



# MAX'S BREAKAWAY

*"Build your life on a firm foundation."* Matthew 7:24-27

**Merry Christmas!** What a crazy year 2020 has been. Your partnership, prayers and financial support have been tremendous, thank you. In light of everything that has happened this year, let me encourage you from **Daniel Ch. 2:19b-23** – "And that night in a vision God told Daniel what the King had dreamed. Then Daniel praised the God of heaven, saying, "Blessed be the name of God forever and ever, for he alone has all wisdom and all power. World events are under his control (**2020 ELECTION**), He removes kings and sets others on their thrones. He gives wise men their wisdom, and scholars their intelligence. **He reveals profound mysteries beyond man's understanding. He knows all hidden things, for he is light,** and you have given me wisdom and glowing health, and now, even this vision of the king's dream, and the understanding of what it means." (The Living Bible)

This Christmas season we are able to reflect on the goodness of Christ and the truth and salvation He has brought the world. As the election drags on, you may get discouraged with what we see and hear but take heart; God holds our future and **1 Peter 3:13-15** offers more encouragement, "Now, who will want to harm you if you are eager to do good? But even if you suffer for doing what is right, God will reward you for it. So, don't worry or be afraid of their threats (**sound familiar**). Instead, **you must** worship Christ as Lord of your life. And if someone asks about your hope as a believer, always be ready to explain it." (NLT) Time is short, Jesus is coming for His bride (The Church); let's use the time we have to share Jesus!

Covid-19 is real; how it has been used in our country and world is another topic. Last March I had to stop traveling. My chapel teams suggested that we move chapel on-line with Zoom; we did and it has been great. Many churches and missionaries are in the same boat and it has been a weird transition; However, I have to tell you there is a huge **SILVER LINING**. As the church and missionaries are being shut down in our culture; God is using it to swing doors wide open for the Gospel. Without what has transpired with Covid this probably would not have happened. Covid has forced millions of people to look at the frailty of life and ask the tough questions about life and death and what comes after death. There are countless testimonies of people finding Jesus on-line, on church zoom calls, prayer meetings, and dare I say, even social media. **Genesis 50:19-21**

- Joseph is speaking to his brothers and says, "Don't Be afraid of me. Am I God, that I can punish you? **You intended to harm me, but God intended it all for good.** He brought me to this position so I could save the lives of many people. No, don't be afraid. I will continue to take care of you and your children. So, he reassured them by speaking kindly to them." (NLT)

The doors have opened for me too, because of on-line chapels, I have more time for ministry (very little travel) more bang for the buck! I am meeting with 5 teams weekly and the schedule seems to move every week from Sunday night to early Saturday mornings to mid-afternoon during the week. I'm learning to be very flexible. In addition, players from various teams have requested extra 1 on 1 meetings on-line. These have been incredibly fruitful times. One example is Jarod Blackowiak from Augsburg College who's testimony is included in this newsletter who has been meeting with me every week since August. Our 1 on 1 has expanded to include his fiancé, and his younger brother, and the week of Thanksgiving their dad joined in. This is a first for me, meeting with a whole family - WOW!!! Our chapel sometimes goes for 3 hours - no kidding. My chapel leader at Augsburg invited a friend from "back home" who plays Division I for the University of Maine, to join the Augsburg chapel group because they didn't have a chapel and they wanted one. The players are being so encouraged that they want their family and friends to get on the **"Good News Gospel Train"**! You are a huge part of this! Our University of Maine Chapel started Dec 3rd, 2020.

Other than Maine, Our Chapels started the end of August. The word adoption had been racing through my mind so we dove headlong into Galatians 4:1-7. God has adopted us as his own through the blood of Christ when we receive him as Savior and Lord! As we discussed this, God rolled out a program we called **"Adopt a Teammate"**, in which each player chooses 1 player to pray for each day and for that player to start coming to chapel. I have been making a list of the chapel attendee and the players they are choosing to pray for; Mariana and I are also praying for them. If you would be willing to join us in this "adopt a teammate" you can e-mail me for a player to pray for specifically, THANK YOU for partnering with us!

**This past October Mariana and I attended the "Sexuality and the Bible**

**Conference" at the Ark Encounter in Williamstown, Kentucky. There were about 800 Pastors, Chaplains and Christian leaders in attendance. Three days of great bible teaching and edification. The conference was to help explain the many deviations. There seems to be as many as 112 genders in which one can identify; talk about confusion in our culture including in our Christian Universities of knowing God's plan for sexuality for men and women. The conference was teaching and equipping us how to minister to those who are confused and/or practicing such deviations. It's a sad fact we must have a conference in 2020 about this topic. But with the so-called list of gender identity, you can even identify as a cat if you so choose. No kidding! Sound insane; not to a culture that is godless. My players are constantly being bombarded with false ideas about God, Jesus, the Bible and choosing your identity. Satan's attack on Gender erodes the nuclear family and all God created it to be. When we deviate from God's plan, Gods word says explicitly what happens in **Romans 1:18-2:11 (please read it all)**. **Romans 1:28-32** "Since they thought it foolish to acknowledge God, he abandoned them to their foolish thinking and let them do things that should never be done. Their lives became full of every kind of wickedness, sin, greed, hate, envy, murder, quarreling, deception, malicious behavior, and gossip. They are backstabbers, haters of God, insolent, proud, and boastful. They invent new ways of sinning (new genders), and they disobey their parents. They refuse to understand, break their promises, are heartless, and have no mercy. They know God's justice requires that those who do these things deserve to die, yet they do them anyway. Worse yet, they encourage others to do them, too." (The Living Bible) FYI - if you wish to look up how many genders people identify as, the internet is filled with different numbers and they literally range from the biblical defined "2" all the way to 112 and everything in between. I choose the 112 for obvious reasons as it pertains to **Romans 1**. You can get that list from <https://dudeasks.com/how-many-genders-are-there-in-2020/>.**

