

A Note to the Communicator:

These sermon outlines are designed just for you, the communicator. These outlines are tools so you can better help those who want to go Deeper in their relationship with God.

Because we value your trust, we want to tell you exactly the results people are getting. Besides significant growth in terms of healthy relationships with God, self, and others, people who experience *The Deeper Path* will:

- ◆ Understand that when they numb their Pain, they also numb their potential.
- ◆ Identify their own coping mechanisms through a profound process of self-awareness.
- ◆ Realize they have a choice to accept chronic Pain which produces slow death or invite acute Pain which produces a soul on fire.

Because *The Deeper Path* content:

- ◆ Weaves the author's own story of overcoming Pain with relatable and supporting examples from the Bible, education, government, entertainment, and business.
- ◆ Reveals a unique and powerful 5 step model that helps readers invite Jesus into their hurts and through their healing.
- ◆ Provides the necessary tools which equip readers to author their OPUS and discover their true potential. (Ephesians 2:10)

*Our prayers are with you as you begin *The Deeper Path*. For those that resonate with the message and want to go even Deeper, please explore what it means to join our Deeper Path team. <http://www.deeperpathbook.com/certification/>*

And look for additional free tools here. <http://www.deeperpathbook.com>

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SERMON OUTLINE

Session 1 - Question Your Condition

TEXTS: John 5:1-9; Mark 10:46-52

(Read Chapter 6 in *The Deeper Path* - © Kary Oberbrunner - Baker Books 2013)

INTRODUCTION

Jesus Christ, the Greatest Teacher, often asked people questions. Although he always knew the answer, Jesus knew many times other people didn't. At times his question exposed a need. (Mark 10:51) Other times, a motive. (Matthew 21:23-27) And still other times, a path to reconciliation. (John 21:15-17)

Questions can be a transformational tool, functioning as a mirror, forcing us to reflect deeply. One source counted over 300 questions just in the biblical book of Job.

Socrates said, "the quality of the questions we ask, determine the quality of the answers we'll get." Clearly, the right kind of questions pack a powerful punch. And if you're courageous enough to face them, the ones in this session will leave a good little sting.

Try these on for starters:

1. ARE YOU SATISFIED OR STUCK?

In the movie *The Matrix*, Agent Smith commented on the complexity of the Matrix. "Have you ever stood and stared at it, marveled at its beauty, its genius?" he said. "Billions of people just living out their lives, oblivious."¹

In the film, the unconscious incompetence of humans gave sentient machines their edge. These machines depended on humanity's ignorance of their condition. These machines pacified the population with electrical impulses meant to distract them from the real truth: that they're stuck, serving the machines unknowingly.

Unfortunately, when we don't know what we don't know, why would we ever change? When we lack the self-awareness that another way even exists, how could we choose another option?

¹"The Matrix (1999)," *Philosophical Films*, <http://www.philfilms.utm.edu/1/matrix.htm>, accessed July 26, 2012.

So how can we get unstuck if we're not aware that we're stuck? If we pay closer attention to the words we use, our vocabulary might just give us away. Here's why

We tend to use linguistic metaphors to explain the way we see ourselves. When we feel "up," we use phrases like:

I am on top of the world.
I am unstoppable.
I am bulletproof.
I am invincible.
I am on a roll.
I am on fire.

But we use other phrases when we feel stuck. We say things like:

I am missing a piece of the puzzle.
I am in the wrong frame of mind.
I need to think outside the box.
I am going in circles.
I can't snap out of it.
I am stuck in a rut.

These last six metaphors express a low level of awareness that we are stuck and powerless.

First we think it.
Then we feel it.
Then we say it.
And then we live into it and from it.

The cost of living from those phrases will take a toll on you and those around you. When swimming in this type of headspace we often devote our awareness to our problems and end up losing touch with our own resourcefulness. In America alone much of the population feels stuck, held back, and detached from their own resourcefulness:

1. One-third of Americans are struggling to live to their "fullest potential."
2. Nearly seventy million Americans are dealing with emotional conflict.
3. Seventy million Americans feel held back by their past.²

² "70 Million Americans Feel Held Back by their Past," *Barna Group*, November 3, 2011, <http://www.barna.org/culture-articles/532-70-million-americans-feel-held-back-by-their-past>.

