

Matthew 26:36-46; Mark 5:21-34

Sunday 6/30/2019

SEC: Introduction: The Concept of "Going a Little Further"

I preached a message in Joplin called, "Christianity Asleep at the Wheel." My first Sunday message ever was based on a comment someone made about the cross just speaking out to us. I said, "Well, I wonder what the cross would say if it could talk." So that was a message.

Last year, we were doing church, and Bob was talking about the Christian life and being in it for the long haul. People come in and come out; we call it the parade. They don't stick around, and they're not sticking to it. But he talked about Jesus, how He went all the way, how in the garden it said that He went a little further. That phrase, "He went a little further," stuck in my mind for a while.

I've done this message once before somewhere in Lincoln. So about three of you may have heard it before. The rest of you, I know you didn't get the tape. That phrase, "He went a little further," reminded me back when I was in the military. I didn't know the concept; I wasn't saved. I was as lost as anybody was ever lost. But suffice it to say that the military is not just the same as putting on camouflage and playing Call of Duty. It's just a little bit harder.

It reminded me of how I got through some of that training: "Just one more. Just run to the next bend. One more lap. One more rung. One more hour." I couldn't have done it any other way. And just by going that little bit further, I made it. I could have never gone from A to B. I could have never gone the whole way. There's just no way that I could have made it if I looked at the whole thing as one thing; it wouldn't have worked. I wouldn't have made it. At that time, getting through OCS was the biggest thing I'd ever done. For a lost guy, that was a big deal.

The biggest thing I've ever done was getting saved one day in 1994 while listening to a tape of the pastor of this church. You can get saved in a car on I-70 doing sub-light speed or whatever I was doing to get back to St. Louis that day. You can get saved in a car because I did. But I did all these things by just going a little bit further. So for the last 25 years, I've done the same thing in Christianity: just a little bit further. Just one more chapter. Just one more devotion. Just one more message. Just one more sitting through announcements that I'm supposed to give.

Not everybody in the military gets a participation trophy. If you join the military to feel good about yourself, don't. A lot of people quit. A lot of people couldn't run to the next bend. They couldn't get to the next rung. It was all mental. They didn't ask us to do anything physically impossible. It was a mental thing, just going out one step further, going a little bit further. And "He went a little further" just stuck in my mind.

You wonder, how many times do we quit before that thing happens that we're waiting for? "I've tried that church thing. It's been six months. Nothing happened." We call that the parade. The people, they come in, they go out. A lot of times they go out and they come back to get beat up. Sometimes we never see them again. But they just leave one second too soon. You never know. The moment you walk away from a thing could be the next moment was the victory. And we just walk away. How many times do we do that?

There's a story in Mark 10 about a young man that comes to Jesus and says, "What shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?" Jesus says, "Sell everything you have. Follow Me." And the guy goes, "Hmm. Yeah, that's just one hill too far. I'm not willing to go a little bit further. I'm not going to do that." This represents a lot of Christianity today. They're willing to show up on a Sunday. They're willing to show up on a Thursday. They'll sign up for everything in the back. They're not willing to take it to the next level and make it to the next step. And that ultimate goal is the judgment seat of Christ. Now that I'm in my 30s, I think about that a lot more than I used to.

I'm going to be starting out in Matthew chapter 26. This is Jesus in the Garden. It's Jesus' prayer in the Garden. I think it's one of the most intimate passages of showing Jesus Christ, the God-Man. He was 100% God. He was 100% man. I don't know if I can always get my head around that, but it's true. It doesn't matter if I could get my head around it. The Garden's where Jesus shows us His humanity. And while we see in the passage that He goes a little further, He went the distance. He didn't just go a little further. He went all the way. We know the story because we can read it. Maybe we can learn a thing or two about ourselves today and whether or not we're willing to go a little further. Are we willing to go a little further, just that next thing, whatever that is? Or are we just going to quit before that miracle happens, so to speak?

Let's pray.

Father, we just thank You and praise You for Your Son, Jesus Christ. Lord, thank You for this opportunity to use this tongue that's not worthy to speak Your words. I pray, Lord, that nothing in my life and nothing in my background and nothing in my spirit would stop Your word from coming through today. That these people would hear what You would have to say and use me as a vessel to get it there. Let us not just hear what You say, but let us do what You say. And I ask these things in Jesus' name, amen.

SEC: Jesus in Gethsemane: The Example of Going Further

Matthew 26:30-46

And when they had sung an hymn, they went out into the mount of Olives.

Then saith Jesus unto them, All ye shall be offended because of me this night: for it is written, I will smite the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock shall be scattered abroad.

But after I am risen again, I will go before you into Galilee.

Peter answered and said unto him, Though all men shall be offended because of thee, yet will I never be offended.

Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, That this night, before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice.

Peter said unto him, Though I should die with thee, yet will I not deny thee. Likewise also said all the disciples.

Then cometh Jesus with them unto a place called Gethsemane, and saith unto the disciples, Sit ye here, while I go and pray yonder.

And he took with him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, and began to be sorrowful and very heavy.

Then saith he unto them, My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death: tarry ye here, and watch with me.

And he went a little further, and fell on his face, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt.

And he cometh unto the disciples, and findeth them asleep, and saith unto Peter, What, could ye not watch with me one hour?

Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.

He went away again the second time, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if this cup may not pass away from me, except I drink it, thy will be done.

And he came and found them asleep again: for their eyes were heavy.

