain field system problem? No, I just mentioned the septic tank. Then, they came back the next day and told me the drain field is all messed up. All kinds of pressure! It's really frustrating. This is where the Christian's supposed to be standing, not halfway in between. All right. All right. Dan.

Dan: Yeah?

Patrick Morley: Okay. Then, when I was not here, last week, I was having a great weekend with my son and his family, our daughter and her family, and come out, get a knock on the door on Sunday morning. We're staying at an AirBNB in Huntsville in the historic district. It's a delight. We're having a great time. Knock on the door. A woman in the neighborhood says, "Oh, somebody went through the neighborhood last night and slashed the tires on all of the cars," my car and my son-in-law's rental car. It just when does it stop? When does it stop?

I don't know what you all think, but I think Dan has really done a great job resisting the pressure, right? But you feel it. Don't you feel this pressure, every day, all day, different times of the day? Sometimes more, sometimes- Just say, "The pressure's too much!" Thank you, Dan.

Dan: You're welcome.

Patrick Morley: Thank you.

Dan: You're welcome.

Patrick Morley: Round of applause for Dan. Dan knows how to stand his ground! Awesome, Dan.

The title of the message today is this: "Do You Feel Like the Pressure is Getting to You?" Well, we all have times when we feel like the pressure is getting to you. In the reminder email which many of you get, this is what I wrote. "Are you feeling under pressure and overwhelmed? In a tailspin? Out of

control? Are you experiencing worry, anxiety, fear? Are you weary, worn down, tired, exhausted, frustrated, disappointed, discouraged, hurting, suffering, sad, even depressed? Is your heart troubled? Are you in sorrow or despair? Are you having trouble getting things done?" Well, we all have times like this. What I want to do this morning is I want to do a one-off, and I want to just talk about: What do you do when you feel like just the pressure's just getting to you?

We're going to look at a lesson from the life of Paul. What can we learn from the life of Paul? As some of you know, I read the Bible through cover-to-cover every year. This is my 30th year. Last year, in the fall, I was reading in the Book of Acts, and I noticed a few things, 2 in particular, about Paul that I had not really paid a lot of attention to in the past. The first thing, and the reason for this is because we think of Paul as our hero. He's the formidable man of courage who faces the challenges. The ship is about to wreck, and everybody's panicking, and Paul's the voice of reason. Paul's the voice of calm. He's the rational one. He's our theologian, and we love him for that. We think about Paul as this determined guy who gets it done. But I was so struck last year just how much trouble, pain, suffering, sorrow, trial, anxiety, worry, sadness that Paul expresses, and he does this in all of his writings!

I want you to look with me at 2 Corinthians 1. We'll start at verse 8. Paul writes this. He says, "We do not want you to be uninformed, brothers, about the hardships we suffered in the province of Asia. We were under-" just having a delightful time, piña coladas. He says, "We were under great," what? "Pressure." Do you feel like the pressure is getting to you? Look what Paul says about that: "We were under great pressure far beyond our ability to endure so that we despaired even of life." He is either here describing a depression or even possibly, although this would be difficult to prove, he's having suicidal thoughts. Read on.

"Indeed, in our hearts, we felt the sentence of death." We know from Phillipians 1, I wrote down the verses so you can look them up later, but he said, "I don't know whether it's better to live or to die." At different points, at least one point, he actually didn't care if he lived or died. He didn't even know which would be better. He actually said, "Actually, for me, it'd be better to be dead, but, for you, it'd be better if I lived."

This is a man, and I hadn't really noticed this before. Then, I noticed something else is that, and this is the most stunning of the two revelations for me, he just can't stop talking about it. He just can't stop talking about it. It's just like he goes on and on and on talking about how much pressure he has felt under and how much that he has felt like he's been pushed back to the other way. He just talks about it all the time, all the time.

Let's go ahead and look at Phillipians 1. Phillipians 1. You can hold your finger in that 2 Corinthians. Notice I said that just after I gave you enough time to not hold your finger in it. Anyway, Phillipians 1, again, verse 23, "I am torn between the two. I desired in part to be with Christ, which is by far better." We talked about that, right? Verse 29: "The word is being granted to you on behalf of Christ not only to believe on Him but also to suffer for Him since you are going through the same struggle you saw that I had, now here that I still have." He just can't stop talking about his struggles. Very interesting.

What's interesting to me: I don't know where I picked this up, but, somewhere along the line, I got the impression that, if you were a good Christian, you would be overcoming your struggles, that, if you were a good Christian, when these problems came to you, that Christ would be enough and you wouldn't need anything else. There is a sense in which that's true. But there's more to the story than that. In fact, I even had the feeling, and I have been told, when in certain times of my life, when I was having

problems that were creating pressure, that the reason that you're having this problem is that you don't have enough faith. What a truckload of horse manure! Because worry is normal. Worry is the- Anxiety is human.

