

The Journey to Biblical Manhood

Challenge 10: Suffering

Session 3: Broken Wings, A Warming Hut, "I Care"

Unedited Transcript

Patrick Morley

Good morning, men. Please turn in your Bibles to John 13:34. And so we're gonna do a shout out here this morning. We've got a group called Iron Men. They're led by Mark Dwyer. They're part of Tomoka Christian Church. They actually meet at the church in the chapel at Ormond Beach, Florida. A group of 14 men who have met for over 20 years. They've been using the video Bible study for over 10 years. They meet at Tuesdays on 7 a.m. Pause. They've been using the video Bible study for over 10 years. Thank you for being part of the Bible study. We want to welcome you, of course. But isn't it fascinating? We have 15,000 people who download this Bible study every week, approximately, and we know over the years, for six or seven years we've been doing a weekly shout out. Sometimes we've done multiple shout outs because we had a backlog. Plus we did a survey once that 21% of the people doing the downloads were doing small group, so we have good reason to believe there are several hundreds of groups that are doing Bible study with us, so we welcome all of you and we hope you too will register on the Bible study page so we can do a shout out for you.

But here's a group who have been meeting for ten years, and as far as I know, this was the first time I knew you guys were out there, but you've been with us for ten years, so thank you for doing that. Here's a quote from Mark. "Our group focuses on strengthening men through discipleship, serving others, and fellowship with each other." Then Mark also leads a prison ministry using the video Bible study. So I wonder if you'll join me in giving a very warm and a rousing welcome to these men. One, two, three! Hoo-ah! Welcome. We are so honored to have you as part of the Bible study.

All right, and then we're gonna start something new this morning. I'm gonna give you a little, roughly 90-second, update on something that's going on in the world of man in the mirror, somewhere around the world, around the country. The reason to do this is to encourage you. As a men's leader, as a disciple maker, some of you are donors, so to encourage you to expand your vision for what's going on among men in the world and also to give you a greater sense of hope that God really is working.

So today's story comes from Oregon, and one of our area directors there, Mike Link, helped a church set up one of our men's seminars. We do a number of them. I think this one was called Success That Matters. He decided to get one of our other area directors from Chicago, Ron Read, come and be the faculty. So it was very inbred, very nice, but Ron did a great job. The pastor wrote to Jamie Turco, our seminar coordinator: "Jamie, thanks for the note and prayers for us this past weekend. Ron did a great job speaking for us. We had 112 men show up for the seminar, a record for us, and we currently have 91

men signed up for the follow-up study, a record as well." By the way, our normal ratio would be 75 men, so 91 is very well done, so kudos to you, Ron, for somehow communicating the importance of that. "A huge step in the right direction for us, as we are working diligently toward a relationally-based discipling culture in our church." Jamie commented, "Pretty amazing that 91 men in small groups, an all for one weekend event. Please pray that God will work in the lives of these men through these groups."

So pretty exciting, huh? So thank you for those of you who pray. Thank you for those of you who donate. I hope this is an encouragement to you.

Today we're continuing in the journey to biblical manhood, challenge and sacrifice of serving. The title of today's message is **Broken Wings: A Warming Hut "I Care"**. So we are in a battle for men's souls, but over the years in Man in the Mirror, we have been careful not to overdo the military metaphor, because you can get a little carried away with that, but there is some sense in which we really are in a battle for men's souls, and I'm here to tell you this morning that this is a battle that we can win. I'm here to tell you this morning that we cannot, we must not, and by God's grace we will not fail. So what I want to do this morning is I want to pull back the curtain on what we're doing here at this Bible study and hopefully what you're doing in your online Bible studies and small groups as well and take a look at that. This will be the part of this talk, of this challenge, that gets into this area of sacrifice, of sacrifice.

WHEN A MAN STARTS OR STOPS SHOWING UP TO YOUR GROUP

The first thing I want us to talk about is when a man starts or stops showing up to your group, and it could be your group here, could be your group at church, in the marketplace, whatever. What does that ... what does that represent? What does that mean? So I want you to picture with me now the front door to this auditorium. I want you to picture a man who has never been here before walking up to that door, reaching out his hand, taking hold of that handle, and then exerting the force that it takes to open that door. Why did he just do that? What just happened? What is the problem that man is trying to solve? What does he need? What does he need that we can give him? How can we help him? These are questions that it would be wise if we had sat around our tables before that happened and considered what a golden moment of opportunity it is for that man to open that door, and all that was invested, all that's been invested by that man, by God, to get that man to open that door as well as by the devil to keep him from showing up.