And he left them, and went away again the third time, and prayed, saying the same words.

Then cometh he to his disciples, and saith unto them, Sleep on now, and take your rest: behold, the hour is at hand, and the Son of man is betrayed into the hands of sinners.

Rise, let us be going: behold, he is at hand that doth betray me.

SEC: Principles of Endurance and Quitting

I make up fake principles because Bob already did them all, so I'm going to give you a couple more that I made up.

➤ The Principle of the First Opportunity Precedent

➤ The "I've Had Enough" Principle

Jesus was 100% God, but He was 100% man. So He was facing something worse than any one of you or I could ever imagine. There's nothing that we could ever go through that'll even be anything close to what He went through if we're saved. If you're lost, you're going to go through that. But if you're saved, you don't have to go through that.

Jesus said the flesh is weak. And we sometimes read that as, "Oh, I can't do it. You made me that way. A lot of water went under the bridge. How am I supposed to do the right thing?" He comes back and He finds His apostles sleeping, the three closest to Him. "Could you not watch with Me one hour?" That's where my hour of prayer comes from. His three closest disciples couldn't go that far. They just went as far as they could go. And what they did was they missed one of the most intimate times in Christ's life. They were asleep while He was praying to God for an answer to something. And now they represent Christianity that only knows about Christ what someone told them about Christ, rather than having a personal relationship with Christ.

They're perfectly willing to write notes in their Bible and never read that thing again. "Oh, look at my Bible. It's got notes all over it." It's a status thing for a lot of people, not everybody. And I'm not against notes. I got notes. What I'm saying is if you don't have a personal relationship with your Lord and Savior, it ain't going to work. Try it with your wife. Go to your next door neighbor and say, "Hey, tell me everything about my wife. I don't want to talk to her." See how that works for you. It just doesn't work. So these guys are missing a great opportunity. And if we really want to see God's work in our lives, sometimes we're just going to need to go a little bit further.

SEC: The Woman with the Issue of Blood: Stepping Out from the Crowd

Mark 5:21-34

And when Jesus was passed over again by ship unto the other side, much people gathered unto him: and he was nigh unto the sea.

And, behold, there cometh one of the rulers of the synagogue, Jairus by name; and when he saw him, he fell at his feet,

And besought him greatly, saying, My little daughter lieth at the point of death: I pray thee, come and lay thy hands on her, that she may be healed; and she shall live.

And Jesus went with him; and much people followed him, and thronged him.

And a certain woman, which had an issue of blood twelve years,

And had suffered many things of many physicians, and had spent all that she had, and was nothing better, but rather grew worse,

When she had heard of Jesus, came in the press behind, and touched his garment.

For she said, If I may touch but his clothes, I shall be whole.

And straightway the fountain of her blood was dried up; and she felt in her body that she was healed of that plague.

And Jesus, immediately knowing in himself that virtue had gone out of him, turned him about in the press, and said, Who touched my clothes?

And his disciples said unto him, Thou seest the multitude thronging thee, and sayest thou, Who touched me?

And he looked round about to see her that had done this thing.

But the woman fearing and trembling, knowing what was done in her, came and fell down before him, and told him all the truth.

And he said unto her, Daughter, thy faith hath made thee whole; go in peace, and be whole of thy plague.

This is a woman that just took it a little bit further. She never gave up. 12 years is a long time. The first thing that I can learn from this woman is that in order to get where I need to be and go a little further, I'm going to need to step out from that crowd every once in a while.

Christianity is a group event, and there's safety in the group. It's a team sport, and it needs to be that. But sometimes, in order to get where God wants us to be, we need to break out. We need to step out. Coming to church on Sunday, that's expected. That's given. Don't pat ourselves on the back because we're here today. Coming to church on a Thursday night for Bible study, given. Don't pat yourself on the back for that. When was the last time you opened your Bible and read it? When was the last time you went back and looked at those notes that you took last Sunday? It's a personal relationship. We need to break away. We need to step out.

Living inside the crowd isn't bad. It's not bad, but once in a while, you need to get alone with God. David got alone with God. He went through that cave in the wilderness and got alone with God. He was in a mess. He got alone with God, and things started to go up. You see this upward, downward, upward thing. And when he gets alone with God, he starts going up. Christianity ought to be a one-on-one relationship. And in that respect, it's really not a group event. It's a personal relationship. My relationship with God isn't going to do anything for you. Trust me. If all we ever learned about the Bible or Christ is what someone else told us about the Bible or Christ, we're missing the mark. We didn't go a little further. We just sat down. We didn't do anything.

Much people thronged Him. This was a crowd of people. He's like a modern-day rock star. I could just see people trying to get at Him. He had His groupies. He had His disciples. He had the apostles. He had His inner circle, the parade of onlookers waiting for a train wreck. There was a lot of people. There was a lot of people between this woman and the solution to her problem. So this is a picture of someone. You've got a problem in your life, a sin in your life, and your only solution is Jesus Christ. But there's obstacles. The longer she had this problem, the more obstacles there were to get between her and her problem being solved. She was weak. Bad blood makes people weak. She stepped out anyways and went that next level. She had to get through that crowd. She represents someone who, while the entire crowd was happy to be near Christ, she knew she needed realness to that relationship.

1 John 1:1

That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life;

There's something physical to this relationship. The crowd was happy for Bob to tell us the notes in his Bible. The woman wanted to touch just the hem of His garment. She just wanted something real. She wanted that personal real. She's a picture of someone that will open up that Bible and let God talk to them directly. And He does later on.

