

Jesus Unfiltered

Session 12: Becoming a Band of Brothers With a BHAG

Unedited Transcript

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Well, it is Friday so good morning, men. Welcome to Man in the Mirror men's Bible study. If you would, please turn in your Bibles to John chapter four verse 31. Let's begin by doing a shout out. Pretty excited to do this shout out. This is actually a shout out to a group we've done one to before, but this is a special occasion. This is their 10 year anniversary. The group is Sports Barn Men's Bible Study. They've been, as I've said, been meeting for 10 years at 6:00 in the barn. Where else? It's called the Sports Barn, using Man in the Mirror study. "We serve men ranging from a local homeless shelter to local business men from all over the Omaha community," led by Mike Bliss, who's been here in this room with us, Bennington, Nebraska. I want to say more about them in a moment in the message itself, but for right now, why don't you join me in giving them a warm and rousing Man in the Mirror welcome? Let's say happy anniversary. Happy anniversary. That didn't work out too well. Let's do it the regularly. One, two, three, hoorah. Happy anniversary. Welcome. Glad to have you with us.

The title of the message today in this series Jesus Unfiltered, we'll get to it in a moment, I guess. Actually, we'll get to it now, **Becoming a Band of Brothers With a BHAG**. What in the world could that possibly be? How many of you have played a discernible role in helping someone else come to faith in Jesus Christ? Rhetorical question, just rhetorical. It may be a cup of coffee that you had with a guy that led to other things. It may have been inviting that person here to this Bible study, to your church. Maybe it's asking an important question at an important moment in his life. It could be almost anything. It could be something that happened at the gym. It could be happening in a fishing boat. It could be as a result of you praying for someone for a short or long period of time. Maybe you gave them a personal testimony or told them your personal story, your personal Jesus story, and it had impact on them. Maybe you know how to actually not only tell your story, but share the gospel itself and you shared with the gospel with someone and they come to Christ.

More often than not, these roles that we play are relatively small because when someone comes to faith in Jesus, it's not that they wake up one day and then realize they need God and then some person comes along and that one person helps them resolve the issue of how to be connected to Jesus. I want to tell you a funny story. Well, it's funny to me anyway. I'm out hiking this last Saturday in the Withlacoochee State Forest. I come to this fork and it says lower river walk, upper river walk. I know where I'm going so I go on the lower river walk. I take about 50 steps and about halfway on the trail, halfway off the trail is lying this fishing rod and reel. I'm looking down and I say, "Wow, that looks like a fairly decent rod and reel." I mean, I don't know rods and reels, but it's not like the Zebco that I have at the house.

I had the most odd thing happen. I saw it and I wanted it. I wanted it. Mine. Mine. That's mine. I don't want anybody else to see that I have this. I've been walking with Jesus for 45 years. I said, "What in the

world is that? Where in the world does that come from?" I said, "What am I going to do here?" I said, "Well, it's not mine." I went back to 50 steps to the fork in the road where there's a sign that says "upper trail, lower trail," and I decided what I would do is I would lean the rod and reel in a highly visible position up against the sign so that if somebody realized that they had forgotten this rod and reel, they could easily spot it. I said, "I hope it's still there when I come around the loop because if it isn't taken by somebody else, it's mine." I came back and I knew I was coming up to the fork. I was so excited to see whether or not anybody picked up the rod and reel and, sure enough, there it was. I said, "Oh, my. This is interesting."

Now, you know, let's see. I am in Christian ministry and this is probably somebody else's rod and reel. I said, remarked my own soul, I said, "How am I going to resolve this issue?" I said, "I know what I'm going to do. I'm going to ask the first three people I meet if this is their rod and reel or if they have heard about somebody that lost a rod and reel." I did. I walked up to this, back to the campground. I walked up to this couple. I said, "I found this rod and reel out on the trail, which is kind of interesting." Then I told them the story. I said, "You know, the first thing I felt was greed. I wanted to keep this for myself but then I realized," I said, "I've been walking with Jesus for 45 years and that I need to figure out a way to do the right thing. I decided that I'm going to ask a number of people if they've lost a rod and reel. Did you lose this rod and reel?"

