

# A Picture of Jesus

by John McGregor

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*In this sermon, John McGregor emphasizes Jesus' compassion for the broken and His ability to bring hope and healing to those who feel powerless.*

**Duration:** 36:04

**Scripture:** Matthew 6:33, Matthew 12:15-21

**Topics:** "Jesus"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker shares a story about a man named Henry who experienced a revival and saw his life transformed by God. Despite facing failure and opposition, Henry's faith in God remained strong, and he went on to start numerous churches. The speaker emphasizes that our hope and strength do not come from earthly powers, but from God's justice and love. The sermon encourages listeners to seek a fresh touch of God's love and to trust in Him even when they feel inadequate or powerless.

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## Transcript

Well, last week I didn't get to be here because of being in Thompson and Oxford House in the north, and thank you for your prayers as we ministered up there. The community of Oxford House had five funerals from mid-December till last week. It's interesting to see how God brings hope in the midst of hopeless situations and trials and struggles, and I know it's because you pray.

And I know sometimes we think as a group, we're just small and what can we do? But when you think about how God used this congregation in Malawi and your prayers in Oxford House and so on, it's a marvelous thing just to be a part of the kingdom of God. And I think what a privilege it is to be a Christian this morning, one of Christ's followers. And some of you will be wondering how did things go yesterday with the leadership meeting between the Evangelical Free leaders and our leaders, and I just need to mention to you that meeting did not take place, and the Evangelical Free folk are sorting out a few things in their leadership before we get that far.

And so I just encourage you to continue to pray, and in God's time and will and way, I'm quite sure we will get together. It has been such a precious time this morning, and take your Bible if you have one handy and just turn to the Gospel of Matthew and the 12th chapter, and we're going to read some verses and look at one verse together just as a moment or two of encouragement in the Word of God. In Matthew chapter 12, and I'll just begin at verse 15 and read through verse 21.

It says, Aware of this, Jesus withdrew from that place. Many followed him and he healed all their sick, warning them not to tell who he was. This was to fulfill what was spoken through the prophet Isaiah.

Here is my servant whom I have chosen, the one I love and whom I delight. I will put my spirit on him, and he will proclaim justice to the nations. He will not quarrel or cry out.

No one will hear his voice in the streets. A bruised reed he will not break, and a smoldering wick he will not snuff out, till he leads justice to victory. In his name the nations will put their hope.

Father, thank you for your presence here in this place with us. Thank you for your word. Lord, would you speak to our hearts this morning and encourage us through your spirit and teach us, Father, something that will enable us to walk through the rest of this week just knowing the presence of the living Lord.

For it is in Jesus' name that we ask it. Amen. The verse I want us to look at is verse 20, and we'll just zero in on that in a moment.

I want to mention to you when I return from Peru on the 7th of February, I want to preach from Daniel chapter 9. And I would love it if you would read through that chapter a few times ahead of the 7th of February. And really the theme of the service that day is just to encourage us toward prayer and prayer and fasting for some days. But the Bible says that Daniel was a man highly esteemed, if you have New International, greatly beloved, if you have New King James, and a variety of terms like that.

And we just want to look at why was he so highly esteemed by God, and what might that do in our lives as we begin to apply that just day by day. But this morning we see here in verse 20 a picture of Jesus. A bruised reed he will not break, and a smoldering wick he will not snuff out, till he leads justice to victory.

And there are two contexts in which this verse is true. First of all, it is true when you think of Jesus himself. He was bruised, but you will recall that they did not break his bones on the cross, not broken, bruised.

And bruised for you and me, the scriptures say. And you will see, too, as you look at the life of Jesus, a smoldering wick he will not snuff out. The flame of his life was closed, in a sense, on Calvary's cross.

But that's not the end of the story, is it? It's like our Black preacher E.V. Hill used to say, it's Friday but Sunday's coming. And on Friday it looked like there was no more flame, no more life, but there was still the smoking wick. And on Sunday there was that great resurrection of our Lord and Savior.

And this is why, my friends, you can put your trust in him. He understands what it is to be bruised and to be reduced in that sense, or humbled in that sense. If you wonder, you know, would Jesus really understand my heart today, my need today? Absolutely he can, because he was in all ways tempted as we are, yet without sin.

So this verse is true of Jesus in that sense, that in his own life he, as a bruised reed, was not broken, and as a smoldering flax or wick, was not extinguished or snuffed out. But the second context in which we want to look at this verse is where we'll spend our moments this morning, just thinking upon it, what it says in your life and mine. Because, you see, the goal of the Christian life is to become more and more like Jesus.