Don't get me wrong. The crowd isn't bad. I'm not saying the crowd's bad. The crowd's good. Because it provides like-minded people that we can hang out with, iron sharpeneth iron. That's why we have the group. That's why we don't all stay home and watch YouTube. The crowd's

important. Too easily we can get caught in the energy of the crowd. And the crowd sweeps us away and we think we're okay. Because the crowd's okay. The crowd's fine. But we lose our personal relation. That physicality to our relationship with Christ. When it comes to Christ we can hear, see, look great. But do you have a personal real physical relationship with Him? Where we can handle that word of God ourselves? Or are we just part of the parade that knows about Christ? There's a difference. This woman wanted to have a personal relationship with Christ and she pressed for that, towards that, to get it.

SEC: Recognizing and Addressing Our Needs

This woman recognized her need. That's, I mean, the biggest part of fixing a problem is realizing, oh, there's a problem. And that's not always easy. But she knew her problem. She had it for 12 years. And everyone else knew it too. Everyone else knew she had an issue of blood. There were Levitical laws that would call her out. She was unclean. I think one of the biggest failures we can have as Christians is not recognizing and identifying the problems in our lives. Because I'm much better at pointing out your flaws. As I look out on this sea of humanity, I can tell you, you guys are messed up. But then I look in a mirror and go, ehh. Let's do some work, because that judgment seat of Christ is going to be real public. All those secret things you think you've hidden from me. But I'm going to be scrambling, trying to hide mine. So I'm not worried about yours.

She recognized her need. She had an issue of blood. An issue of blood is at the root of all our needs. An issue of blood was this woman's problem. But an issue of blood was our salvation as well. Christ's issue of blood. In this case of this woman, her issue disqualified her from every aspect of daily life. She couldn't even worship. Every aspect of the nation of Israel was out of her touch because she was unclean, because of this issue of blood that she had. They were not welcome in polite society.

Now turn that around. There was a time I was talking to someone before church started about it. A time in Christianity where long hair excluded you as a man from church. Wearing blue jeans excluded you from church. These are real things. Now let's talk about that. That's not, that's one thing. That's not even, let's talk about sin as the problem in this woman's life. Say this woman had sin in her life. It disqualifies her from polite society. It just disqualified her. She couldn't be involved. She was an outcast. She was someone that was to be looked down upon by society. And according to Leviticus 15, she was barred from worship. So as a picture of a lost person, there's no worship in a lost person. You can't do it. I don't care what you do. You can say all the words. Even that devil said, "Yeah, even the devils believe and tremble." They tremble too. Even that woman with the spirit of divinity, right? Said, "Thou art followers of the most high God." She was possessed by a demon. She can say the right words. It doesn't matter. The words don't matter. It's the heart that matters. It's the blood that matters. And she was disqualified from worship just like we were before we were saved and got our sins cleansed at the cross.

So it's technically Old Testament here in Mark. But this issue of blood defined this woman every day of that 12 years in the same way our spiritual condition defines us today. I don't care how clean you look on a Sunday and how saved you are, but if there's unconfessed, unrepented sin in your life, you're this woman. I'm this woman. We are this woman. The issue of blood, no matter

what it is, defines us. Whether we're asleep at the wheel or not asleep at the wheel. Whether we look like we're doing the right things or not.

She had this thing for 12 years. She was tired. She carried it for a long time. That's a long time to carry any load. It was a lot longer than the apostles one hour. They couldn't even wait an hour. She had this thing for 12 years. She could have been defeated. The people around her weren't helping her. The people around her were probably blaming her for this sin. I know that we would never do that here. Last Bible believe in King James Bible. Christians just, we never look at someone else's spiritual condition and judge them, do we? Nah, well I don't. I know that you do though. For this woman though, this was a physical ailment that caused her spiritual and emotional distress. Try putting yourselves in that position for a minute and the next time you come across someone that's deep in sin, maybe our response to that person is different. Maybe we invite them in rather than push them out. Next time that homeless dude walks in, I've heard stories, the stories that I hear about, guys with long hair coming in, it's like you really don't need to be here. Really, that's exactly the right thing. That's what Jesus would have done with his crew cut, right? Remember that guy? I know he's not blowing hair blue eyes but I'm gonna guess he had some hair.

She was an outcast and it was easier for the good, God loving religious folks at the time to secretly blame her for that problem. It's easier to blame them. We wouldn't do that. At least not in public, right? Maybe alone, band practice. Maybe we'll do that. I don't know. Since the Bible's written to us, maybe we could put ourselves in her place. Practically we might read this to say that we've carried this or that burden for a long time. Most people become comfortable with their sin after a while. You chew on that sin long enough, you become entitled to it. It's like, and if you ever get called out on him, that's just how God made me. I was pretty old when I got saved. I was 33 years old. Lot of water went under the bridge. You might've stole your dad's change off the nightstand but I framed my sister for it. I was not a good person. A lot of water went under my bridge and I just, I can't use that as an excuse. I might try but we tend to give up not after 12 years, after 12 minutes of struggling with something like, ah, I'll just do it this one time. Sorry Jesus, eternal security, ha ha. That judgment seat of Christ is gonna be a hoot. That's just how God made me but the woman kept trying.