The guy said no. He said, "I suggest you keep it because it's probably going to be the luckiest fishing pole you'll ever have." Then I went ahead and I did the same thing. What I found happening is that I started telling the story. I started telling the story to people. I said, "Look, this sounds like a long story, but it's not." I read Agustin's confessions. He talks about, it's his autobiography, and he talks about how he saw something and he just wanted it. I said, "I saw this fishing pole and I just wanted it." I said, "I've been walking with Jesus for 45 years and I figured the best thing to do, the best way to overcome that is just to talk to people and see if I couldn't find the rightful owner."

I ended up talking to seven people, not three, and nobody had any claim on it. I also then went to the office to try to turn it into a lost and found and saw this closed sign, I'm in the campgrounds, back in 30 minutes. Then, this last Thursday, I guess that was yesterday, I called because I knew I needed to have a good story for today. I called the campground office to see if they had a lost and found. They said, "No, we don't have a lost and found." Said, "If we have anything really valuable, we just turn it into the sheriff's department." Then I told him the story, "I've been walking with Jesus 45 years," blah, blah, blah. Then I was thinking about this talk today. I just realized that what had just happened was is that I had no idea why I found this fishing pole, because I'm not really a fisherman. I did buy some shiners this week and threw it in the water. Nothing happened. That was that. I'm done with fishing now again.

I realized that God had given me this rod and reel as an opportunity and I had taken it and I had sowed into the lives of probably at least a half a dozen people in just a little way the meaning of what it's all about to say that you walk with Jesus. In other words, that you try to live a life of integrity. I asked you if you played an identifiable role in helping someone else come to Jesus. I don't know what happens out of that, but I do know this and you should know this too. When you do something like that, there have been dozens, hundreds of other people who have been sowing into the life of that person and God is sovereignly orchestrating all human events to bring that person into right relationship with himself and each other. We are players in this grand scheme of things to sow into the lives of people so that they can come to faith in Jesus Christ.

The talk today is how we can become a band of brothers with a BHAG. Now, what is a BHAG? Somebody quickly? Big hairy audacious goal. Where did the term come from? Came from Jim Collins in his first book *Built to Last*, which I think he calls the prequel to *Good to Great*. Big hairy audacious goal. We at *Man in the Mirror*, we have co-oped that term. We call it the big holy audacious goal. That's how we'll use that today. The topic is becoming a band of brothers with a big holy audacious goal. First up, we want to take a look at this story for the third week of the woman at the well and what happens in this city where she lives. Verse 30 chapter four, verse 30, one verse before where we're going to start, the last verse we looked at last time. It says, "They came out of the town and made their way toward him." The people, just a review, what's happening here. Gosh, this seems like an awfully long introduction. Sorry about that.

Anyway, Nicodemus and Jesus are talking and Jesus tells Nicodemus, he says, "I did not come to condemn the world, but I came to save the world." We said that the idea for that morning was is if Jesus thinks the world's worth saving, it must be worth saving. If Jesus came to save the world, it must be worth saving. Then we rolled into this story of the woman at the well. The next time that we were talking about that, we looked at her life of immorality. We talked about the idea that no matter what you've done, you can be forgiven. No matter what you've done, you can be forgiven. She was so excited about it. The last time that we were together, we saw how she brought the message back. She left everything and she went back to the city. "I found this man. He told me everything I've ever done. Could this be the messiah?" The idea last time was is that I'm going to explode unless I can talk about what just happened.

When you come to Christ, you feel like you're going to explode unless you can talk about what just happened. She's done that. What happens? The whole city's coming out. It's the first crusade. It's the first citywide crusade ever recorded in history and she's the front man. She's the advance person. She's making it happen because she's exploding. Then we come to this verse. "They came out of the town and made their way toward him." The first thing I want us to talk about is: What does Jesus see when he sees this city?

WHAT DOES JESUS SEE WHEN HE SEES THIS CITY?

Let's read through the passage together. Verse 31, they're coming out. "Meanwhile, his disciples urged him, 'Rabbi, eat something.' But he said, 'I have food to eat that you know nothing about.' His disciples said to each other, 'I guess under their breath so he wouldn't hear them, "'Could someone have brought him food?'"