And this gives us a picture of him, doesn't it? Now, there are times in life when we feel inadequate, and there are times in life when we feel broken, and times when we're quite sure that we're powerless. When

you think of the pictures on your television, looking at the country of Haiti in these recent days, it makes us feel powerless, doesn't it, as you look at all of the devastation and so on. And there are times too when things are just not going right in our lives or families, and we feel somewhat powerless.

And, you know, sometimes we seem to be against overwhelming things, things that life brings to us that we would never choose for ourselves, and yet there they come along. And as we think about this this morning, there are times when we need just a fresh touch of the love of God. And we've been receiving it today, even as we've been worshiping him and hearing from Carla.

These verses here in Matthew 12 are originally stated in Isaiah 42, 3 and 4, and so it's the fulfillment of prophecy in Jesus' life. But I want to just take the three things that verse 20 says and look at them with you for a moment or two. The first is that he will not break the bruised.

And I like this because there are times when we are bruised and when we're struggling and so on. Jesus was bruised for you and me, and he knows our infirmities, understands our lives. The little reed, you know, I grew up in Ireland, and there's lots of rain there, and there's lots of marshes there, and the reeds that we would talk about here are called rushes over there, and they stick up like little spikes, you know, and once in a while one of them is just over at a right angle, and you think, well, that'll just blow off and fall away.

It's bruised. There's no strength to it whatsoever. It's just, it's a perfect picture of how we are sometimes when we see how life can bruise us.

Bent, but not broken. And you know, sin is the thing that has bent us, isn't it? And life has its hurts, and sometimes it hurts us very deeply. But just look at these words and underline them in your Bible.

A bruised reed, he will not break. Not only did Jesus not break, but neither will you and neither will I in Jesus Christ. You see it? You see, as you think about the Lord, he didn't break, and he is the one who comes to us and who looks at us and says, let me touch you.

Let me just touch you. Oh, if I had a dollar for every time these hands have hung down and this head has hung down, and I felt like, what's the point? I'd be so rich, we wouldn't have to worry about selling land on the far end of town here. And maybe you can identify with that this morning, but those are the times when Jesus comes and says, let me just touch you.

And that's all it needs, you know? It's just that touch from him. He's saying, I can heal you. I can lift you up.

Keep your finger there in Matthew chapter 12 and slip over with me to Luke chapter 13 for a moment, and let me just give you an illustration of exactly how this verse applies. In Luke chapter 13 and verses 10 through 17, just listen to what Jesus does here. On a Sabbath, Jesus was teaching in one of the synagogues, and a woman was there who had been crippled by a spirit for 18 years.

She was bent over and could not straighten up at all. When Jesus saw her, he called her forward and said to her, woman, you're set free from your infirmity. Then he put his hands on her, and immediately she straightened up and praised God.

I don't even need to read the rest of the story. There is the application right there. Someone who is bent over just like that reed, just like how our lives sometimes are.

And think about the places packed in that synagogue that Sabbath day when Jesus is there. Everybody knows he's the miracle worker. Everybody in the country is talking about him, but in that whole process that day, who is it that Jesus zeros in on? Do we find him over with the ruler of the synagogue sort of saying, you know, let's get together.

I know you're the power source here. No, he zeros in on that one who is bent over and who so desperately needs that touch. 18 years, it says.

She was in that condition, and he comes and touches her, and immediately it says she is straightened up and praising God. And you know, there are so many people in the scriptures who are discontent. What could one person do? Just one person.

Well, you look at highs so often, the Lord takes just that one and fills them and uses them in an incredible way to their time and to their generation and to the people who so desperately need a word of hope. Yes, we might be wounded and broken, but he specializes in this. I love the fact that the Lord Jesus doesn't sort of follow the rule of the jungle, you know, the survival of the fittest.

You ever notice that? Keep your finger there in Matthew. Go over to 1 Corinthians and chapter 1, and let me just read a couple of verses beginning at verse 26. Brothers, think of what you were when you were called.

Not many of you were wise by human standards. Not many were influential. Not many were of noble birth, but God chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise.

God chose the weak things of the world to shame the strong. He chose the lowly things of the world and the despised things and the things that are not to nullify the things that are, so that no one may boast before him. It is because of him that you are in Christ Jesus, who has become for us wisdom from God, that is our righteousness, holiness, and redemption.

Therefore it is written, let him who boasts, boast in the Lord. And there's a wonderful passage just again to illustrate the fact it's not about our strength, it's not about our abilities, it's about the one who can touch us in our weaknesses and lift us up and cause us to know that he is using us. We might be forgotten, we might feel the least in all the world, but Jesus wants to touch our lives.