French-born American author Anaïs Nin wrote, “We don’t see things they way they are, we see things the way we are.”³ Whether we agree with this reality or not, we’re an extension of our world. When we’re off-centered, perplexed, or conflicted, then our world is as well.

2. WHAT DO YOU REALLY WANT?

(Reading chapter 13 of *The Deeper Path* will provide additional insight)

Jesus asked a peculiar question when interacting with people, especially sick people. At times, the all-knowing Son of God seemed cruel when asking the penetrating, sometimes obvious question, “What do you want?”

But Jesus never seemed satisfied with shallow conversations. He wanted to dig Deeper and get below the surface. Like the time he met the man who’d been sick for thirty-eight years.

Some time later, Jesus went up to Jerusalem for one of the Jewish festivals. Now there is in Jerusalem near the Sheep Gate a pool, which in Aramaic is called Bethesda and which is surrounded by five covered colonnades. Here a great number of disabled people used to lie—the blind, the lame, the paralyzed. One who was there had been an invalid for thirty-eight years. When Jesus saw him lying there and learned that he had been in this condition for a long time, he asked him, “Do you want to get well?” (John 5:1–6)

- What was Jesus thinking?
- Wasn’t it obvious?
- Of course the lame man wanted to get healed. Why wouldn’t he want that?

We would do well to ask ourselves why we don’t want to be healed sometimes. Notice the man never answered Jesus’s question. He simply told his story instead.

“Sir,” the invalid replied, “I have no one to help me into the pool when the water is stirred. While I am trying to get in, someone else goes down ahead of me.” (v. 7)

3. ARE YOU WILLING TO ENGAGE GOD IN ORDER TO EXPERIENCE TRUE HEALING?

We find Jesus’s question buried other places in the Gospels. In the story of Bartimaeus we hear a different song, but the same melody line. Jesus confronted him with the same penetrating question: “What do you want?”

Then they came to Jericho. As Jesus and his disciples, together with a large crowd, were leaving the city, a blind man, Bartimaeus (which means “son of Timaeus”), was sitting by the roadside begging. When he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to shout, “Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!”

Many rebuked him and told him to be quiet, but he shouted all the more, “Son of David, have mercy on me!”

Jesus stopped and said, “Call him.”

³ “Anaïs Nin,” *Wikiquote*, http://en.wikiquote.org/wiki/Anaïs_Nin, accessed July 26, 2012.

So they called to the blind man, “Cheer up! On your feet! He’s calling you.” Throwing his cloak aside, he jumped to his feet and came to Jesus.

“What do you want me to do for you?” Jesus asked him. (Mark 10:46–51)

Bartimaeus was different from the lame man sitting at the pool. He’s the one who engaged Jesus, and it’s clear what he wanted.

But in the other story, it’s Jesus who engaged the lame man at the pool. It’s unclear what he wanted.

Two stories. Two sick men.

One question. Two answers.

One excuse. One request.

The blind man said, “Rabbi, I want to see.” (v. 51)

Bartimaeus knew what he wanted and he got what he wanted; Jesus honored his request because of his faith.

“Go,” said Jesus, “your faith has healed you.” Immediately he received his sight and followed Jesus along the road. (v. 52)

Unfortunately, the lame man didn’t know what he wanted. He got something he may or may not have wanted. You and I both know there are plenty of people who would rather remain sick and stuck in the familiar than be healed and free in the unfamiliar.

So with your permission, may I ask:

1. Are you willing to engage God in order to experience true healing?
2. Do you know what you really want?
3. Are you satisfied or stuck?

These five sermons will take you on a journey through your Pain and into your potential. We’ll look at the Scriptures and The Deeper Path in order to find five steps that will let our hurts lead to our healing.