While at the Bible Conference we heard the Benham Brothers share their story. **The Benham Brothers**, identical twins, David and Jason Benham, are American authors, speakers, real estate entrepreneurs, and former



Sexuality and the Bible Conference at The Ark Encounter with the Benham Brothers

Minor League Baseball players. The Benham Brothers are practicing conservative Christians, and are strongly anti-abortion. Controversy regarding these positions lead HGTV to scrap a house flipping reality television program that was scheduled to premiere in October 2014." (wikipedia). We had the chance to do a meet and greet and bought their book. I asked them if they would be willing to do a Zoom call with my teams, and after autographing my book, they took the book back and wrote their personal e-mail and said, "we would love to!" I read their book and was blown away. I e-mailed them and they responded the next day. I told my HMI teammate, Rob Globke in Chicago about the Benham's being willing to share with the college chapels and Rob is helping facilitate this opportunity to all the chapel teams across the country. We are excited to bring the Benham Brothers to the College hockey world. Please pray for this event!

When the lockdowns were at their peak, I thought about presenting a 28 day Bible challenge for all 5 teams. As athletes they loved the idea of a challenge, **even a Bible reading challenge**. The challenge was to read the Bible everyday for 28 days and share what you read with the chapel group text and encourage the guys on your team to make sure you and they read the Bible everyday. What came of this? My phone "**BLEW UP!**" With an average of 8 guys per team, 40 different Bible verses or sections of scripture everyday coming in via text, WOW! I have never been so encouraged in my life and I wish I had testimony to the Bible challenge but this has gotten long again, haha. Getting young men to read the Bible daily, priceless.



St John's Hockey Golf Fundraiser

*In His Grip,  
Max and Mariana Erickson*

*Merry  
Christmas!*

**Personal Testimony:  
Jarod Blackowiak Augsburg College**

I grew up in a family who always believed in God. I always knew He was there. I said the same prayer before bed for as long as I can remember. My parents would bring me to church every once in a while. Although, I would have to be forced out of my bed and would be on my phone the entire church service. My faith was my parents, being forced upon me. I was only taught that I needed to believe there was a God, but I never understood why I should believe in Jesus Christ. I remember when I was in high school, a good friend of mine, who was a faithful follower of Christ, asked if I wanted to lead a bible study of some younger hockey players. Of course, I said yes! I thought, "what better resume builder right before I graduated." It was awesome for the first 6 months, until I needed to give a devotion in front of everyone. I got up there, made an absolute fool of myself. I was unprepared, scared, and most of all, I didn't really believe in what I was saying. Nevertheless, I continued on with my ways by knowing that God existed, but not understanding why I should believe in Jesus Christ. Fast forward to my freshman year of college when I started to go to bible study with Max and his ministry. I couldn't make it my first semester because of my schedule, but I started up in January when we got back from break. It was my second or third bible study when we started talking about marriage, dating and sex. We were having such good conversations with the group. Right when we were about to finish, I felt a huge weight on my chest, and I did not understand why. After the group left, I asked Max if he had some time to talk about the study. I explained to Max my situation. I had been dating Sammy, my



Sammy, Jarod and his brother Luke

girlfriend for about 5.5 years at the time of this conversation. I had mentioned to him how she had brought up the idea of marriage and how she felt we should get married, just a week prior. My reaction to her came out of nowhere and was not a pleasant reaction. I knew I wanted to get married to her, eventually, but I did not want it to be now. Max started asking questions about why I did not want to get married, if I knew I was going to marry her. After making every excuse in the book, I ended up not being able to think of a good reason why. Max continued by explaining to me what the bible has to say about marriage, dating and sex. That moment, my eyes were opened to something I never knew I was looking for. And that was Jesus Christ. Looking back months later, I now know that Christ was talking to me, through Max, that day in January. **Christ saved me when I wasn't looking to be saved.** I wanted to do things differently from this moment on. I wanted to understand why I should believe in Jesus Christ. A few months later, I gave my life to be a servant of Jesus Christ and to be adopted into the Kingdom of Heaven. A few months after that, I got down on a knee and proposed to Sammy. Since I gave my life to Christ, all I have wanted to do is to tell people what He has done in my life. Sammy and I have moved forward with our relationship in a different light, one that honors Christ. This has now transformed my relationship with Sammy, my parents, my siblings, Sammy's family, and my friends as well. Not only did that one day change my salvation forever, but it has changed many others with me. I went from a man who thought he was going to heaven because I knew God, to now, knowing I am a citizen of heaven because I have a relationship with Jesus Christ.



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