

## February MOC: NICE BIKE! ... Why We Encourage

Last month we discussed the heavy subject of Hell  
Part of that message was a review of the suffering men endure while here on earth

### **SLIDE: MOC SUFFERING LIST**

During that message I shared a short but painful list of worldly suffering  
Do you remember WHO ... this list refers to?

Yea ... it was us! The list you see represent the REAL suffering that takes place in JUST the MOC  
What we learned is that the scale of pain and suffering even among our small group is staggering

Today, we are going to talk about one of the ways we get to counteract all this suffering  
One of the ways that, as Christians, we not only “get through” the suffering but live kingdom honoring  
and fruitful lives BEYOND the suffering offered in this world  
Before we do that ... I want to ask a question ...

### **SLIDE: HARLEY**

“Who here has owned a motorcycle at some point in their lives?”  
Quite a few I see ... me too

Who here has EVER had someone walk over to you as you sat on or stood next to YOUR motorcycle  
and then said words similar to these to you ...

"Hey man - Nice Bike!"

How'd that feel?  
I know I appreciated it – though I don't covet my motorcycle, I sure don't mind when somebody says  
... that's a nice bike man

By now you're wondering what on earth motorcycles have to do with last month's message about Hell?

I'll explain ... about 15 years ago, the company I retired from began a journey to reinvent our company  
culture. We were on a mission to better understand, respect and care for our INTERNAL team members  
than we had in the past. We were at the top of our game in taking care of the customer – but, at the  
time, not so good at taking care of the People that take care of the customer.

We called in a nationally recognized motivational speaker to speak to all the executives. His name was  
Mark Sharenbroich – yup that's a mouthful. He's part comedian, impersonator and his message is  
wrapped around the concept he calls “NICE BIKE”

Mark's story began during the 2003 Harley-Davidson 100th Anniversary celebration in Milwaukee,  
Wisconsin. He was scheduled to be the speaker at the convention, and as he drove slowly past a sea of  
Harley riders into the convention hall, he witnessed a powerful moment: strangers passing by bikers  
would say, “Nice Bike!” Sharenbroich realized that “Nice Bike” was more than a compliment—it was

a call to action to acknowledge, honor, and connect with people in daily life. This insight inspired him to write a book titled “Nice Bike.”

### **SLIDE: BOOK NICE BIKE**

The mission of the book, is to help people make meaningful connection with others. The concept can be boiled down to 3 simple things that happen when people genuinely connect:

Acknowledgment, Honor and Connection

Mark’s book and especially his “in person” speaking message are incredible. I’ve never forgotten him or his message I heard so many years ago.

NOW, Mark .. weather he knew it or not – stole this idea directly from Jesus. AND ... I’m not surprised because almost every single concept of goodness, kindness, of love and light in the world came about because of Jesus when he came and changed our world over 2,000 years ago.

### **SLIDE: BIBLE IMAGE**

Let’s see how Mark’s concept compares with the bible:

Mark’s theory is that meaningful connections begin with noticing and appreciating others, and are then brought to completion in the passionate SERVICE of others:

- **He says Acknowledgment means** being fully present and recognize the value of every person
- **He says Honor means** we should serve others with passion by focusing on their needs
- **He says Connection** should leave a lasting and positive impact on people

Men ... Christians recognize the value in every human being because each of us was made in God’s image. We are also called to serve others with passion ... and can only do that well by knowing them and understanding how we can help. Christians are also called to leave a legacy of lasting connections – and the kind of connections we make, have eternal impact!

Mark’s book IS based on biblical principals, and it pushes us to move our focus from self to others ... just like our savior did. It’s not just about saying kind words either. Words like “nice bike” ARE important to say, and we SHOULD say them, but ... the words are nothing but a gateway in preparing to serve that person, to encourage that person and in turn, change their life.

As we saw earlier ... at times, we suffer terribly here on earth. The examples I shared surrounding just the MOC groups suffering with cancers, prodigals, divorce, surgeries and financial need prove that life here on earth is hard ....