The big idea today is this: Pressure is normal. Trying to handle it alone, that's what's not normal. We already see some clues, some hints, about how Paul is making sure that he doesn't try to handle it alone. How? Just by simply being vulnerable and telling other people about it. Pressure is normal. Trying to handle it alone is not. That's the big idea for the day.

Now, how has God provided to solve this problem? In Matthew 6, I'm going to talk to you a little bit about that. I'm going to ask you to turn to 1 Peter 5. In Matthew 6, Jesus tells us, "Do not worry. Do not worry about what you eat, what you wear, and so forth." He said, "The people who don't believe they run after these things, but your Heavenly Father knows that you need them. Seek first His kingdom, His righteousness, and He will give you all of these other things too." Then, Jesus still speaking, He says, "Do not worry about tomorrow. Tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own."

One way that God has provided to solve this problem is He's told us to not worry. Now, if you worry, does this mean then that you're sinning? See, I think this is maybe where some of these people get the screwed up idea. Jesus says, "Don't worry." Jesus didn't say, "You shouldn't worry." He saw that you were worried, and He's telling you, "Don't do that. I've got this. I'll take care of this." But He never says, "You shouldn't worry." He made you with the emotion that results in worry. To tell you you shouldn't do something that He created you to do, how bizarre would that be? What kind of a God would that be? Worry is normal, and the pressure that comes with it is normal. Do you see this? All right.

John 14:27 says: "Do not let your hearts be troubled," Jesus said, "and do not be afraid." Again, He's telling us how to solve the problem. He's telling us not to be worried, not to be afraid. He's not telling us you shouldn't. He's not making it a moral failure if you do. He's rather, as a loving God, telling us that we don't have to, not to do it.

Now, in 1 Peter 5:3, we need to start talking about, "Okay, well, how do we not worry? How does that happen?" 1 Peter 5:6: "Humble yourselves therefore under God's mighty hand that He may lift you up in due time." Well, just a little idea here. Humbles yourselves. Come to God humbly. One thing that's not going to overcome the pressure is railing against God. Watch this, verse 7: "Cast all your anxiety," all of your whatever, your anxiety, "on Him because He cares for you." Okay, watch this. Watch this. I think that's what Paul was doing. Peter's writing here, but that's what Paul was doing! Paul was casting of his anxiety on the Lord by putting it out there, by putting it out there.

Then, if you would, turn to 2 Corinthians 12. I don't know what you're going through today, but I hope this is going to be a good deal for you. 2 Corinthians 12. Paul, back on the strength of Paul, he has this surpassingly great revelation, and then he writes here. He says, "But, to keep me from becoming conceded about it," thinking I'm a big deal because I got this word of God thing going, he writes, "there was given to me a thorn in the flesh." Nobody knows what it is, and a lot of speculation, but, anyway, something that he couldn't get rid of. "I pleaded 3 times to the Lord to take it away, and then this is what the Lord said to me." Verse 9: "My grace is sufficient for you."

Whoever is trying to push you off this X over there, whatever it is, whether it's a physical ailment, a migraine headache, or half-blind, need glasses when they didn't have glasses. Maybe, some people think

it might be. Whatever it is, this is trying to push off this mark, push you off your mark. "My grace is sufficient for you."

Then, He says, Jesus to Paul, I love these little red letter sections of Acts and Corinthians, so forth, where Jesus is speaking to Paul. I don't know how your theology works, but I have had God speak to me a few times. I was looking through the file yesterday. It looks like maybe a dozen times in my Christian walk I have heard the voice of God. Now, Paul's not saying here he hears it out loud. He might have. I don't. But I do hear God's voice. This is Jesus telling Paul and Paul on behalf of Jesus telling us, "My grace is sufficient for you." Jesus said, "For My power," and that's "dunamis," the dynamite, "For My power is made perfect," or fulfilled or completed, "My power is made perfect in your weakness."

In other words, when we're weak, it actually releases somehow, mystically, spiritually, the weaker we are the more that allows the power of God to be displayed in our lives. When we're really under pressure, we can buck up, we can tough it out, we can try to be stronger, and I think there's a sense in which we should, but not in our own strength, in the strength of the power of the Holy Spirit! "My power," my dunamis, the Holy Spirit, the power of the Holy Spirit, "is made perfect," fulfilled, completed, "in your weakness."