SERMON OUTLINE

Session 2 - Unmask Your Painkillers

TEXTS: Psalm 69; Psalm 109

(Read Chapter 7 in *The Deeper Path* - © Kary Oberbrunner - Baker Books 2013)

INTRODUCTION

The Scriptures model the importance of meditating. But unlike New Age mediation, which centers on emptying the mind, Biblical mediation centers on focusing the mind. Isaac the patriarch meditated. (Genesis 24:63) David the king meditated. (Psalm 119:15) And Jesus the Messiah mediated. (Luke 6:12) Each retreated from the noise of the world and focused their thoughts instead.

David meditated upon the law all day long. (Psalm 119:97) Although this discipline seems foreign today, it's always been difficult. Hundreds of years ago Pascal saw this phenomenon even before TiVo, or movies, or electricity. He wrote, "All of man's difficulties are caused by his inability to sit quietly in a room by himself."⁴

Turning down the noise helps us to think better. But we know that most people don't want to think. Thomas Edison said, "Five percent of the people think; ten percent of the people think they think; and the other eighty-five percent would rather die than think."⁵ We prefer amusement instead. Consider the word *amusement* and its etymology for a moment.

A = Not

Muse = Think

Amusement = Not Think

Amusement means "to distract or divert," and most of us are scared to death of a day without distraction. It's far too Painful. But if we want to turn on the healing than we must turn off the noise and unmask our Painkillers.

1. WHAT'S YOUR PAINKILLER?

We all engage in what *The Grief Recovery Handbook* calls S.T.E.R.B.S., or Short Term Energy Relieving Behaviors.

⁴ Pascal, *Pensées*.

⁵ "Talk: Thomas Edison," *Wikiquote*, http://en.wikiquote.org/wiki/Talk:Thomas_Edison, accessed July 26, 2012.

Although the flavor of Painkiller varies from person to person, each Painkiller has one single, obvious goal: to kill Pain.

Here are just a few examples:

- Romance novels
- Extreme sports
- Video games
- Substances
- Busyness
- Shopping
- Success
- Church
- Money
- Work
- Sex

How do you kill your Pain?

2. ARE YOU GIVING GOD A HOLY HEISMAN?

The Heisman trophy is an annual award given in college football. The statue depicts a player with one hand out in front, pushing opponents away, and the other hand placed near his heart, guarding the football.

Many of us are guilty of giving God the “Holy Heisman” in order to avoid our Pain. We have one hand in front of us, pushing God away with our tasks. We keep him at bay, appeasing him with our good works. We prefer to live our lives and expect God to live his, maybe hooking back up in the afterlife.

We place our other hand over our heart to guard it. We’re not about to let God get close to us, and so we desire a transactional relationship with him rather than a transformational one. Although we want to associate ourselves with him, we want to keep him at a distance, where we can control him.

Many of us have a rocky relationship with our heavenly Father, perhaps due in part to rocky relationships with our earthly father-figures, or lack thereof. Sometimes, we see this more clearly in movies because our own issues don’t get in the way. I think you’ll recognize this particular example from the movie *The Lion King*, a story about a lion cub who struggled a bit with his father.

Rather quickly, we meet Mufasa, king of the jungle, ruler over all. In the beginning he and his son, Simba, have a beautiful father-son relationship. The world seemed perfect, or so Simba thought

As he got a little older, he listened to the voice of his deceiving uncle Scar and trespassed into a forbidden place—the elephant graveyard. Sensing Simba was in danger, Mufasa sacrificed his own life to save his son.

Immediately, guilt plagued Simba and he fled, ashamed of his foolish choice that cost his father’s life. As time marched on, Simba forgot who he was and lived a life of purposelessness instead.

His kingly father became a distant memory, not a daily reality. Simba saw himself as an embarrassment, no longer worthy to be called a child of the king. Finally, after running for years, he reached the end of himself and vulnerably cried out to the heavens, “You said you’d always be there for me, but you’re not . . . it’s because of me . . . it’s my fault.”

The moment he was finally honest, his breakthrough came via a crazy messenger. The monkey Rafiki confronted Simba in the midst of his identity crisis and led him through the jungle, to a pond where he saw his father’s reflection. Simba finally poured out his heart to his father.