So let's talk about that man. So we know that man is driving around this community this morning or your community, wherever you are around the world. There are men driving around, and you've heard me say these seven things before. I know it's very difficult to remember these seven things. It's not three easy steps with three acrostics. These are real things, so that's why I keep saying them to you over and over again. A man can be driving around and he's thinking, "I just feel like I'm in this alone." He feels isolated. He may have isolated himself, but I just feel like I'm in this alone. I don't feel like God cares about me personally. Me cat morally. Personally. Yeah, he cares about certain things, but I don't feel like he cares about me personally, not really. Number three, I don't feel like my life has a purpose. It feels random. I don't feel useful. Useless. I have these destructive behaviors. They keep dragging me back down. I don't know how to get victory over them. My soul feels dry, feels shriveled up inside. My most important relationships, they're not healthy. And then finally, I just don't feel like I'm doing anything that's making a difference and leaving the world a better place.

And so from time to time, some of those men will show up at the front door of your church, golden moment of opportunity, or they'll show up at your small group, or they'll show up here and then

eventually become part of your group. And just think about ... just think about what's been invested in that moment where that man reaches out his hand for that door handle. First of all, think about what's going on inside of him, how puny he must feel. Now, all men come for other reasons. Men come because they want to grow, but we're not talking about that right now. He feels puny inside. He feels isolated. He feels guilty. He feels shame. He's afraid. Very afraid. He has doubts that this will even be helpful. And not only that, he's suspicious because he's had contact with other Christians who have let him down. And yet somehow he ends up there at that front door. How in the world did that happen?

And then think about how much God has invested to get that man to the front door. Just think about it! We talked about this last week! That the whole creation has been subjected to futility, frustration, meaningless vanity by God - get this - in hopes that that man might be liberated from his bondage in decay and brought into the glorious freedom of the children of light, which is what's in this room. What we represent is deliverance from bondage to decay and bringing men into the glorious freedom of the children of light. That's what's in this room. You can see why God would want to get them here.

We say this futility, this suffering that the men are going through, feeling alone, doesn't care, no purpose, blah blah blah ... this suffering is the chief tool by which God is sovereignly drawing men to himself of their own free will. He came to that door of his own free will. There's no other way to get him there. But God ... no man comes without a little assistance from the Holy Spirit. And so suffering, you see, suffering directs the man or even compels the man to seek the God that success has made him think he doesn't need.

So we have these men out here chasing all kinds of different ideas, idols, gods, whatever you want to call them, and God has turned them into futility. When we say suffering, some people suffer physically, but the pain in a man's heart is so much greater than any other kind of pain, and one day it just becomes overwhelming to him. You have been asking that man for months, every time you've seen him, you say, "Why don't you come to this Bible study? Why don't you come to this group? You look a little down. Why don't we go to this group together? I think you'll like it." No, no, no, no, no, no. No no no no no no! Have I got enough no's in there yet? I do not. No no no no no no! Over and over again. No, no, no, no! But God continues to sovereignly orchestrate his life, the circumstances of his life. Gracious suffering. Do you get it? Gracious suffering. The brutality of grace, but gracious suffering. It's brutal. It's painful. It hurts. And yet God uses that to help us seek him, to come to the front door of our own free will.

Wow. Go out into the cosmos and just think about how much energy God has released to create that golden moment of opportunity. But that's not all. Ephesians 6:12. We do not labor, we do not struggle, against flesh and blood. There are these spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms, and you have - every man has, every idol has - an ally. I like that. Every idol has an ally, a little demon that's been assigned to promote on Facebook the benefits of that idol. Ooh, I like that too. And so there are ... are you ready for this? There are demonic forces in the world that are doing everything possible to prevent that man from touching that door handle. So just think about the gravitas of that moment, when he touches that door handle. And just think about what's at stake when he touches that door handle. Dare I say that the future destiny of that man and his family, and his family's family, rests on what happens after he opens that door? Wow. That is gravity.

