

A MANLY REVOLUTION THE MAN CHRIST JESUS 1 TIMOTHY 2:5-6

In 1 Timothy 2:5 we read, “For there is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus, who gave Himself a ransom for all...”

I want to start by describing a scene from one of my favorite movies. In “The Man from Snowy River,” Jim Craig is confronted by his fellow mountain men.

Even though his father is dead, he can’t take over the family’s ranch until he earns the right. Young Jim leaves for the low country to prove his manhood.

After signing on to work at a prosperous cattle ranch, a jealous ranch-hand frames Jim. He makes it look like Jim chased off the owner’s prized stallion.

As Jim sits by a campfire, two friends tell him he’s been falsely accused. They suggest he ride with the rescue party to retrieve the stallion, and clear his name. Jim remarks, “That’s asking too much of a man.”

His old friend, Spur, replies, “A man did you say?”

Spur insinuates the verdict is still out. There’s more for Jim to prove to be considered a real man.

The next day Jim *acts like a man*.

He takes responsibility for what’s not his fault. He rides to retrieve the stallion. Jim’s bravery and daring sets him apart from the other horsemen. He corrals the stallion all by himself, and wins back his good name.

In the final scene his former boss shouts at him, “You’ve got a long way to go yet lad!” That’s when Spur jumps in, “He’s not a lad. He’s a man.” Then he shouts it again. This time louder than at first, “He’s a man!”

Now let me put a different spin on today’s verse...

Here’s how I hear Paul’s words... “Jesus isn’t just male. His manhood is more than a body with masculine features. Jesus is not just a human with a Y chromosome. *He’s a man!* - “the man, Christ Jesus.”

Jesus came from the mountain to the low country to prove Himself! He took responsibility for what was not His fault, and gave His life a ransom for you and me.

Pilate saw Jesus, and said to the crowd, “Behold the man...” The Roman centurion who knew men. He saw Jesus and said to himself, “this was a righteous man.”

Now Paul sees Jesus in heaven. He’s ascended back to where He came. *And it’s quite stunning!*

Today, a man sits on the throne in heaven. Jesus is still a man! The Son of God is “the man, Christ Jesus.”

And here is Paul's emphasis to Timothy... **Now you also be a man!** As he said to the Corinthians, "**Be on the alert, be firm in the faith, act like men, be strong.**"

And what better way to *act like a man* than to model Christ Jesus? *In this session, I want us to examine the masculinity of our Lord Jesus...*

As I've noted, when God created humans He did so male and female. Men and women are equal in terms of status and favor - both reflect God's image and glory. **But "equal" doesn't mean "same."**

God made humanity with distinction.

Here's my point, **Gender matters to God!** Not only do the biblical roles for male and female nurture and order society, *they speak vital truths about God's very nature.*

In John 4:24 Jesus said, "**God is Spirit.**" God doesn't have *male parts* and *male chromosomes*, because He has no *parts* and no *chromosomes*. God is Spirit. He has no physical body. *Biologically*, God is asexual.

But *relationally* God is very masculine. In terms of character, and role, and nature God is decidedly male.

From the first page of the Bible to the last, God reveals Himself in the masculine gender. He's never once called "*God the Mother*" or "*God the daughter.*"

He's always "**God the Father**" and "**God the Son.**"

Certainly, God's people - either OT Israel or the NT Church - are usually spoken of as feminine - but the Godhead is invariably portrayed as masculine.

There's a danger today threatening Christianity.

Several of the newer Bible translations have advertised themselves as "*gender-sensitive.*" Where the translators can swap a gender-specific word for a broader term they do... Rather than "**man**" they'll use a more generic word like "**humanity**" or "**humans.**"

At times this is harmless, *but where will it stop?* Will we replace "**Son of Man**" with "**Offspring of Human?**"

Listen to a few translations of 1 Timothy 2:5...

Today's New International Version reads, "**For there is one God and one mediator between God and human beings, Christ Jesus, himself human...**"

The New Century Version, "**There is one God and one mediator so that human beings can reach God. That way is through Christ Jesus, who is himself human.**" Are translators afraid of the M-word, "**man**"?