He confessed his inadequacies, his shortcomings, and his hang-ups. His father listened, but then spoke boldly. “You are more than who you have become . . . remember who you are.”⁶

Mufasa reminded him of his position—who he was, not his condition—how he was.

When Simba poured out his heart to his father, only then could he embrace his true identity and accept the crown that was rightfully his.

3. WILL YOU WRITE YOUR OWN PSALM TO GOD?

A certain group of psalms in the Bible called the “imprecatory psalms.”⁷ This particular group causes most theologians to squirm in their seats.

According to *Theopedia*, an encyclopedia of Christianity, the imprecatory psalms contain curses or prayers for the punishment of the psalmist’s enemies. To imprecate means “to invoke evil upon, or curse.”⁸

⁶ *The Lion King*, directed by Roger Allers and Rob Minkoff (1994; Walt Disney Pictures, 2011), DVD.

⁷ See Psalms 7, 26, 35, 52, 55, 58, 59, 69, 109, 137, and 139.

⁸ “Imprecatory Psalms,” *Theopedia*, http://www.theopedia.com/Imprecatory_Psalms, accessed July 26, 2012.

These psalms are written by David, a king of Israel, someone the Bible identifies as a man after God's own heart. (see Acts 13:22) The Bible holds up David as an example to emulate.

Because the Bible gave him this label, you might think his psalms would be sanitized and Pain-free. A few might match that description, but certainly not the imprecatory ones. These ancient writings are chock-full of struggle, tension, doubt, anger, revenge, hurt, and fear.

Here are a couple:

Save me, O God,
for the waters have come up to my neck.
I sink in the miry depths,
where there is no foothold.
I have come into the deep waters;
the floods engulf me.
I am worn out calling for help;
my throat is parched.
My eyes fail,
looking for my God.
Those who hate me without reason
outnumber the hairs of my head;
many are my enemies without cause,
those who seek to destroy me. (Ps. 69:1–4)

Pour out your wrath on them;
let your fierce anger overtake them.
May their place be deserted;
let there be no one to dwell in their tents.
For they persecute those you wound
and talk about the pain of those you hurt.
Charge them with crime upon crime;
do not let them share in your salvation.
May they be blotted out of the book of life
and not be listed with the righteous.
But as for me, afflicted and in pain—
may your salvation, God, protect me. (vv. 24–29)

Can you believe David's brutal honesty? How could a man after God's own heart ask God to blot out his enemies from the book of life because he's in Pain? Most of us have never heard these psalms preached or sung in church before.

Here's another one:

Appoint someone evil to oppose my enemy;
let an accuser stand at his right hand.
When he is tried, let him be found guilty,
and may his prayers condemn him.
May his days be few;
may another take his place of leadership.
May his children be fatherless

and his wife a widow.
May his children be wandering beggars;
may they be driven from their ruined homes.
May a creditor seize all he has;
may strangers plunder the fruits of his labor.
May no one extend kindness to him
or take pity on his fatherless children.
May his descendants be cut off,
their names blotted out from the next generation.
May the iniquity of his fathers be remembered before the LORD;
may the sin of his mother never be blotted out.
May their sins always remain before the LORD,
that he may blot out their name from the earth. (Ps. 109:6–15)

If a man after God's own heart could be this bold and raw, then there must be a place for us at the table. Many of us don't believe that God wants to interact with us unless we're happy, calm, pleasant, and perfect. Many of us don't believe we can come into God's presence unless we're all cleaned up.

As a result, we wait a lifetime.

When we think something other than God can clean us up, then we're believing a lie. But this is the exact strategy of the Enemy of our potential. He wants us to believe we can't come to God until we're perfect.

It's time to stop waiting.

It's time to start unmasking your painkillers.

It's time to begin writing your own psalm to God.

Will you?

In the next sermon we'll go even Deeper by Exploring our Wounds. We'll examine the difference between our cross and our crown and we'll discover the secret to finding our purpose in our Pain.

SERMON OUTLINE

Session 3 - Explore Your Wound

TEXTS: 2 Corinthians 11:23-28; 1 Corinthians 9:24-27; Hebrews 12:2-3

(Read Chapter 8 in *The Deeper Path* - © Kary Oberbrunner - Baker Books 2013)

INTRODUCTION

Do you know you have a cross and a crown? Most people don't know and that's the problem.

