

# The Journey to Biblical Manhood

## Challenge 11: Leadership

### Session 2: Jesus Picks Unremarkable Men To Do Remarkable Things

Unedited Transcript

Patrick Morley

Good morning, men. Please turn in your Bibles to Mark chapter three verse 13. Let's begin by doing a shout out this morning. We have some men down in Jamaica. The name of the group is New Life Men in Jamaica, which is just outside of Hudson, New Hampshire. The person who put this together for me is such a kidder. Actually, I was out of town this week and so I did have somebody else do this for me this week. New Life Men, a group of men from Hudson, New Hampshire. New Life Christian Church, Doug Flynn. They're meeting on Saturdays at 8:00 AM. This is the same one from last week. Yeah. This is the same one from last week. Jamaica, we'll get to you next week. These guys, you guys here at New Life Men, we just want you to know that we gave you a double portion of welcome and blessing and shout out. Would you join me in giving an applause that's twice as loud and a shout out that's twice as loud to New Life Men? One, two, three. Hoorah. A second time, hoorah. Wow. We got a new thing going here. We'll see.

Journey to Biblical Manhood is the title of the series today. We're in the second part of three sessions on leadership. Faith and life objectives cards on the table. You can look at that or study the PowerPoint if you're online. The title of this message today is that Jesus Picks Unremarkable Men to Do Remarkable Things. The message today is a message for all men because every man has a burning desire to do something remarkable, to not be ordinary, that his life would have an impact, that he would make a difference. I want to give you an example of that right from our own group here this morning. Where did Monas make his way to? Monas. This is Monas and Monas attended the University of Central Florida from Lahore, Pakistan, and then returned and has been there for a few years, and today is the head of the physics department at his university in Lahore.

He is a disciple of Aubrey Truex's, one of our leaders. Aubrey poured his life into Monas, as did others. Aubrey brought him to be part of this study. Now Monas is back in Lahore, Pakistan and has gathered a number of Christian professors, and they are going through the book *The Seven Seasons of a Man's Life*. Monas is a leader. Monas is doing something extraordinary with his life. Now, in Monas's case, he was a remarkable man that's doing remarkable things. Just an example of what your investment's into, this ministry and the men that are involved in this ministry are doing not only here in America but around the world. Why don't we give a shout out to Monas just as a way of saying we're proud of you? All right? One, two, three. Hoorah. Welcome, Monas. We're glad to have you back in town.

Anybody that doesn't think they can make a difference should observe a mosquito. I was camping three days this week and there's this most inventive mosquito, and he did make a difference in my life. When Steve Jobs, the famous story, when he recruited John Sculley to become the Vice President and basically the Chief Operating Officer, I don't know what his real title was, but John Sculley was a Vice President at Pepsi and he was responsible for establishing Pepsi as the number one brand. This was in the mid-1980s. Apple hit a billion and a half dollars in sales. They were really struggling. It was a dark time because the Macintosh sales were only like 20% or 25% of what they projected. Anyway, they were really in trouble.

Steve Jobs, CEO and Founder of Apple, went to see Sculley and tried to persuade Sculley to come to the Apple company. Now, Sculley's a remarkable man. Why would he want to leave Pepsi for Apple? He had everything going for him. In his own words, he later recalled in an interview, he said, "You know, it was interesting. We were sitting there and here's this man. I respected Steve Jobs for what he had done. He's there in his uniform, his mock turtleneck and his blue jeans and his tennis shoes. He had said all these things and I was happy with where I was." He said that Steve was staring at his tennis shoes. At that time, he had a bushy hair of wavy locks and had these steely eyes. He said Jobs looked him in the eye and he said, "John, do you want to make sugar water for the rest of your life or do you want to come and help change the world with me?"

Sculley said, "I realized it was a defining moment, one of those moments that was a defining moment for my whole life." He made the shift and there's a lot of other history that goes with that. He did come and he reestablished order to Apple. Of course, Apple today is, I don't know if their cap rate today is the highest, but it's one of the highest of all the companies in the global economy. He's a remarkable man. Here's the thing. Not everybody feels remarkable. Yet, in the economy of God, what I want to show you this morning, is that you can be remarkable. You may feel like all you're doing is making sugar water with your life. Jesus is going to show you this morning how you can do something remarkable.