The problem to me is obvious - *Jesus wasn't just human. He was born a male!* It was God's design for Jesus to have hairy legs, stubble on his face, a husky voice, and an eleventh toe... Jesus was a man!

Hey, if Christians aren't careful *political correctness* is going to rob us of our *theological accuracy*.

In the Bible, God reveals Himself with the masculine pronoun "He." Genesis 1:5 reads, "God called the light Day, and the darkness He called Night." In Genesis 1:27, "So God created man in His own image..."

There are verses where God's concern is compared to a nursing mother's love for her child... His passion is described as labor pains... Jesus wanted to gather Israel as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings...

Female traits can also reflect God's image.

But throughout the Bible - *without exception* - God always refers to Himself as "He" - and never as "She."

After God created Adam and Eve, He put the man in charge of His creation - *even over his wife*. Adam was responsible for his family. God established male headship as a pattern in the home and in the church.

Genesis 5 lists Adam's family tree, and the branches are filled with men. With a few addendums the same occurs in Genesis 10... From creation God established patriarchal societies. Men are head of their families.

Later when God speaks to Moses in Exodus 3 He identifies Himself as the "God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob..." He says this name is a "memorial to all generations."

Obviously, God is over *women and men*. But He observes a chain of command. God is over the husband - then the husband is over his wife. Thus, God is the God of the fathers - Abraham, Isaac, Jacob.

Men play crucial roles in the Bible...

Men go to war. Men serve as priests and offer sacrifices. Men are chosen as kings and prophets.

Women also serve God in meaningful ways, but over and over, throughout the Scripture, God always sends the men to the head of the pack to lead His community.

Galatians 4:4 tells us "When the fullness of time had come, God sent forth His Son..." Realize, God's plan reached a crescendo with the birth of a boy!

Jesus was not *God's daughter*, but *God's Son*. Make no mistake about it, when God became a human He took a Y chromosome. He came in the male gender.

Later, when Jesus established His ministry He also followed the same pattern of creation. Our Lord chose twelve disciples - *and guess what?* They were all men.

There were women who followed Jesus, but He didn't choose them to lead. Mary Magdalene and Mary of Bethany may've had a stronger faith than either Peter or John - but Jesus chose the men for headship.

In Acts 2 there were women in the Upper Room - filled with the Spirit - but God used Peter to preach!

An emphasis on masculine leadership persists throughout Acts and the growth of the early church.

In fact, fast forward to the future - at the end of the age when Jesus returns to Earth a second time - He comes as a mighty, manly man. In Revelation 19:11 heaven opens and you see Jesus on a white horse!

He isn't floating down on a puffy, cumulus cloud.

Jesus is on a stallion - actually, a war horse. It's stomping its hoofs - hot breath billows from its nostrils.

Jesus is called "Faithful and True." His eyes are wild with passion. His head holds many crowns. His robe is splashed with the blood of the men He slays in battle.

Jesus swings a sharp sword to strike the nations.

Pardon the lingo, but Jesus *bust chops, takes names, and starts breaking kneecaps*. He fights for what's right. He judges and wars against sinners.

Jesus is a pacifist alright - *but only after He kills off all His enemies*. Like an ancient warrior decorated for battle, He even has a name tatted on His thigh which reads, "King of kings and Lord of lords." *You won't find a stronger dose of testosterone than Revelation 19.*

Yet here's where we need to slow down and think this through... How do we reconcile this vision of Jesus' Second Coming - *Jesus on the warpath* - with the humility that Jesus modeled at His First Coming?

What does it mean to be a man like Jesus?

In Philippians 2:5 Paul tells us, "Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus..." Then he goes on to describe the humility of Jesus he wants us to model... I should *empty myself, deny my pride, shun the trappings of power, maintain a servant's heart...*

Certainly, I need to exemplify the *selfless attitude* that Jesus taught and displayed at His first coming.

But think it over, how can I do that in earnest without first recalling the glory Jesus had before He came - and the glory He'll possess when He comes again?