**I propose we need an ANTIDOTE for all this suffering.**

**We need to shift the narrative from OUR SUFFERING to ... KINGDOM BLESSING**

**We need ACTIONS that move our focus from US to OTHERS**

**One way to do that is through ENCOURAGEMENT and that’s the title of my message today**

Let’s go to the bible first and see what Paul had to say about ENCOURAGEMENT

### **SLIDE: ROMANS 1:11:12**

Paul literally began his ENTIRE Roman Epistle by sharing his desire to ENCOURAGE the Roman Church AND to be ENCOURAGED BY THEM

### **Romans 1:11-12 NIV**

**I long to see you so that I may impart to you some spiritual gift to make you strong— that is, that you and I may be mutually encouraged by each other's faith.**

Here Paul says we should encourage each other and do so “by each other's faith”  
There's so much more to those 4 words ... because Paul was not going to visit the Roman church members and then just “stand next to them” waiting patiently for his faith (and their faith) to shine magical “encouragement” rays onto each other ... NO

Paul expected that the WORDS they shared with each other and the FRUITS of their faith would be the catalyst to encouragement

In other words .. each would have to actually DO SOMETHING that demonstrated faith

If you're wondering what that was ... you can thank Paul for not leaving us hanging.  
He gives us the answer in Phillipians

### **SLIDE: PHILLIPIANS 2:1-15**

#### **Phillipians 2:1-5**

**1Therefore if you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from his love, if any common sharing in the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion, 2then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and of one mind. 3Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, 4not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others. 5In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus:**

And ... what does that ENCOURAGEMENT look like?

Just read the bold words within Paul's letter – words like “tenderness”, “compassion”, “love”, “humility” and “interest of others” – tell Christian men exactly how we are called to ENCOURAGE one another

AND Paul says, we do this because of our renewed mind in Jesus

When studying for this message, it was at this point I asked myself 2 questions:

Why was Paul so adamant about ENCOURAGEMENT?

Why is it even needed in the life of a Christian believer?

The answer was simple ... because the world is VERY DISCOURAGING

#### **It's discouraging against:**

- **Our bodies – where they are on a path to decay from the day we are born**
- **Our contentment – where the world tells us to strive but it only brings emptiness**
- **Our peace – where the busy-ness of our days pushes the Holy Spirit away from us**
- **Our faith – where the entire world stands in direct opposition to all we believe**

**YES! ... the Christian man NEEDS ENCOURAGEMENT**

So much so, that I believe that the Christian who ENCOURAGES, thru the prompting of the Holy Spirit, is the ONLY defense against the pain, suffering of this world

REALLY! Are WE are the only thing that can defend against world misery?

WELL ... think about it, here are a few examples of how the “world” will “help” a suffering man. I’ll state the problem, then the “world’s answer to it”:

- Cancer? I keep you in my “thoughts”
- Prodigal? I would disown him ... that’s what I would do!
- Finances? Sorry to hear that ... maybe you could get a 2<sup>nd</sup> job!
- Divorce? She’s not worth it, you deserve better!
- Surgery? How’d that go for you?

You see those shallow answers don’t help – AT ALL

How does keeping me in your “thoughts” help me get through cancer?

Why would I disown my son, when Jesus tells me otherwise. If I was redeemed by Jesus, shouldn’t I offer that same forgiveness to others ... especially blood family?

How does not offering to share (financially) help me when I’m broke?

Where in the bible does it say that demeaning, and devaluing my ex-wife will help me get through the emotional pain of divorce?

How does asking me “how my surgery went” help me as I prepare for it, go through it and recover at home?

Asking a friend “how that surgery went” and then ending it “there” ... is NOT Christian connection

Where is the prayer? The hospital visits? The card to brighten their day? The meals prepared for when they return home? The word of God shared on the subject of healing? The questions of “what else” can I do?

The world connects on the superficial level, because the world doesn’t care about YOU, it cares about itself. The world is selfish in it’s intent. World style connections are merely check-boxes and treated as deposits meant to be called upon should they need something from YOU in the future

The Christian man encourages in order to advance the kingdom of God – investing all they are as a Christian, into that other person ... and expecting nothing in return but to glorify God by the visible fruit of His Holy Spirit.