### **ABOUT THE LEADERS JESUS PICKED**

First up, I want us to look at the leaders that Jesus picked. Mark chapter three verse 13, Jesus went up into the hills and called to him those he wanted and they came to him. He appointed 12, designating them apostles, that they might be with him and that they might send them out to preach and to have authority to drive out demons. These are the 12 he appointed: Simon, to whom he gave the name Peter. He changed his name like he changed Saul to Paul. James, the son of Zebedee, and his brother John. To them, he gave the name whatever it is, which means sons of thunder. Then, we see a little bit later that they wanted to call down some ... Anyway, probably men with tempers. Andrew, probably, not necessarily. Andrew; Philip; Bartholomew; Matthew; Thomas, the doubter; James, son of Alphaeus; Thaddeus; Simon, the different one, the zealot; and Judas Iscariot, who betrayed him.

When we look at this list, one of the questions that I'm asking when I look at the text, I say, "Okay, what is obvious? What is obvious about this text?" First of all, what is the situation that called this text into existence? That was that Jesus had a plan. His plan is total global conquest. His plan is to take his good news, the message of his love to this broken generation who, in turn, will reinvest that in other generations like Monas is doing and like these men up in New Hampshire are doing and like you are doing and reinvest that kingdom life into the lives of other men, as disciple making disciples. That's his plan. That's what Jesus is doing. That's the situation now that called this into existence is that he is now initiating the second stage of his rocket ship.

What's obvious here to me is that the population, you know, I looked it up this morning on the US census. Worldwide population estimates for 0 AD, and this is looking at different estimates from different scholars, low of 170 million, high of 400 million people. There are 325 million people in the United States. The world population at the time that Jesus was making this decision is about equal to the population of the United States. Don't you think he could have come up with some more qualified leaders with better resumes? What's obvious here is that he has picked some incredibly ordinary men to take these positions. When you think about it, he knew who those leaders were that had the resumes. From the age of 12, he had been with religious leaders and going back and forth with them, so he knew who was theologically trained and who was not. Even in his human nature, he knew that.

Why didn't he look for men like Moses or Abraham or Joseph or Job or Daniel or David or Elijah or Paul? I mean, why didn't he just look for somebody like Paul right from the beginning? Very interesting questions. What's obvious here is that Jesus had some kind of a larger plan in mind. I just made a list, you know, of things that you could ask about these men. Where these men of great faith? No. They were afraid of the waves. Were these men educated? No, they were not educated men. We're leaving Mark. Turn over to Acts chapter four and we could begin at verse one, but let me just recount that. Peter and John were speaking. They had healed a lame man and they were speaking and proclaiming the gospel. They got arrested. Even though they got arrested, it says in verse four, "But many who heard the message believed and the number of men grew to about 5,000."

The next day, the rulers of the country, there's 71 people in the Sanhedrin, they brought these men, Peter and John, before them. In verse eight, it says, "Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them, 'Rulers and elders of the people.'" Now, remember that Peter had never been to seminary. Peter had never been to college. Peter was not ever selected to be most likely to succeed senior in his high school class, never got a distinguished alumnus award from his university, wouldn't stand out in a crowd, necessarily, and in the world's eyes was probably a nobody prior to his selection by Jesus. It says, "Rulers and elders of the people, if we are being called to account today for an act of kindness shown to a cripple," kind of puts it in perspective, "and asked how he was healed, then know this, you and everyone else in Israel. It is by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified but whom God raised from the dead, that this man stands before you completely healed. Salvation is found in no one else, no other name under heaven, given to men, except Jesus Christ."

Then, this is what I want you to see in particular here. When they saw the courage or the boldness or the confidence, you have to ask, "Where did this confidence come from?" Because just a short time earlier, we know that all of these 12 men that Jesus had selected had fled in the middle of the night. We know that this man, Peter, from the other scriptures, we know that he had followed along from a distance and made himself cozy in a fire outside the house of the high priest. Before the cock crowed twice, he had denied three times that he even knew Jesus. Where did this courage come from? Where did this confidence, his boldness come from? We'll get to that. When they saw the courage of Peter and John and realized that they were unschooled, ordinary men ... Unschooled, original language means without learning or unlettered. These were unlettered men. Ordinary literally means unskilled person. They were unskilled persons. When they saw the courage of Peter and John and realized that they were unschooled, ordinary men, they were astonished and they took note that these men had been with Jesus.