I heard this phrase in 1994, she broke from the crowd. I went to KCBT once, heard a message. She broke from the crowd. I chewed on that for 25 years. She went a little further. She never stopped trying to get rid of that burden and she was never comfortable with it because she shouldn't be. If it represents sin, she should have never been comfortable with it.

Look at Mark 5:26:

And had suffered many things of many physicians, and had spent all that she had, and was nothing better, but rather grew worse,

She tried everything the world had to offer. New cars, new houses, new spouses, new churches, new clothes. Whatever it was she tried didn't work. But I mean, you cut some people some slack once in a while. When something's going on with me, the last thing I'm doing is looking inward. I'm looking outward for my solutions. I'm not looking to God. That's just not my first move. It

should be. Sometimes it is, not always. But usually when something bad's happened to me, it's based on something I've done. I don't know, things just don't fall out of the sky and hit me, okay? It's always something I've said, something I've done, some attitude I've had, some decision I've made. It's come back to haunt me later on. Here I am, the innocent victim of a crime against humanity because that's just how I see myself. I'm a good person. Gosh darn it, and people like me. First instinct's not to look within, right? If we're honest, we look outside for solutions to our problems. This woman probably started that way. And over the years, having not kind of the conclusion that Christ was her only hope, she keeps going. And according to how I read the passage, things got worse, not better.

But here's something that just dawned on me. For at least eight and a half years of this woman's 12 years, Christ was not the answer. His public ministry was three and a half years long. There was no way to call on Jesus for the longest part of her 12 years. So let's say this was at the beginning of his ministry. I didn't do the timeline. She had eight and a half years without that spiritual solution. That's a long time. But for us, we've got no excuse. From the moment we got saved, there is a spiritual solution to every one of our problems. Every emotional problem we have, every spiritual problem we have has a solution. We don't wanna take the medicine, but she did. She went a little further. When it comes to our sin, the longer we try worldly solutions to our sin problem, the longer and more severely we'll suffer. And the woman teaches us that. But it's a medical condition. She has a medical condition. Okay, and the woman may have done nothing wrong. I don't know, it represents sin. We all know that. Maybe she had this problem just so I could learn a lesson from her 2,000 years later. Maybe that's why. Why do bad things happen to good people? Because Bob needs lessons of good people having bad things happen to him. I'll just say it that way.

She had a lot of doctor's visits, treatments, snake oil. She probably had a lot, you know she had a lot of advice from people. "What you need to do is, here's what you need to do. Here's a self-help book. Here's a commentary. Here's anything except Bible." She sticks with it hoping that someone will figure this thing out, but she never settled for, "This is how God made me. It's not my fault." She stuck it out. She went all the way. She went a little further. It certainly takes patience to go the distance when things aren't going our way. In 12 years, that's a lifetime to some people. It's an eternity to some people. 12 minutes for me is long enough.

She spent everything she had. Many physicians, it says many physicians spent all that she had. In Luke chapter 8, the same story, she says she spent all her livelihood on physicians, but the world had no cure for her problem. The message here is that neither the things of the world nor our livelihood will ever solve a spiritual problem. Won't work. All of my spiritual problems are solved right out of this book. Right out of this thing. And sometimes someone gives it to me. Sometimes I get it myself. But if I was relying on what you gave me to solve my spiritual, I just got too many. I'm like, even Bob can't solve all my spiritual problems. This woman's only a physical picture of our spiritual condition. And a reminder to us that when we fall into sin and we try things like those new cars, new houses, new spouses, whatever it is, and other physical remedies to mask the symptoms of our spiritual condition, it just won't work. Until she stepped out of that crowd, nothing worked. Until that moment in time, someone told her about Jesus. So

when was the last time you told someone about Jesus Christ? I'll just let you chew on that for a while.

But no matter what. Look at Mark 5:27:

When she had heard of Jesus, came in the press behind, and touched his garment.

For she said, If I may touch but his clothes, I shall be whole.

She knew the solution. She was right. This was the one thing that would solve her problems. She did not allow those obstacles in her life to come between her and that solution. And there's going to be obstacles. After 12 years, there's going to be roadblocks. There's going to be things that you've done, things that have just happened that are going to be in the way between you and that spiritual solution. I call it pride. That's what I call it. I call it pride. "I'm not going to do that. I'm not going to humble myself. That guy's garment can't do anything for me. That Bible can't solve my problems." I've heard it. I've said it. And I've been proven wrong.

So Jesus was thronged in Mark 5:24. Many followers. That didn't stop her. And this is kind of difficult for her. She sees her only hope, but He's surrounded by obstacles. And it's big time obstacles. She could not and would not just brush by these people. She couldn't. She was unclean. Anyone she touched would be unclean. And can you imagine someone like that going through a crowd? And they know who she is. She's that woman with an issue of blood 12 years. You've got to know who she is. And she just touched you. Now you're unclean. You're the unqualified for daily life in the nation of Israel. Because you're now unclean. It was a big deal to these people. So anyone she touched would be unclean. And she knew it. But she took a chance because it was worth the chance. But I'm saying this. I don't think she brushed her on. It's like touching people. She found a way to get her spiritual solution without destroying the people around her. And I've seen this a lot. Our path to spiritual solutions to our problems is not always clear and open. But we need to take into consideration the lives of the people around us.