In fact, most of us only know we have a cross. And even though we might sense our wounds, we've never explored them. And because we've never truly felt them we can never truly heal from them.

The Apostle Paul knew about his cross.

I have worked much harder, been in prison more frequently, been flogged more severely, and been exposed to death again and again. Five times I received from the Jews the forty lashes minus one. Three times I was beaten with rods, once I was stoned, three times I was shipwrecked, I spent a night and a day in the open sea, I have been constantly on the move. I have been in danger from rivers, in danger from bandits, in danger from my own countrymen, in danger from Gentiles; in danger in the city, in danger in the country, in danger at sea; and in danger from false brothers. I have labored and toiled and have often gone without sleep; I have known hunger and thirst and have often gone without food; I have been cold and naked. Besides everything else, I face daily the pressure of my concern for all the churches. (2 Corinthians 11:23-28)

But the Apostle Paul also knew about his crown.

Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one gets the prize? Run in such a way as to get the prize. Everyone who competes in the games goes into strict training. They do it to get a crown that will not last; but we do it to get a crown that will last forever. Therefore I do not run like a man running aimlessly; I do not fight like a man beating the air. No, I beat my body and make it my slave, so that after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified for the prize. (1 Corinthians 9:24-27)

Understanding our crown helps us carry our cross.

1. DO YOU KNOW YOUR CROSS?

In *The Passion of the Christ*, we hear the big idea within the dialogue between Jesus and one of the thieves crucified next to him. He obviously caught it too, based on his icy interrogation of Jesus.

“Why do you embrace your cross, you fool?” the thief spewed.

Good question. Why would someone embrace something as Painful as a cross?

But it’s just a movie, right?

Make-believe?

Jesus didn’t really view his cross that way.

Did he?

The Scriptures dispel the mystery for us. “Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross.” (Hebrews 12:2)

Seriously? Joy about a cross?

Today, we beautify them. We wear them in our ears and around our necks. We see crosses in our places of worship and we find them within our art. We display them as a symbol of hope and inspiration.

Not so in the first century. Crosses were instruments of death. Crosses lined roadways, pathways, and walkways. They guaranteed certain sounds, like Deep moans of anguish from people suffocating to death. They brought undeniable smells, like the putrid stench of rotting corpses. And they invited certain images, like circling vultures that joyfully fed on decomposing flesh.

The Romans were smart people, utilizing crosses as motivation for accepting Roman control. They created them in order to inject a fear factor into their society. Visible, daily reminders to everyone, crosses depicted the result of rebellion, unconformity, and revolution. With the purpose of generating unquestioning allegiance, the Romans created the perfect killing machine.

Why would anyone welcome this instrument of suffering?

Today, it would be like expressing affection for an electric chair. I haven’t seen too many people wear them as jewelry or portray them in art. And an electric chair hardly conjures up feelings of hope and inspiration.

Regardless of the modern day translation, do you know your cross?

If so, do you embrace it with joy?

If not, getting more clarity about your crown will help.

2. DO YOU KNOW YOUR CROWN?

Jesus tapped into another reality. He saw the importance of the cross because he saw past it. He had crystal clear clarity for his crown. And he knew his cross was the only way to achieve his crown. So it became his passion and he carried it willingly, needfully, and even joyfully.

Experts generally define the word *passion* as a powerful and compelling emotion or a strong feeling or experience of love.⁹ But surprisingly, the first definition for *passion* in Webster's dictionary is "the sufferings of Christ between the night of the Last Supper and his death."¹⁰

Even Mr. Webster heard Jesus's melody line. Jesus's passion connects so clearly with us that it shapes the way we understand the word itself.

Jesus's cross was merely a means to a much bigger end. His cross signified a step in the process. He didn't cherish the cross itself but what waited beyond the cross.

The author of Hebrews writes,

Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. Consider him who endured such opposition from sinful men, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart. (Hebrews 12:2–3)

The author exhorts us to consider the way Jesus approached his cross so we will not grow weary and lose heart when carrying our own. We're told not to focus on our cross, but rather upon Jesus as our example.