Yes, it is a battle for men's souls. It is sacred. It is a sacred moment. We do not want to squander that moment. All of that, all those resources that have been expended to create that opportunity. So now what? Let's look at John 13:34. Jesus says this. He says, "A new command I give you: As I have loved you, so you must also love one another." So what's new about the command? It's loving the way that we

have been loved by Jesus. Then he goes on to say that all men will know you're my disciples if you're able to fix this man when he walks in the door, and you've got 24 hours to do it or he's gone. That's not it, is it? "All men will know you are my disciples if you love one another." So when that man opens the door, the now what, the golden moment of opportunity, is to do what? To demonstrate, to prepare a live demonstration of the kingdom of God for him to observe right here.

It's even more important than that. Turn to 1 John 4. Oh, oh, this is amazing. It sounds like this would be delivered with fire and brimstone, but I don't think that's the way that John wrote it, because John always talked about love. Verse 20 of 1 John 4. "If anyone says 'I love God,' yet hates his brother, he is a liar. For anyone who does not love his brother, whom he has seen, cannot love God, whom he has not seen." There's an estoppel in there, you see, you're estopped, like a legal term. You are estopped from claiming that you love God if you don't love your brother. This is why it's sacrificial, because a lot of these brothers that we see around here aren't that lovable. I mean, really, you think about ... Christianity attracts what? Broken people. The more broken they are, the more attracted they are. So I mean, there's a lot of sacrifice involved in this. It goes on to verse 21, and he has given us this command: "Whoever loves God must also love his brother." So here's the Big Idea. **Men will decide if our Christianity is real based on how well we love them.**

These men who are coming, who open the door, who after 47 invitations are finally so overwhelmed by these inner aches and pains that they say, "Well, maybe that would be a place that may have some answers for me." That's why they're coming. They're overcoming suspicion, fear, doubt, guilt, all these things, because they think maybe. They don't think you will have, but they think maybe that might be a place that has some answers for me. They're gonna come and they're gonna decide if our Christianity is real based on how well we love them.

Now, I said our Christianity. I didn't say if Christianity is true. Christianity is true. You either believe it or not, but it's true. So it's our Christianity, the way we express Christianity. Men will decide if our Christianity is real. I put the word "real" in quotes because I didn't want to use the word "true." Truth is not exactly the most popular concept in the general culture. Relativism and all that. So just the word "real" or "authentic" based on how well - and I did have this; I sent in a revised PowerPoint this morning - how well we love each other. But I just said, the Scriptures bring us to that point of really how well we love them. We put on a demonstration, but if they don't walk out of here with a feeling that I think that might be a group of men that might actually care about me personally. If they don't hear in their brains when they look at you, "He cares" ...

And that's why we have created this Bible study from the very beginning, we've always said that this is a hospital for men with broken wings. We've always said this is a hospital for them. All the leaders know this. It's actually in their written job. It's actually in their written job description, that this is a hospital for men with broken wings. We've also likened it to a warming hut at the bottom of the slope. We're not the real hospital. We're sort of a quick-care clinic. We're not the church. We're not baptizing babies, marrying, burying, bringing meals to sick people. We're a Bible study. So we're the warming hut. But we're also the place when ... the first place where the injured man receives help. You see? You see? You see how it works? We're the safe place. We try to create a safe place. So the guy who isn't ready to go to the church, he's wiped out, maybe he's sprained his leg, maybe he's broken an arm. He needs help and he needs help right now, and he's not gonna go to the hospital because he's got all these suspicions, so we invite him to come here.

WHY IT'S A SACRIFICE

Now, why it's a sacrifice. Turn to Galatians 6:1. Galatians 6:1. "Brothers, if someone is caught in a sin," and by the way, we're all sinners and so the guys that are coming to us, they're often wrapped up in a tangle of behaviors that are just honestly sinful. They may not feel like they're sinful, but the reality is most men know what they're doing wrong. "Brothers, if someone is caught in a sin, you who are spiritual," the light in the room, should shun him in shame and make him feel like dirt, and do so in a way that forces him to never, ever consider coming back here again. "Brothers, if someone is caught in a sin, you who is spiritual should restore him." It's the ministry of restoration. We're not gonna have time to get to 1 Peter 5, the verse is on your sheet. We talked about it a little bit this week. I said we'd talk about it this week. I lied. See? I'm a liar. But you can look it up for yourself.