Philippians 2 speaks of Jesus' humility... He was obedient to God, even to the point of death - but then Paul immediately adds to His resume, "God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow..." Implied is that *we can't appreciate Jesus' humility without first considering His glory...*

You might gloss over the significance of Jesus washing His disciples' feet... Unless you knew that angels had bowed and worshipped at His feet.

Jesus is the Lord of light... *what manner of love did it take for Him to step out into our darkness?* - He dwells in unapproachable holiness... *how could He descend into our cesspool?* It also must've taken amazing strength and resolve for Jesus to humble Himself.

In Revelation 19 Jesus returns to Earth to condemn this wicked world... Knowing that, how meaningful was it for Jesus to say to the woman caught in adultery, "Neither do I condemn you, go and sin no more."

In Revelation Jesus pulls a sword to slice and dice His enemies... On the cross a soldier pokes a spear through Jesus' ribcage... He could've fought back. He told Peter earlier He had angels under His command.

Imagine, Jesus lugging a cross, as tens of thousands of combat-ready, battle-hardened, special-op angels - fiercely loyal to their King - are ordered to stand down!

We're so accustomed to seeing Jesus as the Lamb, *the sacrifice* - when we read Revelation, and see Him as a Lion, we're surprised! But heaven was so accustomed to the Lion it was shocked to see Jesus as a Lamb.

Here's the big thought in this today's message: **True masculinity is an attitude that combines both Jesus' first and second comings...** It's not just *being a servant*, but a servant who takes charge and acts!

It's not just showing **humility**, but humility with the backbone to defend others... It's not just **identifying with the lowly**, but it's taking action to lift them up...

It's not just **weakness** - I embrace *my weakness* to know *His strength*... It's not just **being a sacrifice**, but a *living sacrifice* that rises up from the altar in the power of the Spirit to live a robust life to count for all eternity..

True masculinity combines *a lion's willingness to rule and be strong* - and *a lamb's willingness to be humble and live sacrificially*. And Jesus of Nazareth was this sort of man - a blend of both **strength and sacrifice**.

Yet I find few people - even Christians - with this sort of picture in mind when they think of Jesus.

The church has developed some very confused and warped impressions of Jesus... *And I believe it's robbed men of their masculine spirit*. Here's a few of the crazy caricatures people today have of Jesus...

There's the **Hippie Jesus**. "*Peace and love, peace and love.*" Sounds like Ringo Star. Make love, not war. This Jesus is on a mountaintop staring at his navel.

Then there's the **Dr. Spock Jesus**. He's a Vulcan with no emotion. This is Robo-Jesus. He acts like He's on Ritalin. He's a sedated Jesus - he's not a real man.

There's also the **Milk-Toast Jesus**. *Never a harsh word, always polite, weak as water...* He's the 98 pound weakling. He could pass for a *teacher's pet*.

Then the **Incandescent Jesus**. He comes complete with a halo. His robe never gets dirty. He walks a few inches off the ground - He even glows in the dark.

And of course, the **Stain Free Jesus**. He never gets dirty or sweats. He walks on water, but avoids getting wet. He's aloof and off-limits. Nothing touches Him.

And finally there's the **Mr. Rogers Jesus**. It's a wonderful day in the neighborhood... just be a good neighbor and you'll go to heaven. **None of these caricatures even remotely resemble the real Jesus.**

The Jesus of history spent 30-plus years working a regular job. He was a construction worker - a carpenter before there were power tools. Jesus swung a hammer for a living. You could see calluses on His hands, and muscles on his frame. He was strong and tanned.

I'm not suggesting Jesus was a he-man with bulging biceps - or a strikingly handsome person. Isaiah 53 predicts that there would be nothing about His appearance that would attract us or impress us.

Jesus was just an ordinary-looking guy...

He was a *Joe the Plumber* type of guy.