So thank God I found a King James Bible when I did. It was by accident. I wasn't trying. In fact, I was trying to not get a King James Bible when I bought my Bible. I went to the Three Rivers bookstore just outside of St. Louis because I was invited to a Bible study. And I had lied and said I was a Christian. And then I further lied and said I had a Bible. So I had to show up with the Bible. I'm just being honest here. So I went to that bookstore. And of course, you see all these things. And anyone that's ever been to a bookstore knows that the King James section is about this big. And then everything else is the rest of the bookstore. I'm like, I don't want that King James Bible. Yeah, that one. I got back to my hotel room. And I was a little bit disappointed. But I wasn't going to go spend another \$30 on the Bible. Thank God I did that. But you know what? On our way to our spiritual enlightenment, we can take this King James Bible and beat people over the head with it. Or we can win them over with our lives. We just win them over. I'll never, ever open another Bible than this Bible. I will never accept that another Bible is superior to this Bible. But I will never beat someone over the head with it. I just won't do it. If it becomes a problem, someone challenges my Bible, I'll chew your feet off. I'll cook your pets. But I will not give up this Bible. That ain't going to happen. No, it'll challenge me. But I'm not going to go out of my way to hurt you with my King James Bible. I'm not going to do it.

She was concerned. I think she had concern. It's not said that the crowd killed her because she touched them. It's not said. The crowd, I think, would have beat her to death had she touched them. So many times we run over our friends, our relatives, sometimes our spouses. I know a woman who prayed for her husband for 20 some odd years. Her kids got saved. Her relatives got saved. Her husband just didn't. And she was patient. And I know she probably didn't go home and beat him up with her King James Bible. And one day that guy pulled the trigger and got saved. I've never met. I've only met one or two people nicer than that guy. Your dad's nicer. Yeah, this guy was one of the sweetest human beings I've ever met. But can you imagine the damage that could have been done if this woman would have went home and beat him up with a King James Bible and did all the things that you probably shouldn't do? This woman got to her solution without hurting other people. I think that's important.

She steps out from that crowd. She goes a little bit further and says, "If I may but touch His clothes, I'll be whole." This woman stuck around long enough to see what God had in store for her. If she had quit, she wouldn't have that issue dried up. If she had quit, she wouldn't have got that spiritual blessing. And she got a spiritual blessing out of this.

Luke 8:45-48

And Jesus said, Who touched me? When all denied, Peter and they that were with him said, Master, the multitude throng thee and press thee, and sayest thou, Who touched me?

And Jesus said, Somebody hath touched me: for I perceive that virtue is gone out of me.

And when the woman saw that she was not hid, she came trembling, and falling down before him, she declared unto him before all the people for what cause she had touched him, and how she was healed immediately.

And he said unto her, Daughter, be of good comfort: thy faith hath made thee whole; go in peace.

When she found Jesus, when she told somebody about it, who have you told about Jesus Christ this week? How many of your relatives have not heard you witness to them about Jesus Christ? Is that OK? Are you willing to watch them march off to the lake of fire one day looking at you saying, "Why didn't you tell me? Why didn't you tell me?" Well, you can say, "Hey, you've been told before." Really? What if you were the one that got the lot of people knocked on my door before I pulled the trigger? A lot of people knock on my door. A lot of people hand me tracts. A lot of people witness to me. Yeah, I mocked them. I was meaning to them. I'd open the door. I'd mess with them. I was not a good person. But one day, someone approached me that one time. You only get once. You're guaranteed once, and then it's on you. But I don't want to look at my friends and relatives and say, "Yeah, I just didn't feel like it." It'll just feel like an eternity in hell. Don't worry about it. It'll just seem like eternity. But it will. And they'll go marching off to the lake of fire. In my mind, maybe I'm wrong, looking at you going, "Why didn't you tell me? Why didn't you tell me?" "Yeah, I know that other guy did, but he had a beer in his hand. That other guy was smoking pot when he witnessed me. You, you're my brother. You're my whatever. Why didn't you tell me?"

But here's the thing. The big point of that was, did you see it there? She had a personal conversation with Jesus Christ. He called her out of the crowd. He talked to her personally. And all the billions of people that want His attention, this woman broke from that crowd, went a little further, and got singled out by Jesus Christ Himself. I think that's pretty good. She reached out, touched the hem of His garment, desired something physical. All she wanted was to touch the hem of His garment, turn around and talk to her. He looked at her. Jesus Christ looked at that woman and spoke words to her. That's a big deal. Her relationship went from the theoretical crowd to Christianity, or rather what someone told her about Jesus Christ, to becoming a physical, direct, one-on-one relationship with her Savior. I think that's pretty cool. He says, "Go in peace." And if she had quit, she would have never received that peace of God. She's at peace with God, as she's saying. But there's a peace of God that passeth all understanding. And she got it that day. Her physical malady was only a vehicle to bring her to the point where she received that spiritual blessing. I think the whole thing wasn't to solve her issue of blood. It doesn't get her saved. The issue of blood could have remained. I mean, not all my problems went away. I'm not all that healthy. I'm half dead right now. Maybe I'll die right here. I don't know. Mel Sabaka tried to kill himself at the pulpit every time. I swear, I thought he was going to have a stroke many times.