Jesus embodies an idea much bigger than a religion. He transcended life and even politics, modeling a lesson applicable to every one of us. He embraced something every human faces—Pain.

So what about you? And what about your cross? More importantly, what about your crown?

Go ahead and ask someone about their cross. Or if that word doesn't connect, call it their "trial" or "Pain point." Just inquire into what or who is bugging them. Most likely they'll give you a detailed speech with sub-points and illustrations about all the struggles in their lives. They are intimately acquainted with the unique nuances of their cross.

However, ask these same people about their crown. Chances are that when you do, you'll get a puzzled look. Most people are foggy about it at best. And when we're foggy about our crown, then the weight of our cross will soon crush us. Clarity when considering our crown gives us

⁹ "Passion," *Dictionary.com*, <http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/passion>.

¹⁰ "Passion," *Merriam-Webster.com*, <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/passion>.

courage when carrying our cross. One flows from the other.

3. DO YOU KNOW YOUR PURPOSE IN YOUR PAIN?

Our cross will crush us unless we're able to clearly see our crown that lies beyond. Holocaust survivor Viktor Frankl experienced this reality in a way very few of us will ever understand. Daily his comrades slipped away into the next life. No one would blame them, for they experienced unspeakable Pain.

But Frankl transcended his Pain. He saw past it and into his potential.

Here are a few of his thoughts on Pain:

Our greatest freedom is the freedom to choose our attitude.

Forces beyond your control can take away everything you possess except one thing, your freedom to choose how you will respond to the situation.

Life is never made unbearable by circumstances, but only by lack of meaning and purpose.

In some ways suffering ceases to be suffering at the moment it finds a meaning, such as the meaning of a sacrifice.¹¹

Frankl understood that suffering only made sense against the backdrop of purpose and meaning. When we get swallowed up in the moment, we give our power to other people or circumstances. In this space we no longer take responsibility for ourselves but float along as victims dependent upon the whims of forces outside our control. Hopelessness sets in, the unavoidable byproduct of being subject to circumstances.

But Frankl didn't see himself as powerless. He wasn't crushed by his circumstances. Instead, he rose above them and exerted control over the only thing he could control - himself.

What about you?

Have you explored your wounds?

Do you know your cross?

Do you know your crown?

In the next sermon we'll go one step Deeper by learning how to Overcome our Excuses. We'll also examine how to take responsibility for the talents entrusted to us.

¹¹ "Viktor E. Frankl Quotes," Good Reads, http://www.goodreads.com/author/quotes/2782.Viktor_E_Frankl, accessed July 27, 2012.

SERMON OUTLINE

Session 4 - Overcome Your Excuses

TEXTS: Matthew 25:14-30; Romans 8:35-39

(Read Chapter 9 in *The Deeper Path* - © Kary Oberbrunner - Baker Books 2013)

INTRODUCTION

Benjamin Franklin said, “He that is good for making excuses is seldom good for anything else.” We can sit and make excuses or we can move and take action.

We have to take responsibility for what goes into our own fuel tank. For every fear we meditate upon, we must combat it with ten thoughts of faith. Concentration camp survivor Viktor Frankl, understood the cost of fear: “Fear makes come true that which one is afraid of.”¹²

God knows the way we’re wired.

You might wonder what’s the most frequent command in the Bible? Surprisingly it’s, “Fear not.” God told us 366 times, one for every day of the year including Leap Day. He knows and understands our tendencies, and he wants us to break free and embody healing.

A Deeper look at a parable will give us more clarity on how to overcome our excuses.

1. DO YOU KNOW THAT MUCH HAS BEEN GIVEN TO YOU?

Jesus told a story about a man who entrusted his servants with different amounts of talents.