I’ve spent too many years of my life, stuck in the “all about me”, self-centered nobody else matters worldly lifestyle AND ...

If I could give you all ONE piece of advice on how to break away from the world and its “selfish connections” ... where when we talk to people – we are more concerned about our situation at that moment or more worried about what WE are going to say next than truly understanding what they are sharing. I would share these 4 words as a way out ...

**“Be interested, not interesting”**

Try it next time you have a conversation with someone – being “INTERESTED” forces you to talk less and ask more probing questions ... questions like:

- Tell me more
- Why do you say that
- Explain that to me

Be interested, not interesting the next time you talk with someone and I promise Paul's words from Romans will come alive right in front of you

So ... why don't we encourage as much as we should? Because it costs you something AND ...

### **SLIDE: IT WORKS**

**It works.**

**It simply works** ... and that's one of the main reasons we, as fallible human beings don't do it enough!

You see, when we genuinely ENCOURAGE OTHERS ... the impact upon our faith and the kingdom of God is OVERWHELMINGLY positive

And the DEVIL does NOT want that to happen

- He is the one that shuts your mouth when a word of encouragement pops into your head
- He says "this will cost you"
- He says "don't say it ... you'll need to invest in this person"
- He says "if you encourage, then you'll need to help too"

And he makes all these things sound like they are BAD

He reminds us to "take care of ourselves FIRST"

And he's the father of lies, so there IS SOME TRUTH in his warning "it will cost you"

You see, BOTH statements ARE true – it WILL cost you and it WILL further God's plans

### **SLIDE: JAMES 2:15-17**

Christian Men of Covenant ...

- We ARE called to PAY THAT COST for one another
- We ARE called to help in ways that honor Christ
- We take ACTION after we say "Nice Bike" because our faith PRODUCES fruit

So we choose to encourage, because we are filled with Christ and ... when we do, God wins

We encourage each other, because we're ON team Jesus, competing in the highest stakes championship game that has ever been played!

Want to score and score often for Team Jesus?

Then ENCOURAGE one another!

That encouragement begins with words BUT ...

**It only becomes complete when we take actions that change the lives of others, to the Glory of our God who so encourages each of us.**

Amen

### **Other Bible Verses on Encouragement:**

Acts 20:2 NIV

[2] He traveled through that area, speaking many words of encouragement to the people, and finally arrived in Greece,

Philemon 1:7 NIV

[7] Your love has given me great joy and encouragement, because you, brother, have refreshed the hearts of the Lord's people.

2 Thessalonians 2:16 NIV

[16] May our Lord Jesus Christ himself and God our Father, who loved us and by his grace gave us eternal encouragement and good hope,

2 Corinthians 7:13 NIV

[13] By all this we are encouraged. In addition to our own encouragement, we were especially delighted to see how happy Titus was, because his spirit has been refreshed by all of you.

Hebrews 6:18 NIV

[18] God did this so that, by two unchangeable things in which it is impossible for God to lie, we who have fled to take hold of the hope set before us may be greatly encouraged.

2 Corinthians 7:4 NIV

[4] I have spoken to you with great frankness; I take great pride in you. I am greatly encouraged; in all our troubles my joy knows no bounds.

2 Corinthians 1:5 NIV

[5] For just as we share abundantly in the sufferings of Christ, so also our comfort abounds through Christ.

2 Corinthians 1:4 NIV

[4] who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves receive from God.

Acts 20:1 NIV

[1] When the uproar had ended, Paul sent for the disciples and, after encouraging them, said goodbye and set out for Macedonia.

1 Thessalonians 5:11 NIV

[11] Therefore encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing.

Ephesians 4:29 NIV

[29] Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen.

2 Corinthians 13:11 NIV

[11] Finally, brothers and sisters, rejoice! Strive for full restoration, encourage one another, be of one mind, live in peace. And the God of love and peace will be with you.