She just went a little bit further than the crowd. The crowd was happy to be near Him. She wanted to touch that garment because her issue would be dried up. Touching that Bible, opening that Bible, you never know what's going to come out of that thing. You might not even know what sin you're dealing with. You read that Bible. You read a proverb and a psalm a day. Watch out, because stuff's going to happen. It's amazing. I read a proverb in the morning, and something happens that day. It's exactly related to that proverb. Maybe I caused it. I don't know. Usually, if that's the problem, I did it. You read a psalm every day. Something related to that psalm happens in that day. It was one of the first things this guy told me to do when I was going through discipleship. And it was like, this is magic. People ask me, "How do you know God is real?" I'm like, "Read a psalm and a proverb every day and call me in a week." Because you're going to know it's magic. There's just no big, ta-ta-da moment. But there's these little things that you're like, how in the world could all these things align perfectly unless this book is real, unless this thing is real? That's why I'm still here. If it wasn't real, I wouldn't have stuck around. I need results. I need stuff. This woman, though, represents any one of us carrying a burden that nothing in the world can resolve. The only hope she had was faith. She had that faith. She had that faith before she moved out of that crowd, though. "If I may but touch." And then she touched. James says, "The doers of the word and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves." She heard something, and then she did something. Like, "Oh, yeah, I know. I was supposed to go to the United Nations, teaching, teaching, baptizing." Really? When was the last time we witnessed to someone? I'll just leave it there.

SEC: Jesus' Burden and Our Response

Let's go back to Matthew 26 for a second. Our hero, we left Him in the garden with His friends asleep, asleep at the wheel. Jesus recognized a need. Now, don't feel bad about having needs. Jesus had one. Jesus was man, the God-man. All man, all God.

Matthew 26:36-38

Then cometh Jesus with them unto a place called Gethsemane, and saith unto the disciples, Sit ye here, while I go and pray yonder.

And he took with him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, and began to be sorrowful and very heavy.

Then saith he unto them, My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death: tarry ye here, and watch with me.

God Himself became sorrowful and very heavy. God Himself? "Oh, you can't be depressed in Christianity." Oh, OK. I'll just tell Jesus that. Now, Jesus didn't go run for the Prozac. He ran to prayer. He ran to prayer instead. Jesus recognized a need. We have needs. I'm no Jesus Christ. I'm 100% man, but I don't have that other part. I have needs. He began to tell His disciples what was going to happen. Even though they didn't believe it, He did. Peter didn't believe it. "Oh, Peter, he's great. He's that guy that runs around the church with the Bible. He's that guy." No, he's not. He's better than that guy. But he didn't believe it. "I'll die instead. I'll die before I deny You." Watch what you say.

He knew what was coming. Jesus knew what was coming. We all know what was coming because we know our Bible. He's heading for an ordeal that ends with His death on the cross. That's not the thing I think He was thinking about. For me, it's terrifying because it's not the scariest part of Christ's issue, His burden. His burden wasn't getting nailed to the cross, and that's what I always think about. It wasn't His own blood. His issue was our blood, our tainted blood, our sinful blood, that knowing that I would have to spend eternity in hell with those people that I won't witness to unless He went through with it, that was a burden for Him. But that's not even the worst of it. I think that's not the worst of it. All the events that were about to take place, the thing that I think He thought about the most was that moment in Matthew chapter 27, verse 46, where He says, "Why hast thou forsaken me?" "Hey, Dad, where are You?" And He wasn't there. Imagine that. Imagine if you could lose your salvation. You can't. He kind of went through that experience, didn't He? His Father turned His back on Him. "Father, why hast thou forsaken me?" I think that's the burden He was praying about in the garden. I think that's why He had sweat-like blood coming out of Him. I think that's why He went three times. "Now, you need to quit praying for that." Really? That woman prayed for her husband for 20 years. Tell me she prayed too many times. I'll fight you right now. You don't give up. You don't give up till you get an answer. And then you give up. And then you do what He says.

We all know that was going to go on there. Christ knew it too. He was carrying a burden unlike ours, worse than ours in every way. But He stepped out of the crowd. He left His disciples over here. He took His three closest disciples with Him. Peter, James, and John says, "Watch with Me one hour." "Yeah, I'm tired. I'm going to take a nap. I'm going to go to sleep," not once, not twice, three times. Three times they went to sleep. So hey, cut yourself a break. These guys saw miracles. They saw everything. They were with Him in His ministry the whole time. No excuse. But let's not be too hard on ourselves. And don't run for the Prozac. I got some. I'll give you some later. Jesus recognized that He had a need, just like that woman did. And even though He

could have ended it, He went a little further. "Know ye not, but I can call 10 legions of angels." He could have ended it any other way He wanted to. God would have been OK with it. We wouldn't be OK. God would have been OK.

Matthew 26:38-39

Then saith he unto them, My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death: tarry ye here, and watch with me.

And he went a little further, and fell on his face, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt.

He carried His burden for a long time. Now, I mean, we can parse this out any way you want it. Some say He's spending eternity on the cross. Sometimes said it was 3 and a half hours on the cross. Sometimes they say for 3 and a half days. I don't care what it is. If it's 3 and a half milliseconds, that's too much time to have your father turn your back on you. Just too much time. "Thinkest thou not that I cannot pray to my Father, and he shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels," is what He said. He could have ended it, but He didn't. He stepped out. He went the distance. He went a little bit further.

We all have a plan B. You all got a plan B? Remember the plan A, plan B thing? I got a plan B. I'd have invoked it. You'd all be in hell today. Thank you very much. Knowing something's coming is one thing, but as the event draws closer, you think about these things in a little more detail. I think Christ knew this the whole time. I think Christ, through His whole public ministry at least, knew what was going to happen at the end of it. He's either Christ or the most insane thing that ever happened on the planet. He made this happen. He orchestrated everything possible to make this moment in time happen. I think He's Jesus Christ. I think He's the Son of God. Nobody else would have done it. Anybody else would have called in a plan B.