Jesus called 12 men on the mountain to be with him and then to go and preach the gospel. Now we see over here in Acts four that they had been infused with the boldness of the gospel of Christ himself by the Holy Spirit even though they were unschooled, ordinary men, nothing remarkable about them like

us. They took note that these men had been with him. Jesus called these men to be with him and they took note that he had. They had been with them. The difference that caused this boldness, this confidence in Peter is that he had been with Jesus. They weren't educated, weren't accomplished. They were common men. They were not men of great influence. They did not have special wisdom. They were constantly asking Jesus, "What do you mean? What do you mean? What do you mean about that prayer? What do you mean? I don't get it. I don't understand." They were not strong men. They couldn't stay awake in the garden. They couldn't keep their word. Every one of them swore they would never desert Jesus and yet they did. They weren't brave men. We already talked about Peter and then Peter even had to be rebuked. They weren't men of skill particularly. They couldn't perform even the most simple tasks, at least at first before being equipped by Jesus in the time that they were with him.

What's the point? The point is that Jesus has intentionally picked men so ordinary, so unremarkable, men like us. He picks men who are so unremarkable, so hard to accept, that they can actually do the things that they do. You can think of different people, if you would just spend moment, a couple of television preachers come to mind. How in the world does this happen? That person can't even keep his eyes open when he talks. All kinds of things that are going on. God using these unremarkable people when there are Davids available, there are Jobs available, there are Daniels available. What this is all about is that Jesus has chosen to pick men who are unremarkable so that when they do something that is very remarkable, as you can see from the text we looked at, that only God can get the glory. That's what's obvious.

Jesus picks unremarkable men to do remarkable things so that only he can get the glory so that men will not worship other men, but that men will worship God. I have so many things taped in the front of my Bible. It would be hard to talk about where to begin, but just one from Oswald Chambers, just the idea, "A beautiful saint may be a hindrance if he does not present Jesus Christ but only what Jesus Christ has done for him. What a fine character that man is." That does nothing to transform men's lives. That, of course, is what Jesus is trying to do here. What made these 12 men so remarkable is not, and what makes you remarkable or what will make you remarkable or will continue to make you remarkable or make you more remarkable, what makes these disciples and us remarkable is not what we do for Jesus. It's what Jesus does for us while we are with him.

I was telling somebody, Cliff here, my wife and I, we went camping in the nice weather here three nights this week. I went out hiking on Tuesday, beautiful weather, fantastic, beautiful scenery. I didn't say this to my wife, but I said to myself and I got back and towards the end of the night, I said, "This is kind of like a nothing day, an unremarkable day." Wednesday, went back out again, same beautiful weather, same beautiful scenery. I had this unbelievable. I came back so full. I thought about it for a couple hours. It's like blinders went off and I realized that I felt on Wednesday like when I had been hiking like I had been with him, in the presence of Jesus. You know, I'm praying, I'm talking to him. He's talking back. Not every day's like that, but that day was. It was amazing. That's what Jesus does when we're with him.

Jesus calls us to himself to live in him. He equips us when we are with him. Then, he sends us to live out our lives for him. Jesus is the one who's doing these things. Here's the **Big Idea** for the day. **The more unremarkable I am, the more God can get the glory when I do remarkable.** The more unremarkable you are, the more that God will get the glory when you do remarkable. I heard another story this morning about a man who has been mentoring another man and now he's getting married. He's going to be a groomsman at the wedding. He's just had a remarkable impact. I don't mean to tell you that you're unremarkable, but you know, you and I, together, we're not Billy Graham. We're not Noah. You

know, most of us are just pretty unremarkable and yet God has chosen for whatever reason to allow us to lead out, to do things that are remarkable so that he can get the glory.

### **WHO ARE THE LEADERS THAT JESUS IS PICKING TODAY?**

What does this mean for us? Who are the leaders that Jesus is picking today? Turn to 1 Corinthians chapter one. 1 Corinthians was written probably about 55 AD in Ephesus to the Corinthians. Paul had been there. We know that he was there sometime between the first of July 51 and the first of July 52, story for another time, but the pro council and an inscription that has been found in everything. He built into the lives of the believers there, established the church. Then he writes this letter to them. This is not a Bible study about 1 Corinthians, but I wanted you to have just a little background. He's writing to Christians. Now, what's obvious about this? I want you to think about this. He's writing to Christians in about 55 AD so he's not writing to the original 12 disciples. Who is he writing to? He's writing to unremarkable men who had been disciplined by unremarkable men. Do you get that? These 12 men, just imagine if they had failed on their mission, but they didn't. Here we are.

Let's start at verse 26. He says, "Brothers," so who are these people? These are unremarkable people who have been disciplined by unremarkable people. Now, we know that even though they may be unremarkable, they were faithful. Paul tells us to trust this message to faithful men. Read on. "Brothers, think of what you were." I'm saying to you as Paul was saying to them, "Think of what you were when you called, called to live in Christ. Not many of you were wise by human standards," pretty unremarkable. "Not many of you were influential." Not that extraordinary. "Not many of you were of noble birth," powerful, not many. "But God chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise. He chose you to shame the wise. God chose the weak things of the world to shame the strong."