We just take a little pause here and we need to talk about Jesus using figurative language. I didn't bring my little worksheet. Oh, yes, I did. I have, again, on my worksheet that I use every week to prepare these messages, part of the first bullet, which I talked to you about last time we were together. If you weren't here, I said the first bullet is, "What truth stirs me so deeply that I feel compelled to tell others about it immediately?" Then, I have here a quote from Matthew 13 verse 34 and 35. Jesus, this is New Living Translation, "Jesus always used stories and illustrations when speaking to the crowds. In fact, he never spoke to them without using parables." In John 10:6, we learn that people don't understand what these things are. Well, Jesus in this text is using two different figures of speech. He's using food. He's not talking about food. He's using food figuratively. Then, in a moment, we're going to see that he's talking about harvesting and fields. He's not really talking about harvesting and fields. He's using that figuratively.

With that in mind, let's keep reading. He says, "My food," verse 34, "is to do the will of him who sent me and finish his work. Do you not say, 'Four months more and then the harvest?'" This was probably taking place four months before the harvest. "I tell you: Open your eyes and look at the fields," figurative language. "They are ripe for harvest." When Jesus looks at this city, he sees three things. First, he sees the problems. The first thing he sees is he sees the problems. We know this from Matthew chapter nine verses 36 and 37. Jesus came on not unlike this and he says that when he saw them, he saw that they were harassed and helpless like sheep without a shepherd. When Jesus sees the city, the first thing he sees is he sees these harassed helpless people. He sees the problems that the city faces. He sees the problems that our city faces. He sees the problem that your city faces. He sees your problems. He sees the poverty. He sees the racism. He sees the greed. Mine. Mine. He sees the envy. He sees the corruption. He sees it all. He sees the problems.

He got out of the boat and he looked on the crowds and he saw that they were harassed and helpless like sheep without a shepherd and it sickens him. That's not what the Bible says. It says, "And he had compassion on them." First up, when we look at the city, when you look at the city, when we look at the city, do we see what Jesus sees? Do we see the problems? Do you see where the sting of the lack of the gospel is felt in your family, in your neighbor's house? Do you see where the sting of the lack of the gospel is most keenly felt in this city? That's the first thing that Jesus sees. The second thing that Jesus sees is he sees opportunity. He sees opportunity. Verse 35, again, "Do you not say, 'Four more months and the harvest?' I tell you: Open your eyes and look at the fields. They're ripe for harvest." There's a tremendous harvest in this city to be taken in. Why does Jesus see it? Because God is love. He has compassion on them. Why does he do that? Why does he see the opportunity? Because God loves them. Those people, enemies, adversaries, gossips, cheats, all kinds of sick things going on, as well as selfish things going on, and Jesus, no matter what they've done, they can be forgiven. No matter what you've done, you can be forgiven.

He sees the problems and he sees the opportunity. He sees something else and it's not in the texts that we have, but it is in the other texts that are listed at the top of your outline. John 10 verses two and three, and then Matthew chapters nine verses 35 and 38, which basically say the same thing, although they were said at different times. Again, he says, "The fields are whitened to harvest, but the workers are few. Therefore, pray to the Lord of the harvest, that he would send out workers into his harvest field." The third thing that Jesus sees when he sees the city, he sees the problems, he sees the opportunity, and then he sees that there are not enough of us to solve the problem. He says, "Pray that God would send out workers into his harvest field."

When I go to cities, which I've been doing for decades now, I'm guessing that I probably have talked about this with hundreds of leadership groups in hundreds of cities. I always tell them that I know that you have invited me here to reap where you have sown. You see, in no city can there be reaping where there has not been sowing. There's no one who comes along and then suddenly ... Sometimes you will hear an overenthusiastic full of themselves, perhaps, young usually, very young, new, green man, announcing that, "Everybody else got it wrong, but now I'm here and I have the solution. I'll fix it. Nobody else can do it. I'll make it work." They may not say it or they may just communicate it by other ways, but you know that every person ever who has done anything great for God is standing on the shoulders of faithful gospel workers who, for decades, have been building into the lives of people in those cities, sowing the seeds, because no sowing, no reaping.