Then, Paul goes on here, and he writes, "Therefore, I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses." I'm going to boast about my weaknesses, and that's exactly what he did in 2 Corinthians 1. He was boasting, he was openly sharing, vulnerably sharing, about his weaknesses. "Therefore, I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses," why? "So that Christ's power may rest on me." I'm over here. I'm standing on this X, the one that Dan was standing on. If I am mute, if I am mute about what pressure I'm under, it makes it more difficult, it makes it more difficult to resist the pressure.

Paul says, "I'm here. I'm under pressure. I'm going to boast about the things that are pressuring me over here. I'm going to boast about my weaknesses so that Christ's power may rest on me." Then, he says this: "That is why for Christ's sake I delight in weaknesses, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties so that Christ's power may rest on me." I delight in these things. So many versions have different words for that. I like the word "delight" personally. We're talking about: How does this happen? Okay? Now, we've talked about not worrying. We're talked about how it should come about. But we need to figure out one more thing.

Again, the big idea today is this: Pressure is normal. Pressure is normal. Trying to handle it alone is not. Now, final thing to take a look at, it's just: How can we apply what we've been learning here or talking about here? Turn with me to Galatians 6:2. Galatians 6:2. The first thing, the first thing that we can do to apply this, is to follow the example of who? No, for how to handle the pressure. Christ tells us what to do. Paul. Okay. You want to remember that. Do what Paul does. What did Paul do? He talked openly about the things that were causing pressure. He openly confessed the things that were causing - And, when he gave his testimony, he talked about these things before Felix or Festus or whoever it was. He talked openly about these things. He was vulnerable.

You as a man, however, have a natural propensity to not do this. Women, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah. Guys, not so much. You want, when it comes to what's causing your pressure, here's what you need to know. You need to be more like a woman. You need to be like a chick. All right? This, when it comes to the things that are causing you pressure, you need to be like Paul. You need to open up. You need to be vulnerable. All right?

Another thing that we should be doing, so, when I prepare one of these messages or actually when I do anything that I do, if I'm in my right mind and it's over here and not over here, if I'm in my right mind, I always do a couple of things. I pray. All of these letters or emails that I've sent to the RV dealer, I have done none of those with anger. You will not be able to discern my emotional state in any way. There's no snark, no snide remark anywhere in these emails. Well, not in the first and second and third draft. In the one that I send, all right, so I'm feeling the pressure over here, but the one that I send, all right, now how do I do that?

Well, I pray. I pray. This is one of the applications. We didn't talk extensively about this, obviously this is one of the - pray about these things. Pray about the things that are causing you pressure. Pray about them. I'm praying, "What do I talk to you men about?" Honestly, if I don't pray about it, I just feel such anxiety. I'm paralyzed. If you're paralyzed with anxiety, pray.

Then, I do believe in the power of the Holy Spirit, and I trust in the power of the Holy Spirit. I think I mentioned it here not too long ago that, 5:00 on Thursday afternoon, I'm putty. It's the most inadequate moment of my life, because, 5:00 on Thursday, I sit down for one hour, and that's when I write the message. I finished all of the preparation, I write the message during that one hour, and I feel so sick to my stomach sometimes, sometimes, not often, but sometimes, when I go up to my study to write the message because I have set aside all of my human wisdom at that point, and I'm relying only on the Holy Spirit. Oh my gosh, like I really am relying on the Holy Spirit.

When you are entirely relying on the Holy Spirit and not your own strength, you might feel a little queasy. That would be normal. Does that make sense to you? That would feel normal to have fully surrendered something to Jesus and the power of His spirit. Blap, blap, blap, blap, pray, pray, pray, pray, pray, Holy Spirit, Holy Spirit, Holy Spirit.

Galatians 6:2. "Carry each other's burdens, and, in this way, you will fulfill the law of Christ." What is the law of Christ? Yeah, love your neighbor, neighbor love, love one another. "Carry each other's burdens." Now, what happens when you are vulnerable and share openly about your struggles, the things that are causing you the pressure that's getting to you? What happens?

Some people, some people, can relate. Some people who are standing on this X, some people over here in this X, they're going to what? They're going to try to take you down further, all right? But there are some people that you will share with, that's why you share with discretion, right? There's some people standing on this X over here, and they have the same Holy Spirit that you have. Maybe they've been through something similar to what you've been through. Anybody had an RV camper they can't get fixed? The bottom line is that they will come, they will come to you and help you carry your burden. That's why we do this Bible study in tables, in groups of men.

The big idea today is this: Pressure is normal. Trying to handle it alone: not so much. You know what to do now. Let's pray.

Heavenly Father, our dearest Father, we come to You, Lord, humbly, and ask you to tutor the message of the day to our lives, for all of our lives, for the rest of our lives, in Jesus's name, amen.