Every time I read this, I have to tell the story when I was called from business to ministry and I loved business when I loved it and then I didn't. I love ministry now. I don't love ministry any more than I loved business when I loved that. It's a very false narrative to think that somehow you're going to feel more spiritual if you're in the ministry. I mean, I really don't feel any more spiritual, but I do feel very called. When I left business and was praying, I left without a plan. I had written the book *The Man in the Mirror* and I'd done a few speaking things. You know, like mayor's prayer breakfasts. When you have a resume, you get invited. After I told a guy a couple weeks ago who was at the height of his influence in the business community and he's doing a lot of speaking, I said, "Leverage that now because once you don't have tacky, sticky worldly credentials, the invitations are going to go way, way down." I'm doing a prayer breakfast next weekend, mayor's prayer breakfast in Mobile next week. I hadn't done one in a year. I used to do them all that time. That has nothing to do with the story.

Anyway, I'm praying and I'm praying and I'm saying, "Lord, what do I do? What do I do?" He put in my heart a few times one word: Jackson. The only place I knew that even came close to Jackson or person was Jackson, Mississippi. I call some guys there. Long story short, I went there. They had a need for racial reconciliation. My best friend at the time was Tom Skinner, African American guy. He's deceased now. Anyway, Tom and I went in there. It was interesting because one day, in the early days, we had been meeting with a bunch of leaders and Dan Hall, Dan, I love you. I'm calling you out though. Dan Hall was one of the pastors. As we walked out of the meeting, he said, "You know, there's been a group of pastors here in Jackson that have been praying for years." I think it might have been like eight years. "We've praying and pleading with God to send us a man and he sent you." He said, "The scripture that comes to my mind when I think about you is how God uses the weak things of this world." I guess I wasn't very accomplished at what I was doing. I was pretty unremarkable.

"God chose the weak things of this world to shame the strong. He chose the lowly things of this world and the despised things and the things that are not to nullify the things that are so that no one may boast before him." In other words, God gets the glory. "It is because of him that you are in Christ Jesus who has become for us wisdom from God." That is our righteousness, holiness, and redemption. "Therefore, it's written: Let him who boasts boast in the Lord." I just have to read the rest of these five verses because this is something I read pretty much every week as I'm getting ready to talk to you.

When I came to you, brothers, probably would have not thought so lowly or humbly of myself had it not been for Dan Hall. Thank you, Dan, so much. Appreciate you pointing out how unremarkable I am.

"When I came to you, brothers, I did not come with eloquence or superior wisdom as I proclaim to you the testimony about God. For I resolve to know nothing while I was with you except Jesus Christ and him crucified. I came to you in weakness and fear and with much trembling. My message and preaching were not with clever and persuasive words, but with a demonstration of the spirit's power so that men's faith might not rest on unremarkable man's wisdom but on remarkable God's power." So that your faith might not rest on men's wisdom, but on God's power. The Big Idea. The unremarkable I am, the more I'm grateful, the more I praise God because the more he gets the glory when I do remarkable.

### **WHAT JESUS WANTS TO DO FOR YOU**

Finally, just a quick thought, what Jesus wants to do for you. Scott McCurdy, one of our leaders, at the age of 38, everything fell apart for him. He went personally bankrupt. His business went bankrupt. His wife was in the process of leaving him. He had been leading a most unremarkable life. It was about to get a lot, lot worse. Over the next couple three years, he made a profession of faith in Jesus Christ and moved here. Many of us had the privilege of watching Scott submit himself to Jesus, to have the desire to be with him, to use the language of the day, to grow in Christ. Now, Scott, instead of concealing his unremarkable past, he boldly proclaims like Paul would do, his unremarkable past. The result of that is is that every week I hear about something remarkable that's happening through Scott, somebody he's having this incredible conversation with on an airplane because he travels a lot, or he's praying with an Uber driver or about some problem. Every week, it's something else, God doing all of these remarkable things. We all know Scott. We know he's unremarkable. Just kidding. He's one of us.

What is the question that we should be asking? What is the question that you should be asking? I think the question is: Are you selling yourself short? I think that's the question of the day. I think that's the question we should be asking ourselves. Am I selling myself short? When Dwight Moody, the Billy Graham of the 19th century, one day heard it's said that the world has yet to see what God can do with the man who is fully and wholly or completely consecrated to God, it fired Moody's jets. It burned inside of him like things burn inside of you. He was a man who wanted to do something remarkable but he wasn't that remarkable either. Trust me. He was a shoe salesman.