People spend their whole entire lives either looking. I remember when I was young, I just wanted to be older. Mostly so I could drink. Now I spent my time, I want to be younger, but neither one of those things are going to happen. But it's coming. Things are coming to a head. It's coming. And they were coming to a head for Christ that day, that night, that evening. And that would be a burden for an unsaved person. So they just don't think about it. I knew who God was. I was raised a little Catholic boy. I knew who God was. I knew who this Jesus thing was. I knew for sure I wasn't going to hell because there's no way I could get through a mass without sinning. I think I got excommunicated once for ripping the sole of Mike Lugweg's shoe off. And I'm like, I just like, loud, right in the middle of this mass. And I'm like, ta-da, I got it. And then this is a real story. His sister grabbed my arm like this. And I was pretty sure I was going to hell. So I just didn't think about it. I just lived my life. And this is how God made me. It's his fault.

But we Christians ought to think differently about this thing. There's a day coming. Our day of reckoning is the judgment seat of Christ. It's coming. "Oh, I don't care if I'm the janitor." Oh, yes, you will. Yeah, you will. "I'll be in. I don't care." You're going to care. There's going to be a whole lot of, I think, crying at the judgment seat of Christ. I just can't be that way when you're standing next to someone, I don't know, pick anybody, Jonathan Edwards, David Brainard, any

Huguenot, any Covenanter, anyone that got their head cut off because they wouldn't deny Christ. And you sit there and like, "Yeah, I was tired." But I'm saved. And Jesus goes, "Really? Really? Is that what you really thought about Me?" I think it's going to be terrible. I think it's going to be a terrible day. After that, it's going to be OK, maybe. He could have ended it any way He wanted. And God would have been OK with it, but He goes through it anyways only to solve my problems 2,000 years later. I just don't have it in me. I like you guys a lot. Nope.

Like the woman, Christ went to this. And He went all the way. Three times He asked for God for another way. And each time He got His answer, and then, like James said, He was not just a hearer. He was a doer. And He did it. He did it knowing that it's going to hurt a lot. That's enough for me. Just you being mean to me is enough for me to go it. He goes through a lot of physical pain, of physical torture. And then comes the real penalty of having His Dad turn His back on Him. And at the conclusion of that third prayer, He breaks from the entire crowd of sleeping Christianity and said, "Thy will be done." And then He did it. We hear the amens. They all happen. But then we go do it. When we're done, when we leave here on a Sunday morning, we actually go do that thing that we amen. I'm going to say probably sometimes, but not always. He went all the way. And just like the woman, He gave everything He had.

1 Timothy 2:6

Who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time.

He gave us the example that breaking from that crowd of Bible-waving noise machine Christianity is more than just showing up, signing up on a few sign up sheets and singing a few hymns on Sunday. It's more than that. It's more than just reading our Bible and then being able to discern the hearts and minds of those lowly humans that don't happen to go to our church. It's more than that. It's more than showing up and serving. It's about taking things home from church, out of the Bible, out of the sermon, out of the messages on Thursday night, and replacing the things that God doesn't want us to have. There's a lot of stuff we have that God doesn't want us to have. I like this stuff. It makes me feel good. Sin feels good, or I personally wouldn't do it. Christ shows us where to carry that burden, lay Him down at the altar of prayer, and give everything we have, not to the world, but to Christ. And then let Him solve the rest of those problems for us.

But know this. Going further and stepping out from that crowd is going to cost you something. It has to. You look at Matthew 26:31-34. It says, "All ye shall be offended." They take Jesus, and Peter shows up outside the palace. What does he do? Knocks down the door, pulls out a sword, kills everyone, and him and Jesus go to Culver's for a hamburger? No. He denies them three times. But you look closer in those verses. I'm not going to read it to you. We're going to run out of time. And I'm just a long-winded guy. Jesus leaves them three times and says, "Watch and pray." And every time He comes back, they're asleep. They would not go further. They didn't break from the crowd. They were the crowd. And a lot of people think that following Christ is a cakewalk. Just dress up, show up, drop a check off, make noise, be seen. It's all good. But knowing that showing up the right way, you'll be offended.

Try this. I don't recommend it. Take a stand against the crowd. Find something at church that's not right. Take a stand on it. See what happens to you. When the crowd wants something, the

crowd's got energy. Take a stand on something that God wants, that the crowd doesn't want. I dare you. I dare you to try it. It would be a better world if you did. It would be a better church if you did. It would be a better family if you did. I just dare you. You can either stand up or just stay asleep. It's OK. Jesus doesn't care. He loves me. I'm a Christian. I'm saved. It's our choice. We can all man up like Peter did and say the words in Matthew 26:33. He talked big talk. He talked big. A couple times in the Bible, he talked big. Hey, he was killed for Christ. I'm not going to. He woke up. He woke up. But if you're any way real about your faith, you'll be challenged for it. But it's easier to be challenged out there than it is in here. Try taking a stand against the crowd. See what happens to you. Hey, maybe we can die for Christ someday. Wouldn't that be awesome? Let's go get killed.