"But watch yourself, or you also may be tempted." Wow. There's a sacrifice. You're putting yourself in the way of temptation. You should restore him. That's a sacrifice. That's gonna take a lot of time, and by the way, not just a lot of time, but a lot of emotional energy. By the way, a lot of times the guys who need help ... a lot of problems don't really have solutions. They don't. You just have to keep chipping away at it. So somebody who's divorced, that's a problem you can't solve. You can just help over time the healing process, the restore ... a man who has a wayward child or a child on substance abuse or a health problem that is something that will not go away, maybe something will go away in two or three years, but maybe he doesn't. Or maybe ... or all the different things that it might be.

The next reason it's a sacrifice is because it's heavy. It's heavy. When that man walks in and we do what the Scriptures say, it's a burden. It says here, verse 2, "Carry each other's burdens." There's a weight to it. "And in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ." Anyone thinks he's something when he's nothing, he deceives himself. Each one should test his own actions, and then he can take pride in himself without comparing himself to somebody else, for each one should carry his own load. Jesus said, "If any man would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross." It's a load. And what is the load? It may be something that's going on in your life, but when it's not going on in your life, the load is what's going on in the day who just walked up to the front door. His load. You see? That's the way the gospel works, and that's why it's a sacrifice.

WHAT SAYS I CARE?

Much more could be said, but we're wanting to move on. So these men are going to decide if our Christianity is real based on how well we love them. And that, finally, what says I care? What says I love you? We don't say, "Hey man, I love you. Thanks, welcome to the Bible study. I love you." We don't even say "I care," but we want to communicate I care. So what does love look like? The first thing it looks like is I always tell our area directors with Man in the Mirror, the most important thing in consulting is breath mints. So love looks like breath mints. Don't ... I'm trying to be serious here, but it's not that funny if you're the guy. Nothing says I don't care like halitosis. These are practical things. Now let's get into things that are not so funny. I've got a dozen things here, so I'm gonna rattle them off.

Listen without giving an overly quick reply, James 1. Touch. Touch. There's nothing more powerful than touch. When you put your hand on a man's shoulder like that, and he is the man we've been talking about, there is a spiritual thing that happens. There is a literal transfer of spiritual energy from your body to his body. I've experienced it many, many times. If I come by here and I'm talking to you and it's at one level of intensity, but when I touch you like this, is it different? It changes things. And so the power of touch.

So breath mints, listen, touch. Pray. One of my business crises, the big one for me, I had a meeting that a guy had arranged down at Disney with some super wealthy guy who I felt was gonna be my bail out. That's what I was hoping for. He looked at my situation and he said, "Let me pray for you." I'm thinking, I don't need prayer. I need money. But he prayed for me, and I remember ... he's a big man, I don't even remember who he was. Big giant guy, and I remember he put his hand across my forehead and touched someplace else like my shoulder or something like that, and he prayed an earnest prayer for me, and it's so interesting how God used that prayer to strengthen me at a moment at which I was ready to give up. I actually ended up giving up another time too and another brother came along and said, "Why don't you let me take this for you for a while?" Pray for men.

When a man starts coming or stops coming, call him. Check in on him. When a man gets messy and dirty and ugly and nasty, don't withdraw from him. Include these men in some of your activities outside of here. Invite him in for a cup of coffee. Give him a resource. You can offer advice, but only if he asks for it or you ask him for permission to give it. Money. Some problems money will help alleviate, at least temporarily. You may not have money; that's fine. Peter said, "Silver and gold have I not, but what I have I give you," and these are some of the things that you can give. What it doesn't look like, what love doesn't look like, it doesn't look like condemnation and it doesn't look like fixing his behavior. We don't play the Holy Spirit for men.

So last week the big idea was I rejoice because suffering deepens me into a man I would otherwise never be. Today is the description of what that man looks like once he has been deepened, and it's important because of the big idea. It's important because men will decide if our Christianity is real based on how well we love them. So let us pray.

Heavenly Father, thank you for this word, this living word that seems to apply in every situation, in every culture, in every generation. What an amazing living word. Lord, I pray that you would tutor this to our hearts this morning in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, amen.