He wasn't that remarkable either, but when he heard those words, he thought to himself, he said, "All he said was a man. He did not say a great man or a learned man or a smart man or a wise man or an eloquent man, but just a man. It lies within the man himself whether or not he will make that full, total, and complete consecration to God. I will do my utmost to be that man." What he did is he embraced the fact that he was an unremarkable person and allowed God to get the glory through his life and he became one of the greatest leaders that's ever walked the face of the planet because he didn't sell himself short.

That's the big idea we want to look at here today. I hope you remember this, think about it. **The more unremarkable I am, the more that God can get the glory when I do remarkable.** Let's pray. Father, thank you for your word. Thank you for the text today. Not sure what you want to do, but we pray, we invite you to go ahead and do that. In Jesus's name. Why don't you go ahead and do some table discussions? Any first time visitors with us this morning? First time visitors, raise your hands. I got another, "Oh, yeah. I'll be there," this morning myself. Anybody get an, "Oh, yeah. I'll be there," this week? Anybody get a, "Yeah, I'll be there," this week? One, two, three, four. Four of us got, "Oh, yeah. I'll be there." Go ahead and enjoy your table discussions and we'll come back a few minutes before the hour.

A question I've put on my worksheet, a new question this year, is this question: Is there another way of looking at this? There have been a lot of things going on where people have taken a particular point of view about something. I'm thinking, "Wow." First of all, I've never thought of that point of view, in some cases. Usually, "Wow, I can't believe that's the only thing that they can see here." Then, I've talked about it here, I'm sure, but how the gospel writers are four different angles, four different perspectives at the same event. You hold up my hand, you describe what you see and you describe something different, but it's still the same hand. The question is: Is there another way of looking at this?

Most men that I have met over the years don't feel like they are leaders. They don't. Yet, they're leading out all the time in the ways that we talked about last week, in terms of showing the way to other people, letting people in in traffic, I mentioned that one last week, or influencing children to understand what the gospel is and all these things, guiding people, and mentoring a young man. These are phenomenal acts of leadership. The reason that God is allowing, I think one of the reasons, possibly, why God allows us to have this low view of ourselves or consider ourselves unremarkable is so that, in fact, he can get the glory. I've kind of stopped worrying about that.

Hudson Taylor, the great missionary to China. Is China in on mission? Is that what it was? He says that many Christians, and I have this one taped to my Bible too. In fact, I think this is still in dot matrix printer. It's been in there so long. "Many Christians estimate difficulties in light of their own resources and thus attempt little and often fail at the little they do attempt. All God's giants," or all God's remarkable men. "All God's giants have been weak men who did great things for God because they reckoned on his power and purpose in them." This is who we are.

Here's what I'm proposing. I've been proposing this a couple of times this week already to different people. I would like to propose that we do something great for God so that he would get the glory, recognizing that we're unremarkable. I don't know what the timeline is, five or 10 years, but I would like you just to start thinking about what if we, in concert with all the other leaders and people in the body of Christ in our community, I guess online too in your own communities, but what if we were to tithe the men of this community to the gospel? What could it look like in five or 10 years if we intentionally began to think about tithing the men of this community? If 10% of the men in this community over the next five or 10 years would come to Christ or back to Christ, would decide to stay with their wife and love their wife and make the choice to be a godly father and not neglect their kids and to represent Christ in the marketplace and all these other things, what could our community look like going forward?

I only say that because I think in this community, as in every community, these days, there is some concern about the direction, the future direction, of our, we say our nation and maybe your nation in Jamaica, I don't know, maybe your nation in South Africa or Asia. I don't know what's going on, what you think the direction of your country is. Country's made up, at least here, this country's made up of states

and states are made up of counties and counties are made up of communities and communities are made up neighborhoods and neighborhoods are made up of us. If we're going to have any potential to impact, I'm looking at total global conquest. I'm looking at the way Jesus did it.

I'm just thinking, gosh, let's just do what Jesus did, and we are and we're seeing impact, but I think that Jesus was very intentional. It wasn't just, "Oh, let's have this lovey-dovey thing. We'll just hang out together." He was every intentional about what he was doing and he released the power of his gospel through these men. Just start thinking about that. We'll talk more about it. Just think about the simple idea: What would it look like if we tithed our community and the men in our community to the gospel of Jesus? Heavenly Father, thank you for this day. I pray that you would bless these men in every way and help them to do extraordinary, remarkable things in ways that only you can get the glory. In Jesus's name, amen. Have a great weekend.