Anyway, I go into these cities and I say, look, I know that I've been sent here to reap where you've sown. As it says in John chapter four, and then I read them this verse. Verse 36, "Even now, the reaper draws

his wages. Even now, he harvests the crop for eternal life so sower and the reaper may be glad together." I believe that God has sent me here to reap what you have sown. I just want you to know that I know that so that we, the sower and the reaper, so that we can be glad together that this is happening. "Thus the saying, 'One sows and another reaps,' is true. I have sent you to reap what you have not worked for. Others have done the hard work and you have reaped the benefits of their labor." I just want you to know, leadership team, that I realize that whatever reaping takes place here today or over this weekend is because of the sowing that you have done. Let's be glad together. You know what happens when I say that, by the way? There is such an intense sense of relief, which means to me that probably there have been other occasions where that attitude has not been expressed. Otherwise, why would there have been tension about it in the first place? I could be wrong.

I'm going to give you the Big Idea today. I want you to think about this in terms of how you see this city, how you see the problems, how you see the opportunities, and how you see the need for you to be a worker and your desire to be a worker and see if this might not be, and I believe it is, if this might not be something that would capture how you feel about this city and about us reaching the city together as sowers and reapers together. The Big Idea today is this. **My greatest joy is working together with you for the salvation of this city.** Now, when I say my greatest joy, I'm using like the literary hyperbole there. I mean, my greatest joy is my wife and my kids, that kind of thing, but it doesn't roll off the tongue quite as well if you put a lot of conditions on it. I just said, "My greatest joy," instead of, "My greatest joy in the work that God has called me to do."

My greatest joy is working together with you for the salvation of this city. God puts us in cities. He puts us in families. He puts us in communities. He wants us to find joy in it. How did it work out here? Well, we kind of know how it worked out here because in the text that follows, it says, "Many of the Samaritans believed." This woman had decided that it was going to be her greatest joy to work together with Jesus, in this case, for the salvation of her city. What happened was is that many believed because of her testimony and many more believed because of the words of Jesus. How do we get the words of Jesus today? Well, we get it through our sermons and our churches on Sunday morning. We get it through our Bible studies.

WHAT'S THE BHAG JESUS HAS TO SOLVE THIS PROBLEM?

Next up, what's the BHAG? What's the big holy audacious goal that Jesus has to solve this problem that the city has, all these places that feel the sting of the lack of the gospel? Well, the big picture is is that his BHAG, his big holy audacious goal, is to do the will of him who sent me. It's to do God's will. It's to finish his work. It's this building of the kingdom. He also talks about it as harvesting the crop for eternal life. That's what Jesus is all about. His strategy to accomplish this is to form this band of brothers, these disciples, you, your table group, another small group that you have at your church or wherever it is. This strategy that Jesus has to solve this problem, to achieve this BHAG of bringing eternal life, is to form men into bands of brothers, into groups of disciples who will sow and reap together.

You know, I remember back in high school, I had some friends and the friendships were just incredible, you did too, and then I was in the military. Some of you were in the military. The sense of brotherhood that you had with guys in the military was off the charts. Then I was in a fraternity in college and those were brothers and you share. All those things we shared for I just call second purposes, not first purposes. Then I got in business and everything seemed to be about starting the career, building a marriage, building a family, really sort of inwardly focused. Then, we got involved in a church. My wife and I got involved in a church. There were some men in that church who had this vision, who

understood that this idea that my greatest joy is working together with you for the salvation of the city. They were working together. They invited me to participate in that vision. I got swept up in it. I have to tell you, I have never felt a greater sense of belonging, a greater sense of mission, a greater sense of brotherhood than being united with a few other guys who were passionate about the salvation of our city.

This is the strategy that Jesus has given us. It's got three parts. You know, we see it in this text. We live in communities that are ripe for harvest. Jesus says, "Look, the field's ripe for harvest." We live in a community that is ripe for harvest, to see that. Then, secondly, we see that he's looking for men who are willing to work. The workers are few. Then, third, we see that he wants us to work together. "Let the sower and the reaper be glad together." You know what? This is almost like a sidebar, but look at this. "One sows and another reaps, that's true. Others have done the hard work." What's the hard work? Is reaping the hard work? No, it's that others have done the hard work. Sowing is the hard work. Reaping's the fun part. You think that reaping's the hard part and sowing's the easy part. No, not in God's economy. The hard thing to do, according to Jesus, is to sow. It's to prepare the field. It's to break up hard ground. It's to water the seed. The reaping is the easy part. Worth remembering.