Why don't we get together Sunday by Sunday? It's so that exactly that can happen, so that we can have an encounter with Jesus, service after service, and that encounter happens to be for all of us together, and we have it individually all through the week, don't we? I love how the Lord can touch the bruised, and he will not break it. Now the world doesn't operate like that, and there are times, are there not, when we just need to know, he won't break me. He won't.

My first job with the Billy Graham Association years ago was to go to the city of Edmonton and meet with a lady who had received Christ because of one of the television things that Billy Graham did. She was a prostitute, and she wouldn't meet with local pastors because some of them had been her customers. So I took a local pastor with me, and we met this lady in a restaurant, and her arms were full of puncture marks, and her neck was covered in puncture marks, and she was shaking.

She said, I'm sorry I'm shaking because, you know, I haven't been smoking and stuff since I prayed that prayer in front of the television set, and her body was reacting to the fact that there were no drugs, nicotine, and so on, all those things, right? And then the pastor and I visit with her, we prayed with her, and

about two, three weeks later, I phoned that preacher and said, how's she doing? And he said, well, it's interesting. He said, you know, she's really challenging us. She's got more questions most times than we have answers, but it's been a great wake-up call for us as a church, because I see Christians reading their Bible now for answers that I didn't see before she came.

And within two years, that last, least, and lost one was the Sunday school superintendent at that church, bruised, but not broken about her hasten. Second thing this verse says is he will not extinguish a smoking wick. He'll not stuff, uh, snuff it out.

Now, sometimes the fire seems to be out, doesn't it? There are times in all of our lives where it seems as if the fire just isn't there. The flame is gone, and only the smoke remains. Don't you love that song? Light the fire again.

Let the passion come again. But look at this. Jesus will not extinguish that.

He'll not snuff it out. You see, in John 6 36, he says, the one that comes to me, I'll never cast them out. And you can translate that verse.

I will never, never get the point. So if there's some casting out and stuff that goes on, it's not Jesus that's doing. He says, I'll never cast you out.

Now, smoke speaks to us about our corruption. There's no heat there. There's no light there.

There's just the darkness of smoke. And oftentimes that's how it gets to be. And the devil tells us lies about ourselves and about our circumstances.

And you know, he says to us, well, you can't do that. Glencurn, you can't do that. How are you ever going to do that? But if he won't snuff the smoking wick out, what's his intention for it? Light the fire again.

He talks to us in lies about our circumstances. You'll never get over this. You don't have the health to do that.

You shouldn't even be engaged in that. It'll wear you out. Sometimes people say to me, why do you run around the world like you do? And there are days when I say, John, why do you run around the world like you do? Why don't you just stay home? Until I see that even in this poor vessel, that truth of his gospel brings a response from human hearts who so desperately need a savior.

And so often I cry to him, even as I did this morning in the worship time. Oh God, send a fire. Spirit of God, fall in this place.

Our human pride gets in the way. He says, you shouldn't tell people how weak you are, but it's in our weakness that his strength is seen. And that pride says, you don't need to repent of that.

How about I do? I do. And unbelief holds us down. You look at the life of Jesus and you see in Mark chapter 6, when he goes to Nazareth, it says there he could do no mighty miracle.

Why not? Because of their unbelief. Just think about the strength of that unbelief. If we're not expecting him to do something, then we're not believing that he's going to do something.

And the sins of the flesh divert us from him and from his will. And we get all caught up in self. I like Henry Blackaby.

He and I have become friends. Sometimes we speak at conferences together. Blackaby's one of those guys that gets itchy under your skin, and you can't get him out till you've met the Lord in scripture about the things that he says.

I said to him one day, Henry, you were in Saskatoon when revival came in 1971. He said, yeah. I said, what was it that caused you to go to Saskatoon? He said, I was called to a congregation of 15 people, and they wanted to close the church.

So they wanted me to come and help them to close the church. And I said, Henry, how do you feel about that? He said, well, I just sort of met the Lord in revival, and he changed my DNA, and he lit the fire all over again. And that little church, he said, is responsible for starting 160 some churches.

I said to him, but you must have had in the 15 people, they must have been great, man. You know what he said? John, in the 15 people who wanted to close the church, I had the distilled essence of failure. Because they were saying, we failed.

And I thought, how about look at what God did in the distilled essence of failure. So there's hope for me. Look at it.

Woo! Last thought, and then we'll close for this time. Third thing the verse says is he will bring justice to victory. He will bring justice.

He leads justice to victory. And I'm thankful that our life does not rest in the powers of this earth. I'm thankful that our failures need not punish us more and more.

I'm grateful that our injustices and offensive wounds need not disqualify us. Because not only will he not break the bruised or snuff out the smoking, but he's going to lead justice to victory. Don't you love that thought? Jesus will bring the victory.

