

I. ME

- A. Welcome
- B. We're better together- **We are designed to need others**
 - 1. Examples
- C. **Flip Side**- We're worse off on our own (Terrible title)
 - 1. One of saddest words in the English language is **ALONE**
 - a. **Introverts**- Don't believe me.
 - b. **Solitary Confinement**- Controversial. Some consider it torture due to its effects.
 - 2. We're worse off on our own.
- D. **Ecclesiastes 4:9-12**
 - 1. All have in common? Have to agree that they are worse by themselves and need help.
- E. **To be "Better Together" we have to admit we are "Worse Alone"**... we can't do it by ourselves.
- F. Admitting that we are worse off on our own means we are admitting that we are lacking something,
 - 1. We have a weakness
 - 2. A need
 - 3. We aren't the whole package

II. WE

- A. Sounds terrible right?
 - 1. **Quinn**
 - 2. We don't want to appear weak.
 - 3. **Weaknesses are usually searched for and exploited**
 - 4. There is someone combing the background of every single political candidate... looking for a weakness to exploit.
 - a. Never want to run for office
 - b. So glad SM didn't exist when I was a teenager.
 - 5. There are co-workers/in-laws/spouses?/Siblings looking for weaknesses to exploit
 - 6. And we are doing it to others too... maybe just so it makes us feel better- "At least I'm not as bad as them."
 - 7. Maybe you left church b/c you felt the people at the church kept looking for faults/weaknesses and using them against you.
- B. So what do we usually do? **We choose to be alone...**
 - 1. Sometimes physically- hermits
 - 2. But more often internally/emotionally alone
 - 3. Shut others out, never open up or let the real us come out
- C. **We choose isolation to protect ourselves.**
 - 1. Protect ourselves emotionally- B/c we've been hurt
 - 2. Protect our image- we want to look like we have it all together.
 - a. "If they knew I had this weakness/need they would think less of me."

- D. We put on a good face...
 1. We tell ourselves that we need to find our inner strength, look out for and only rely on Number 1.
 2. We fake it til we make it.
 3. We hide our true selves
 4. And we don't let anyone see behind the curtain, see who we really are.
- E. Eventually we wake up and realize no one truly knows us.
 1. Something falls apart and we have no one to turn to.
 2. We face a challenge and no one is there to get our back
- F. How do we fix this?
 1. The answer is actually pretty scary/uncomfortable
 2. It makes you vulnerable/exposed
 3. But it's the only way to become more than you could be on your own
 4. This idea...
 5. **Admitting our weakness allows others to lend us their strength**

III. GOD (Galatians 6:2-5)

- A. Galatians (50 AD)
 1. Paul
 2. Following Jesus isn't about following the Law of Moses but following the Law of Christ- Love each other as I have loved you.
 3. Describes the transformation Jesus brings
 - a. Life in the flesh- caring only about yourself (using others)
 - b. Life in the Spirit- Loving God by loving others.
 4. Then he gives an example of how to do that...
 - a. What happens when someone stumbles (sin)- restore them gently and...

B. Gal 6:2

1. Don't speed by that...
 2. Carrying each other's burdens... FULFILLS the law of Christ.
 - a. What does it mean to follow/obey Jesus?- Carry each other's burdens
 - b. What about the rules?- Carry each other's burdens.
- C. Seems really important- so what is it?
1. **Carry- Bear** - Servant's work... heavy loads, back breaking
 2. **Burden**- Context is sin/restoring someone
 3. But the feeling is really of any type of need...
 - a. Spiritual/physical/financial/emotional/mental
 - b. Cancer/results of divorce/nagging guilt/anything that burdens someone.

D. So caring for each other like this FULFILLS the law of Christ.

1. Why Paul said a few sentences earlier... Gal 5:6b

2. Why Jesus' best friend said 1 John 4:20-21

3. Following Jesus means your love for God is expressed by your love for others.

E. But in order for this to happen there has to be a willingness to be vulnerable.

1. We have to be willing to show our cards, show our weakness...

2. Admit what's true about every single human being... we don't have it all together and we need help.

3. In order to fulfill the law of Christ... we have to be willing to bear/carry each other's burdens as we are open about and bare/share our own burdens.

4. Two things keep us from bearing and sharing... Arrogance and comparison.

F. V. 3

1. Arrogance convinces us we don't need to help or be helped

2. Arrogance prevents us from offering help

a. "Why would I help **THEM?**"

b. "I didn't get myself into that mess."

c. "That's below me I'm too important to help."

3. Arrogance prevents us from asking for help

a. "I can handle this"

b. "They will know I'm not better than them"

4. That's why the NT writings constantly talk about being humble, knowing who you are... and that even Jesus (God the Son) came as a servant.

5. We can't be better together if we think we're better than each other

6. Comparison is a similar trap but it's a bit subtler...

G. V. 4

1. Comparisons convince us we aren't enough to help and we don't need help.

2. We compare ourselves to those that seem to have more than us so how could we help?

a. I'm not as good as them

b. Other people are so much smarter/holier/stronger/richer/unencumbered by all the responsibilities I have

c. So I can't help.

3. We compare ourselves to those who might be worse off.

a. Well, I'm not as bad as them

b. Obviously they need help... I'm smarter/holier/stronger/richer than them.

c. Help someone who actually needs it.

4. In reality we all have needs and we all have a role to play with carrying each other's burdens.

H. V. 5

1. **Own Load**- Not servants burden as the previous verse.
 2. More like a backpack for a journey, a soldier's pack, a medic's bag.
 3. We all have a job to do in carrying each other's burdens.
 4. Carry a house load of bricks on your own or each one of you carry a brick in your pack?
 5. There are things only you can do
 6. But there are things you CAN'T DO
 - a. **Me and counseling.**
 - b. "Why aren't you choosing to love each other?"
 - c. "Stop doing that and choose to love."
 - d. Why we have professional counselors we partner with
 7. But just b/c I shouldn't counsel doesn't mean I can't be a friend/listen/give support and prayer.
- I. **To be better together I need to bare my burdens and bear your burdens.**

IV. YOU

A. What do we do?

B. Find people to be better together with

1. You have to know and be known in order to bare and bear.
2. Scary/uncomfortable
3. Find somewhere you are loved unconditionally

4. Where you can safely drop the pretenses and masks and just be real.

5. Connect Groups- Even if you're not convinced about this Jesus stuff.

6. These groups are designed to be a safe place to connect for everyone.

C. Let the real you show up

1. No human being has it all together
2. Be willing to be real with what you are carrying
3. Be willing to do your part in helping others carry what they are carrying.
4. Get awkward- **Awkward is good b/c it means we are being real.**
5. The first step might be making yourself available to help...
6. Letting people know you are willing to carry their burden makes them more willing to be honest about their needs.
 - a. You don't have to do this alone.
 - b. I want to help
 - c. I won't use this against you.
 - d. I was there too until someone helped me.
7. Might mean identifying with your new family- **Baptism.**

V. WE

A. What if we could belong to a community that was constantly lending each other our strength?

B. Weaknesses were an opportunity to be better not something to be exploited?

C. Lend some strength... and ask for some too.

D. Our burdens are lighter when we carry them together.