Again, it will be like a man going on a journey, who called his servants and entrusted his property to them. To one he gave five talents of money, to another two talents, and to another one talent, each according to his ability. Then he went on his journey. The man who had received the five talents went at once and put his money to work and gained five more. So also, the one with the two talents gained two more. But the man who had received the one talent went off, dug a hole in the ground and hid his master’s money. (Matthew 25:14-18)

We’ve all been entrusted with at least one talent. But we’re mistaken if we think our talents are ours to keep. Quite the contrary, they’re actually temporarily ours to invest, develop, and multiply. And be certain, we’ll each give an account about what we did with what we’ve been given. Unfortunately, our excuses don’t alleviate the accountability.

¹² Viktor E. Frankl, *Search Quotes*, http://www.searchquotes.com/quotation/Fear_may_come_true_that_which_one_is_afraid_of/68749/, accessed July 27, 2012.

2. DO YOU KNOW THAT MUCH IS REQUIRED OF YOU?

Jesus continued with the parable:

“After a long time the master of those servants returned and settled accounts with them. The man who had received the five talents brought the other five. ‘Master,’ he said, ‘you entrusted me with five talents. See, I have gained five more.’ “His master replied, ‘Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master’s happiness!’ “The man with the two talents also came. ‘Master,’ he said, ‘you entrusted me with two talents; see, I have gained two more.’ “His master replied, ‘Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master’s happiness!’ “Then the man who had received the one talent came. ‘Master,’ he said, ‘I knew that you are a hard man, harvesting where you have not sown and gathering where you have not scattered seed. So I was afraid and went out and hid your talent in the ground. See, here is what belongs to you.’ (Matthew 25:19-25)

Notice the excuses the servant used:

- *I knew that you are a hard man*
- *I knew you harvested where you have not sown*
- *I knew you gathered where you have not scattered seed*
- *I was afraid*
- *I went out and hid your talent in the ground*

The servant concluded his litany of lame excuses by telling the master, *“here is what belongs to you.”* Although the wicked servant was obviously clueless, at least he had the awareness to realize the wealth was never his to keep.

When we face God we won’t be allowed the luxury of defending our litany of excuses either. We’re each the C.E.O. of a cool little company called Y.O.U. We each need to take responsibility for the talents entrusted to us.

3. WHAT WILL YOU DO WITH YOUR EXCUSES?

Jesus revealed what the master thought of his excuses:

“His master replied, ‘You wicked, lazy servant! So you knew that I harvest where I have not sown and gather where I have not scattered seed? Well then, you should have put my money on deposit with the bankers, so that when I returned I would have received it back with interest.’ Take the talent from him and give it to the one who has the ten talents. For everyone who has will be given more, and he will have an abundance. Whoever does not have, even what he has will be taken

from him. And throw that worthless servant outside, into the darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.’ (Matthew 25: 26-30)

The master didn't entertain his excuses or accept them. In fact, he rebuked him, removed his talent, and relocated him from a place of comfort to a place of punishment.

We could cling to excuses if we wanted to because we all have them. The real question is our response? And if we ever hope to overcome them then we must first identify them.

What self-limiting beliefs swim around in your cerebral?

When did you first start believing them?

How do they hold you back?

Where do they surface?

Who planted them?

Why?

Self-limiting beliefs are nothing new. They've been hijacking hearts and sabotaging human potential since the beginning. Fear tricks our minds into obeying illogical commands and submitting to unfounded statements. Our subconscious can't easily discern between reality and fantasy. This is why rationalizing with a three-year-old about the pretend monster under the bed doesn't pay big dividends.

The weapon for overcoming our fear is nothing other than love. The Scriptures say:

“There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear, because fear has to do with punishment. The one who fears is not made perfect in love.” (1 John 4:18)

When we truly meditate on God and his goodness what excuses do we have left?

What, then, shall we say in response to this? If God is for us, who can be against us? (Romans 8:31)

No matter what excuses we come up with, nothing can separate us from God's love.

“Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Romans 8:35, 37-39)

Excuses will always exist. The real question is what we do with them - use them or lose them? President Theodore Roosevelt exhorts us to lose them.

It's not the critic who counts, not the one who points out how the strong man stumbled or how the doer of deeds might have done them better. The credit belongs to the man who is actually in the arena; whose face is marred with the sweat and dust and blood; who strives valiantly; who errs and comes up short again and again; who knows the great enthusiasms, the great devotions and spends himself in a worthy cause and who, at best knows the triumph of high achievement and who at worst, if he fails, at least fails while daring greatly so that his place shall never be with those cold and timid souls who know neither victory nor defeat.¹³

In the next sermon we'll take the final step and Embody our Healing.