He's taken your sin and mine on Calvary's cross. And he cannot be overcome, neither by sin, nor by failure, nor by anything else. That's the Savior.

And this is why you and I need that life that is close to him and surrendered to him. This is why we made the first trip to the cross, isn't it? To know that our sins were forgiven and that we had a place with him in eternity. And it's why we need to make the second trip to the cross to say, Lord, instead of me trying to sort this all out and work it out and manipulate everything into it, here I am.

Take me. With all that I have and all that I have not, take me. Use me.

Let me serve you with joy. When we make that second trip, he begins the journey from justice to victory. All those failures and offenses that rise up, they need to come to the cross.

Friends, I close with this little illustration. Many years ago, as a Baptist pastor, forgive me, I got a call one day from a friend, a man I highly respected, another Baptist pastor. He lived two hour drive away.

He said, could you come to my house? And for some reason I knew I needed to go. So I went to visit him. When I got there, he said, I've just resigned the church.

He said, you know we have foster children and one of the foster girls has accused me of some wrongdoing. And so I've resigned the church to try to keep any difficulty from the church. He said, I wondered if you'd pray for me, and I wondered if you would allow me to come and place myself under your church and authority.

This is a guy who, well, let's just say when I listened to him preach, I'd sometimes shake my head and say, why do I even try? I said to him, I want to ask you a question and I want you to know how you answer it will not change my love for you. Did you do it? And he sat there weeping through his tears and said, I can honestly say I didn't do it. Do you know the media fried the guy? Blasted his name and his reputation everywhere.

Took 18 months before the court case ever came up. But halfway through that time, I said to him, I want you to teach the adult Sunday school class on Sunday morning. And he said to me, you don't want me to teach.

It'll cost you your job. And I said to him, I want you to teach the Sunday school class on Sunday. We sat down in a circle that Sunday morning in Sunday school, and he opened the word at the book of Proverbs.

And his Bible was like a colored mosaic. Every word had a different color on it. And it wasn't very many moments into that Sunday school class that we begin to realize this man came to us from the presence of God.

This is not just surface stuff that he's talking about. This is coming from the depth of a heart that knows what it is to walk in the fire with Jesus. I didn't get fired.

When the court case came, it took 20 minutes and the judge stopped it and said, case dismissed. This is completely wrong. But for 18 months, his life was torn up.

But in those 18 months, he met with God in such a way. And he still ministers today down in Minnesota. Now he could have, and I certainly would have been tempted to say, God, I'm finished.

I can't really do anything anymore. But instead, in surrender to the Lord, he found the depth of revival of the word of God in his heart. We need to pray.

Dear Lord Jesus, you've told us to come to the Father in your name, and we do that this morning as we close. We think about this dear verse that we've been looking at, a bruised reed he will not break. Father, we confess to you, we know what it is to be bruised individually and as a church body to thank you that you do not break us.

Lord, when we think about this smoldering wick, you do not snuff it out. So thank you, Lord, that your intention then is to bring back the flame. And perhaps this morning, Lord, under the sound of my voice are those who would say to you from their heart, Lord, I need the flame again.

And thank you that the verse says to us, you will lead justice to victory. Father, in the quietness of our hearts this moment, as your Holy Spirit is speaking to us, let us acknowledge our need of that flame and that touch. And we're just asking you for it.

And just as we're in the attitude of prayer, God's been speaking to you this morning. As I close in prayer, I want to give you an opportunity just to say, pray for me. God's talking to me.

Are there those this morning you want to just slip up your hand right where you are? Thank you. Thank you. God bless you.

Thank you. Thank you. Many of our hands, dear friends, and it's good that we can lift up holy hands to him.

And see for sure from his word this day, his intention is not to break you, not to leave you in that smoking wick stage, but to bring again the flame of his love. So Lord, we're asking for each of us this day, touch us again with your love and lift us again in your presence and give us the hope and the courage that as we move on throughout the events of this year, that we will encounter you not just Sunday by Sunday, but day by day. And know the fire of your love and passion and goodness and grace for us individually and as a church body.

Lord, would you seal these truths to our hearts and minds and spirit of God, would you be the after speaker and bring this thought to us in times of discouragement and times of concern and despair. A bruised reed, he will not break. A smoldering wick, he will not snuff out.

Until he leads justice to victory. In Jesus name we pray. Amen.

I so appreciated the worship team this morning and I wonder if you would do the old pastor, as Brad calls him, a favor and do that song again that talks about the fire and the passion as we close. And then why don't you bring the closing prayer today? Change is good, right? Amen.

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