Big idea today, my greatest joy is working together with you for the salvation for the city, some of us sowing, some of us reaping, but working together for the salvation of the city. Why? Because we see that our community is ripe for harvest, that Jesus is looking for workers, and that he wants us to work together and be happy doing it. Then, finally, how do we fit in, you and I? By the way, I also wanted to just draw your attention, the word you in this passage. "Do you not say?" "I tell you: Open your eyes." Let's see where else. "I sent you to reap what you didn't work for. You have reaped the benefits." That's not you you. That's plural you. You see? It's a band of brothers. Jesus is interested in building bands of brothers to do this work. He never sent anybody out by themselves. You know that, right? There's no you in this. It's no you singular. It's us. You is we. You is us. When you see you in the Bible, in America, when we read the Bible, we see you, we think me, but we're the only ones, some of the very few people in the world who see it that way. Most people understand that when you see you, it's we because of the idea that Jesus wants to build here this band of brothers.

HOW DO WE FIT IN?

How do we fit in? Well, he wants us to work together for the salvation of the city. Do you see that? He wants us to work together. He wants people to work together for the salvation of our communities. He says, "I sent you to reap." He wants us to go and reach the community. He says, "One sows and another reaps." He wants us to work side-by-side. You know, guys, you've heard it said I'm sure that women, they work best in relationship face to face. Men work better in relationship shoulder to shoulder, working together side-by-side. There's some truth to that. All right. How? Well, I think number one thing is pray for workers. Everybody can pray for workers. Jesus made it very clear in these other passages that if we want to find our joy by working together for the salvation of the city, we need somebody to work with so let's pray for workers. Let's pray for our city. Let's pray that God would raise up bands of brothers, and there are bands of brothers all over this city, but raise up many more bands of brothers around this city because we need men who will sow alongside us into the lives of these others in our community who are struggling with the sting of the lack of the gospel in all these different ways that they are.

Then, secondly, pray for workers, be glad together. That means you can't be glad together unless you know what each other are doing. Share with each other funny stories, good stories, great stories. You

know, if you have something crazy that turns out for good, it's mine, but then you get a chance to tell seven people or however many people I told. I don't think I told all seven the idea that I'd been walking with Jesus for 45 years, but most of them. Then, realizing that I've sown, well, what have I done by telling you that? I've given you a reason to be glad together with me. Hopefully you can tell me stories too that will make me glad with you. Hey, listen to this. I told you I'd come back to the Sports Barn group.

In the blurb that I got from them, they meet every Friday. They have a breakfast that runs from 6:30 to 7:00 and then a Bible study from 7:00 to 7:30 in small groups like we do in Omaha, but they have two groups of people that they bring together. One group comes from the Omaha Open Door Mission, a homeless shelter. Every week, one or two vans bring men from the Omaha Open Door Mission Homeless Shelter to the Sports Barn and the other group, it says, "We also serve businessmen from all over the Omaha community." They bring the businessmen together. Kind of lost where I am. Pray for workers, be glad together, and then do the hard work, do the sowing. Understand that it's not easy. It's not easy to ask a hard question or a relevant question.

The title of the message is Becoming a Band of Brothers. The way we've taken a look at this this morning is to ask, "How does Jesus see the city?" I want to leave you with this paradigm. Can you picture any way of ever getting the city right without getting the church right? Well, if the body of Christ is wrong in the city, how would we ever see the city right? If that's true, can you picture any way of ever getting the church right without getting families right? Well, if that's true, can you ever picture any way of ever getting families right without getting marriages right? If that's true, can you picture any way of ever getting marriages right unless we get these women straightened out?

You're laughing because you know the answer is: Is there any way of ever getting marriages right unless we get men right? It really is about the men. It's about men not doing this with a singular you but by the plural you. The idea here today is that I hope you will be able to say, "My greatest joy in ministry is working together with you, the plural you, for the salvation of this city." Let's pray. Heavenly Father, thank you for this picture of sowing and reaping and just reminding us of the many touches that go into someone coming to faith. We pray, Lord, that it would be our great joy to work diligently with each other to see the salvation of the city. We pray that you would superintend this to our hearts in the ways that you see fit. We ask this in Jesus's name, amen.