¹³ Theodore Roosevelt, "Citizenship in a Republic," Speech at the Sorbonne, Paris, April 23, 1910, *Theodore Roosevelt Association*, <http://www.theodoreroosevelt.org/life/quotes.htm>, accessed July 27, 2012.

SERMON OUTLINE

Session 5 - *Embody Your Healing*

TEXTS: 2 Corinthians 1:3-5; Titus 3:1

(Read Chapter 10 in *The Deeper Path* - © Kary Oberbrunner - Baker Books 2013)

INTRODUCTION

Our healing isn't merely for ourselves, it's also for those around us. We're encouraged and expected to share the outcomes of our transformation with others. The Scriptures tell us more.

Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves have received from God. (2 Corinthians 1:3-4)

Our world is waiting on us to get past what we're waiting for. But before we start moving we must ask ourselves three questions.

1. HAVE YOU PREPARED?

True masters of their craft realize the power of preparedness and the importance of process. A story about one of the greatest and most influential artists of the twentieth century, Spanish legend Pablo Picasso, adds some color to this truth.

Picasso was sitting at a table outside a Paris cafe. A woman came up to him and asked him to draw a portrait of her on a napkin. He complied, doodling as only he could. After handing the sketch to her, she was pleased with the likeness and asked how much she owed him. Picasso requested the French equivalent of five thousand dollars. Aghast, the woman said, "But it only took you five minutes!" Smiling, the artist replied, "No, Madam, it took me my whole life."¹⁴

Picasso isn't the only artist in the room. Each of us has the opportunity to add to embody our OPUS every single day of our lives. Our masterpiece isn't some compartmentalized canvas but rather every square inch of our self.

And one day we will each give an account to the Artist on what we did with what we had.

¹⁴ Leda Karabela, "No, Madam, It Took Me My Whole Life," *Why Hesitate*, August 7, 2011, <http://whyhesitate.com/2011/08/07/no-madam-it-took-me-my-whole-life/>, accessed July 27, 2012.

2. ARE YOU READY?

The Scriptures tell us to be ready in season and out of season. (2 Timothy 4:2) It exhorts us to be ready now to do what is good. (Titus 3:1)

The defining moment is not the glory moment, it is the glorifying moment. It's the gut-check moment. The moment that we decide to look up, show up, and man up. The moment when we decide that God's vision is farther-reaching than our own and we choose to trust His perspective. When fear takes flight and we begin to soar into our potential. Our defining moment is the moment we need to be courageous. And remember, courage is fear with wings.¹⁵

What are you waiting for? Now is the perfect time because the “present” is a gift.

3. WILL YOU JUMP?

The letter to the Corinthians ends with an interesting charge.

Be on your guard; stand firm in the faith; be men of courage; be strong. Do everything in love. (1 Corinthians 16:13)

Sometimes the details detain us.
Sometimes we shouldn't deliberate.
Sometimes we must do this thing afraid.

It's been said that if we put an adult brain inside a baby's body, it would take us until age eighty-three before we'd learn how to walk. We'd be so full of fear, self-judgment, blame, self-limiting beliefs, and shame that we'd spend eight decades stuck in an emotional and psychological self-sabotaging cycle.

Break the cycle. Embody your healing.

To reach higher ground, we must take *The Deeper Path*.
Remember, stuck stinks!

JUMP!

And build your wings on the way down.¹⁶

¹⁵ Audrey Moralez, <http://www.audreymoralez.com>

¹⁶ This line inspired by science fiction author Ray Bradbury. See Lev Grossman, “R.I.P. Ray Bradbury: He Jumped Off Cliffs and Never Hit the Ground,” *Time Magazine*, <http://entertainment.time.com/2012/06/06/r-i-p-ray-bradbury-he-jumped-off-cliffs-and-never-hit-the-ground/#ixzz1zgRmkPxx>, accessed July 27, 2012.