

Lesson 1: We Aren't That Much Different Than Ancient Rome — Let Me Explain

*“Construction requires skilled engineers, yet demolition only requires a sledgehammer” -
Morgan Housel, Same As Ever*

Hey there, for those of you who do not know me, my name is Ty Broermann. I am a 22-year-old from Jackson, Ohio & a member of First Baptist Church. Upon conversation with Pastor Seth and much prayer, I have realized that God has been calling me to be a warrior in the battle for mental health. With that being said, I am going to begin writing a weekly (tentatively) blog that will aim to let people know that they are not alone in their struggles with mental health. There won't be much structure to these & I am just going to let God take the wheel when I write these each week. Some might be one page & others might be ten pages... It's up to God. But, I am here to be a beacon of light for those who feel like they're mentally in a dark place because not only have I been there, but I continue to fight mental health battles. You are not alone. Anxiety, fear, lust, jealousy, envy.... The list could go on. I've faced these battles & I'm here to be open about my ever-growing journey. So, let's tackle mental health — together, one step at a time.

I already know what you're thinking — Ancient Rome & Mental Health? Must be a typo, right? Wrong. Think about Rome for a second. We still admire some of the ancient architecture and history to this day. At its peak, it was at the top of the world in just about every facet. It was organized, disciplined, and extremely influential. In the ancient world, Rome was the world center and was in a continuous state of improvement – richer people, more complex buildings, and braver warriors developed each generation that went by. Rome looked like it would continue to thrive forever. Rome was on top until it wasn't.

Rome teaches us two lessons about destruction that we can apply to our lives today:

1. As we stated, Rome took forever to build, as some historians think it took around 800 years to reach its peak. This all changed in AD 64 during the Great Fire of Rome. The fire raged on for six days and destroyed a vast amount of Rome. The same city that took 800 years to build would be pretty much destroyed in only SIX DAYS! That is how sudden destruction can be. One bad habit. One toxic relationship. One wrong sentence to the wrong person. One night of not taking the garbage out.... hahah I'm kidding Mom I love you (Mothers can be very scary, even when they're only 5 feet tall). All jokes aside, we are exactly like Rome in the sense that we can feel destroyed practically overnight. All the work that we took building our bodies, spiritual life, and mental health can be gone in what seems like the blink of an eye.

2. But the greater story of Rome can also lie in the SLOW DECLINE of the empire itself. Centuries of corruption, greed, and lust led to an eventual division among the people. This formed cracks in Rome's foundation – kinda like how erosion works. Little by little, the foundation becomes less and less stable until one little gust of wind appears to topple the entire structure. Isn't our mental health sometimes like this, too? We feel like little things just continue not to go our way, and we just eventually lash out? Or do we give up? We often keep our emotions bottled up, which further complicates the situation. Well, I am here to say LET IT OUT. Talk to someone. Write it down. Seek help & don't feel bad for doing it. You're important. This world is a better place with you in it.

Sometimes we face a sudden fire — a tragedy, a breakup, a season of crushing anxiety — and it feels like everything collapses at once. Other times, it's the slow decay — letting bitterness grow, ignoring prayer, choosing isolation, feeding envy or lust — until one day we realize we've drifted far from where we thought we were.

Both the fire and the fall of Rome tell the same truth: destruction is always easier than construction.

The beauty in all this is that God CAN AND WILL work in your life for both of these situations. If you're experiencing a 'fire' – where everything seems to burn down in a matter of days – he stands ready to rebuild your life, just like he did with Job. If we can feel our foundation cracking away from erosion in our lives (envy, lust, greed), he stands ready to restore the foundation brick by brick & stone by stone. But you've got to stand ready to accept that you might need help. Just like you can't expect a broken arm to heal without surgery, we shouldn't expect our mental struggles to get any better without seeking help.

So here is something that I think is extremely important that we often overlook: Celebrate the Wins, even the Small Wins.

See, our minds are wired to feel the bad more strongly than the good. One harsh word sticks longer than ten compliments. One failure feels heavier than ten successes. One rejection appears stronger than ten acceptances. That's why progress in mental health can feel invisible — we notice the setbacks more than the steps forward.

Yet, scripture reminds us that **OUR PROGRESS IS VISIBLE**. In Philippians 4:4 it states *“Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice”*. Not just when the war is over, but when we win our little daily battles.

You woke up today. A lot of people didn't. That's a win.

You got out of bed this morning after a tough night's sleep. That's a win.

You chose prayer over panic. That's a win.

You reached out to a loved one when feeling isolated. That's a win.

I'm here to tell you that little wins stack up over time.

One thing that I do every day that I think has created a turning point in my life is getting **3 wins a day** in the 3 realms of life. One Spiritual, One Physical & One Mental.

Spiritual: Prayer, Meditation, Reading the Bible, Doing a Devotion, etc

Physical: Lifting, Running, Swimming, Biking, etc

Mental: Journaling, Creating, Reading Books, etc

Attacking every day with the mindset of getting these three wins – no matter how big or small– has allowed me to be in a better place mentally. My anxiety and fear don't disappear overnight, and it's not going to. However, these are active steps that I take to allow myself to feel like I am headed toward a better place.

The Romans celebrated their victories with parades, monuments, and feasts — but we often dismiss ours as “too small to matter.” Don't make that mistake. Every step forward is worth celebrating. **Progress Compounds. Wins stack up.** Before you know it, your foundation will be as good as new – and restored in Christ.

Rome might have never fully recovered, but you can. Because our hope alone is not in an emperor or a king – it's in Jesus Christ who died for our sins. He is our Rock that never erodes and our builder who is a perfect architect.

GOD BLESS AND SEE YOU NEXT WEEK! - TY