Not going a little further is really sad. You know what He says to them at the end? "Sleep on now." Just sleep. I can imagine Him shaking His head. "Wow, I thought you were My friends." I don't know. Jesus is better than me. There's a difference here between the woman in Mark and the three apostles here in Matthew. She breaks from that crowd. She keeps going. She sees the power of God firsthand. These three guys, closest to Jesus Christ than any other disciple ever, missed it. They can only do now what we do if we don't have that personal relationship. They can only tell others what someone told them about that night. They could have seen Him go to that garden and pray. They could have heard the words He said. And now all they can do is repeat a story. And I don't know how they heard the story if they were all asleep. But someone told them. They go to sleep and miss one of the most personal moments of Christ's entire public ministry, in my opinion, the God-man being man right there in the garden. Imagine what Peter and James and John could tell about Christ praying in the garden. Now they can just tell a story about what someone told them. God wants us to have a personal relationship with Christ. And some people are just content to be told what He said.

So while we're going through the rest of our journey of life, we come across these men and women with issues. Let's try to look inward at our own junk first and get rid of our own issues and our own burdens and respond to them the way. Are we willing to break from that crowd or are we willing to sleep through it?

There was a blind guy in Luke chapter 8. He wanted to get to Jesus. He cried saying, "Jesus, thou son of David, have mercy on me." But they were with him. But they went before him, rebuked him, that he should hold his peace. So he went away and he was blind. No. But he cried so much the more. They wanted him out of there. Think about that blind man who tried to imagine his life if he just let those who went before him shut him up. Nothing would have happened. Sit quietly and not take that step of faith. What if he quit before he went a little further?

There was that Greek Syrophenician woman in Mark chapter 7 that wanted Jesus to cast forth the devil out of her daughter and Christ says, "Let the children be filled first: for it is not meet to take the children's bread, and to cast it unto the dogs." So she went away and her daughter just kept the demon. And she answered him and said unto him, "Yes, Lord: yet the dogs under the table eat of the children's crumbs." So Jesus goes, "Yeah, I like that." And He cast the demon out of her daughter. What if she had quit? What if the crowd won? What if she had just walked

away? She didn't take no from an answer from Christ. But she spoke to Him. She had a personal relationship with Him. I think that personal relationship means something to Him.

Worse yet, think about how bad life would be if Jesus quit before He went and took that extra step. God would probably make some other way, but if I was God, I'd make no other way. I'd be done with all you people in a heartbeat. We have no reason to be here. There's no reason for us to be here.

Philippians 3:10

That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death;

Oh, I like the power. I like the fellowship. But I don't like the fellowship of His sufferings. I don't want to be made conformable unto His death. I like the good stuff. We all want to know Him. We all want that power, but are we willing to break from that crowd, take a stand? What if you were in the crowd that day, that Pilate up there? Everybody's going, "Give us Barabbas! Give us!" And you said, "Give us Jesus!" There is not one voice in that crowd. He said, "Give us." I dare you to take that stand. You take a stand right next to Him on the cross. It's going to cost you something. It costs something to take that stand. It costs something to break from the crowd. The crowd will turn on you. It doesn't matter. The crowd turned on Christ. Worked out pretty good for me. Thank God. And that crucifixion, the crowd cried out, "His blood be on us, and on our children." "Give us Barabbas! Give us Jesus!" I could just see it now. I'd be there. Yeah. No. Imagine that's you in that crowd. You got your reputation right. We don't want to give up our reputation. I don't like the direction this is going in, but I don't want to take a stand against it. I'll just go to sleep. I'll just go to sleep.

Imagine we're holding on to something we shouldn't, just like the crowd in the world today. Are we willing to take that step when we break from the crowd, when we take it to the next level? What do we do when we see someone in that position standing at the limit of their endurance after 12 years that woman had that issue of blood? What do we do? Just curse God and die. How about that? "Yeah, you do have problems. You should just go away. Your hair is too long. You shouldn't be here. You don't dress right. You shouldn't be here. There's no more room at the cross. Sorry. Not for you anyways. Jesus loves me. Sorry about you. You're not one of the chosen few."

Anyway, Christianity is easy these days. It's just too easy. We don't have to take stands. We get pretty hard to stand here. We stand up in here. We wave our Bibles, answer back to heaven. We leave there. That's the test. We're irrelevant in this room. To the world, we're irrelevant right now until about five minutes from now. When we walk out of there, what are we gonna do with what we know about our Lord and Savior? And if we only know what someone has told us about Him, we won't be effective. We just won't. And that's not what God wants. And that's gonna show up in our moment at our trial at our judgment seat of Christ. It's gonna happen. That woman and the issue of blood, the blind man, that Christ show us various levels of grit, in my opinion. The blind guy was an annoyance to those who came before him. I call those the pretty people of church. The woman had it rough. She was unclean. She faced physical danger for stepping out, the religious people of the church. When Christ had it worst of all, He had the sins of the world

about to fall on His shoulder and His own Father turning His back on Him. That's us. We're all of those things. And never forget, He was 100% God, but He was 100% man. I'll never get my hands completely around that, but it's true.

Philippians 4:13

I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.

That means our strength comes from what we do through Christ. So if I've done nothing today, other than say, whatever you see in the Bible, go do it. Whatever you've heard about the Bible, that's right. Go do that. But go home and have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ and don't be part of the crowd. That's not what He wanted. He wants us to all step out.

Let's pray.

Father, we just thank You again for this time. We come together at church and thank You for the country that we have that allows us to do this with relative safety. Lord may be.