Author Rick Bundschuh recalls a painting from his childhood that depicted Jesus as *pale* and *frail*. He writes of it, "Jesus was a gaunt, pasty white creature hidden under mounds of flowing robes. His hair was long, thin, and stringy. He was painted to look strained, tired, and supplicant. This was gentle Jesus, meek and mild. He was soft and suspiciously effeminate..."

I've seen a few of the same distorted portraits.

I'm not sure when artists started envisioning Jesus in that light, but they need to *repent* and *repaint*. Jesus might not have been ripped, but Jesus was no wimp.

I'm convinced the Jesus of the Bible is a Jesus most people - even some church-folk - have never met.

Jesus was humble, loving, and kind - but He was also untamed and unpredictable - passionate and radical. Jesus was a manly man who grabbed life by the throat. He took charge of every situation He was in.

Jesus lived boldly and bravely - fully and freely. Yes, He was a servant, but a servant on a mighty mission.

When you think of Jesus, recall Paul's words to Timothy, "God did not give us a spirit of timidity..." There was nothing shy or timid about Jesus.

Whenever we think of Jesus' masculinity we usually recall the time that He bounced the crooked priests out of the Temple with His bare knuckles.

But there was an earlier occasion, when Jesus went *Temple brawling* with a whip. And not just a whip He picked up from a bystander, or found up against a wall.

I use to think Jesus just got caught up in the moment, and reached for whatever happened to be available. It could've been a broom, or stick, *or whip*.

But read John 2 carefully - that's not what happened! The Bible tells us that Jesus "*made a whip of cords.*"

Get the picture... Jesus is sitting in the corner of the Temple weaving a whip as He eyeballs these crooks...

His blood is boiling... His hands are clinching... hot molten rage is bubbling up within Him. *Jesus is angry. He knows He's about to go ballistic. It's going to turn ugly...* **Realize, Jesus of Nazareth cleansed the Jewish Temple in a premeditated act of aggression!**

And this wasn't the last time He overturned tables.

Quite frankly, *it became His habit*. Jesus was always turning over tables - upsetting the apple cart - shaking up the status quo! *Jesus was the ultimate boat rocker!*

Remember, Jesus made a point of healing folks on the Sabbath Day. He could've cured them on Friday or Sunday, and avoided all the conflict and controversy.

God is open 24 / 7 - 365 days a year - there are six other days for Jesus to work miracles... but He waited

for Saturday - *and why?* He did it just to infuriate the little people - to agitate the narrow and the legalistic.

Jesus ran roughshod over their rules and traditions.

He showed how silly and hypocritical they were. They put law over love. They put ritual above people.

But Jesus also made life uncomfortable for His own disciples... He frustrated them with hard sayings...

Sent them out with no pay and scant provisions...

On one occasion, Jesus called Peter the devil...

Once, Jesus *stood up* His own family when all they wanted to do was sit down and talk to their brother.

Remember Jesus' only foray into politics... Talk about uncomfortable... Imagine the press conference when Jesus took the mic and called King Herod "*a fox.*"

Gentle Jesus once threatened to hang a millstone around a person's neck and throw him into the deep end. Sounds more like the Jewish mafioso to me!

One day a rich man comes to follow Jesus.

The disciples are glad - *boy can they use an infusion of cash into the treasury*. Yet Jesus makes it hard on him... Tells him he can't follow until he sells all his stuff.

We're told the rich man went away *sad*.

And I'll bet the disciples ended up *mad*.

Speaking of mad, what about the environmentalists?

When Jesus cursed that Jerusalem fig tree, I'll bet tree-huggers all over Israel were up in arms.

Some folks accused Jesus of drinking too much... Some people said He ate groceries like a glutton...

Jesus didn't care what people thought!

If you've ever been inclined to call Jesus "a nice, well-mannered guy," I hope you don't read Matthew 23... There Jesus goes off on the religious leaders...

He calls them "blind guides," "fools," "hypocrites," "sons of hell," "white-washed tombs," "serpents," "brood of vipers" - *He hurls every name in the book.*

When you read the chapter you're tempted to pull Jesus off to the side, and tell Him, "*Hold on now. I know you don't like these guys, but at least respect the uniform. They're still God's priests - men of the cloth.*"

Say what you will about Jesus, but He was a ball of fire. He *dug deep* and *lived large*. He was always in the moment. Jesus cared about *God*, and *people*, and *truth*, and *what was right*... **What do you care about?**

Everywhere Jesus of Nazareth went He shook things up. He was determined to leave behind a big footprint.

And realize, people who shake the status quo aren't usually called "nice!" There're other terms - *bother*,

pest, *meddler* - but not "nice guy." Jesus was labeled a *troublemaker*. In one sense, that's what got Him killed.

And why is it, 2000 years later, we still want Jesus to be a nice, easy-going, low-maintenance, undemanding Savior... People want to treat Jesus like a pet, "*That-a-boy, Jesus! Nice Jesus. Sit Jesus. Roll over Jesus...*"

One author writes, "We want a just-my-size God, approachable and fluffy, without all those picky commandments. But once we get him down to teddy-bear size we find that he's powerless. He's unable to ease our suffering or comprehend our dark confusions.

His strength isn't equal to our grief. We find a reduced God is no God at all." *Please meet my God!*

He's a man... "the man, Christ Jesus!"

Jesus is no reduced God. Jesus is *fully God* and *fully man*. And He wants those who follow Him - who've been born of His Spirit - to be fully alive - with all His passion and daring coursing through them.

In the mold of Jesus, real men - manly men - are not exactly "nice guys." You can be "nice" - You can *avoid trouble*, and *mind your manners*, and *make your mom and dad proud*, and *even win the admiration of your friends at church* - and do nothing of lasting value!

You haven't *built anything - fought* for anything - *achieved* anything. Where's the blood, man? Where's the sweat and the tears? All you've done is be "*nice*."

Hey, you can be "*nice*" and still go straight to hell.

Here's a funny quote, and a sad truth. It's been said, "**Christian men are often the *bland* leading the *bland*.**"

Realize, Jesus doesn't want a group of nice guys. He wants men - a church-full of Christ-like, manly men.

I have a friend who said for years, he assumed just because he was a nice guy - *he didn't smoke, drink, chew, or run with women who do* - that he was pleasing to God. *Now he knows there's more.*

Some *so-called men* I know just take up space.

They're like an unused shovel hanging in the garage. It's clean - polished - still has the label. It's not dented or dirty. It *looks good*, but it's not *doing any good*.

It definitely isn't fulfilling the purpose for which that shovel was created. It needs to dig a hole, or mix some cement, or plant something that'll grow and flower.

George Orwell said, "**The ordinary man is passive... So far from endeavoring to influence the future, he simply lies down and lets things happen to him.**"

And the church can be a haven for this type of guy.

We mind our spiritual manners and wipe our theological noses - while our wives go un-nurtured, and our kids go unprotected, and the people around us go to hell in a hand-basket... *but we're really nice guys!*

Jesus wasn't a nice guy.

He had nerve, and focus, and determination. **He never held a gun, but He could sure pull the trigger.**

He wasn't afraid to *speak up* and *act out* for the good of others. He used His masculinity to glorify God and serve folks who otherwise would've never got a break.

Paul Coughlin writes disparagingly of our churches, "**Numbing niceness still pumps like ether through sanctuary air ducts on any given Sunday morning...**"

Now here this, **Jesus came to take away my sins, not my backbone.** Christian men aren't invertebrates.

"Christ-like" doesn't mean spineless.

A Christian man is strong enough to fight, and strong enough to stand down when the Captain orders... He can throw a punch, or pull a punch... Jesus *laid down His rights for others and stood up for what was right!*

Again, Rick Bundschuh, writes of Christian men, "**An energy that breaks the status quo should be expected when the Spirit of the One who overturned tables pulses through the veins of men who serve Him.**"

It grieves me, but many churches - even Bible-believers - misunderstand Christianity and the cross. Especially what it means for men to take up their cross.

Ironically, early Christians found motivation to go to war under the sign of the cross... Somehow we've turned it into a symbol of pacifism and capitulation.

Yes, the cross speaks of **surrender**, **weakness**, and **sacrifice** - but these aren't virtues in and of themselves.

Surrender to evil is an act of cowardice...

Being **weak** isn't necessarily godly...

And you can **sacrifice** to the wrong god...

This is why some young black men today are abandoning Christianity for Islam. They hear words like "**surrender**," and "**weakness**," and "**sacrifice**" - *and they wonder why?* To them it sounds like a justification for more oppression and slavery? They'd rather fight.

They've rejected the *sissified Je-sus* for *Jihad*.

It's sad, but these men don't understand the powerful paradox of the cross, and mis-read God's intentions.

Jesus did **surrender**... But not to the Roman soldiers and their whips - but to the will of God - and through His surrender He has overcome sin and rebellion.

Jesus became **weak**... But not because He liked getting beat up. (*BTW, the cross is the only beating Jesus will ever take.*) Jesus died on the cross to show us how we can tap into real life and spiritual power.

And Jesus **sacrificed** His rights... But not because He was afraid to fight. He did fight - and won more than a fist-a-cuffs with the Romans. He won for us a right standing with God - and the potential for a better world.

As a servant of Jesus let's follow His example...

Yes, surrender... But not because you're afraid of a conflict. Surrender to the will of God - not the demands, and intimidation, and manipulations of this world.

Yes, embrace your weakness... But not because it's easier to just lie down, and give up, and roll over. View your weakness as the pathway to God's power.

And **yes, sacrifice your rights**... But not because you're afraid to take a stand. Sacrifice *your rights* so that you can protect and advance the *rights of others*.

The cross is a paradox. An instrument of death is God's way to new life. And the same paradox *takes what would be* dead end objectives... like *surrender*, *weakness*, *sacrifice* - and turns them into power plugs.

Real victory is unleashed through the cross...

Christians **surrender to win**. They become **weak so they can grow strong**. They **sacrifice to serve others**.

This is true cross-training. Learning to live like Jesus.

True Christianity is a manly religion. Jesus died as a Lamb, but He has and will always be Lion-hearted.

Masculinity comes in various shapes and sizes.

You'll find real men wearing a hard hat, or toting a gun, or writing a book, or speaking to a crowd, or fighting a fire, or arresting a bad guy, or playing music, or swinging a hammer, or teaching a child...

It's hard to nail down a single example of true masculinity - *until we look to Jesus. For there's no clearer, sharper picture of real manhood than Jesus.*

Jesus entered the kingdom of death and darkness, and built a kingdom of life and light. He built spiritual walls that will serve as our refuge forever... And Jesus stands in the gap between heaven and hell. He's now the bridge between a lost world and the holy God...

I hope you'll follow Him. I hope you'll want to be like Jesus. And I hope you'll introduce Him to others.

And if you don't know Jesus... *what are you waiting on?* When Jesus called His disciples He expected them to lay down everything - *businesses, careers, pastimes, even families* - and follow. And amazingly

they didn't hesitate. There was something about Him that grabbed their heart and engaged their confidence.

Jesus' masculine spirit inspires and commands men. He's a man real men want to follow! He demands our allegiance. You can follow Him unreservedly. If there's a hill to take, you can charge into battle with Jesus!

He's the General who in essence has already taken a bullet for you! He took a nail for you in His hands and feet. Trust in Jesus' leadership. March to His commands. Jesus is worthy of our undying devotion!

In fact, Jesus requires that devotion! He's not just an add-on or an accessory to the life you've already chosen and arranged. Jesus is the King of kings and Lord of lords. There is a chain of command in the universe, and at the top reigns Jesus. That's why when we come to Him, we bow and come on our knees.

This weekend God is launching a manly revolution. He's recruiting real, masculine, manly men who will *surrender their rights, and become weak so Jesus can make them strong, and then sacrifice for other people.* I hope you'll be the kind of man Jesus was! Jesus is the man all men were meant to be... I trust you'll never forget that He's the man. He's **"the Man Christ Jesus!"**