

Well, man, thank you. Thank you, David. You've been absolutely killing it this year. I imagine all creatures, great and small, from here to Mississippi have been trembling in fear for months, trying to avoid this evening as best as they can. When I first came to America, and it is great to be amongst some good, honest, red-blooded carnivores, when I came to America the first time and was graduating seminary, and I was interviewing with a church in Mississippi, in Yazoo City, of all places, one of the deacons looked at me, because I'm from Europe, and said, son, are you a vegetarian? And I went, no, sir. And he said, I think I know some vegetarians, but I don't trust them. So if you're a vegetarian here this evening, I am sorry. I hope the peas were really good, or the beans, or whatever other fare you managed to partake of. Well, this evening I want to speak to you about the essence of manliness, what it means to be a man. Let's draw near to God first and pray, shall we? O Lord, our God and our Father in heaven, we come to you in the name of your Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, who is the way and the truth and the life, who is the great warrior king, our elder brother, And we come in His name, Father. He has shown us what it means to be a man, and we fall so very far short of His example. And yet He has covenanted to work in us by His Word and Spirit to will and to do for your good pleasure that we might work out our salvation as men. And part of that, O Lord God, is becoming more like him, less of us and more of him. So this evening, our God and our Father, we pray as we turn to your word that you would bless us, that you would direct our hearts and our minds, and you'd grant me wisdom, liberty, and unction to proclaim the unsearchable riches of God in Christ Jesus, that these men here and their sons would be strengthened to lay aside every weight and the sin which so easily entangles, and to run with endurance the race set before them, looking unto Jesus, the author and the finisher of our faith. And if there be any here this evening, O Lord, who do not yet know you as their Savior, We pray that you will do for them what you have done for the rest of us. You'll call them out of darkness into your marvelous light and qualify them by your grace to share in the inheritance of the saints in light. We offer these prayers in Jesus' name. Amen. Let me read a few verses from Paul's letter to Titus, chapter 2, and I'm going to read from the New American Standard Version. This is the word of God. But as for you, Titus, speak the things which are fitting for sound doctrine." Now, it's interesting. Paul outlines the content of sound doctrine, which is normally his way, he actually unpacks the effects of sound doctrine. And the reason for that is because Paul doesn't measure a man or a theologian by how well he thinks in his head as important as that is. You cannot honor God as you

ought unless you know him as he is, right? But Paul actually begins with the effects of sound doctrine in older men, and older women, and younger ladies, as my son is calling me, younger ladies, and then younger men. And then he gets down to the content of sound doctrine. Let's listen together as Paul unpacks this. But as for you, speak the things which are fitting for sound doctrine. Older men are to be temperate, dignified, sensible, sound in faith, in love, in perseverance. Older women, likewise, are to be irreverent in their behavior, not malicious gossips nor enslaved to much wine, teaching what is good, so that they may encourage the young woman to love their husbands, to love their children, to be sensible, pure, workers at home, kind, being subject to their own husbands so that the word of God will not be dishonored. Likewise, urge the young men to be sensible, In all things, show yourself to be an example of good deeds with purity and doctrine dignified, sound in speech which is beyond reproach, so that the opponent will be put to shame, having nothing bad to say about us. Urge bond slaves to be subject to their own masters in everything, to be well-pleasing, not argumentative, not pilfering, but showing all good faith so that they will adorn the doctrine of God our Savior in every respect. For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all men, instructing us to deny ungodliness and worldly desires, and to live sensibly, righteously and godly in the present age. looking for the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Christ Jesus, who gave himself for us to redeem us from every lawless deed and to purify for himself a people for his own possession, zealous for good deeds. These things speak and exhort and reprove with all authority. Let no one disregard you, Paul says. Well, what is the essence of manliness? Young men and their fathers have been answering that from time immemorial. But there's never been a more important time, I think, in the history of mankind that we answer that question clearly and concisely. and biblically, because people all across our land are denying that there's any difference between men and women at all. And if there is a difference, they will say, and you spend too much time thinking about it, that will make you toxic as a man. And if we don't stop this malarkey, before too long in Western civilization, there only will be two sports, men's sports, and men who think they're women's sports. And so this evening, I want to draw your mind to the scriptures. Before we go there, though, I want to say to you that it's a grave mistake for our culture to deny the difference between men and women, because there is a difference. God himself has designed us to be different. God has designed men to be the designers and builders and protectors of good things, and to attack, to destroy, Those who attack and deny what is good and beautiful and true. We're to be designers, protectors, and builders of good

things, and to attack and destroy evil. Women, on the other hand, God has designed to create and nurture and cherish life. And a woman can fight. If a woman are backed into a corner, and especially if they're young, are at stake, they will fight with all of the fury of a lioness. But God didn't design them to be the point of the spear in combat, physical combat or spiritual combat. That is God's high calling for you and for me as men. And denying these differences It's bad for men, it's bad for women, it's bad for boys and girls, and it's bad for society. It's like using a Ferrari. in an Amazon warehouse to lug boxes around about. I mean, you can use a Ferrari, boys and girls, sorry, no girls here, you can use a Ferrari, young men, boys, to drive and drag boxes about an Amazon warehouse. But that's not what Enzo Ferrari had in mind when he designed those glorious engines. He made them for the open road, to roar down that open road with full throttle, exhilarating acceleration. And when you look around the world tonight, I'm speaking now to especially the young men here this evening, look at the world. Every building that has ever been built, every church, every home, Every cathedral, every business office and skyscraper has by and large been built by the hands of men. The raw materials that went into building those buildings, the granite, the iron ore, the steel, the carbon, was all mined by men. The oil, the gasoline, The methane that was used to power the tools to construct those buildings, likewise, was discovered and mined out, drilled out by men. And women can do all these things, but they weren't primarily designed by God to do these things. And when you beat men down, as we are in our culture today, you're beating down the warriors. You're beating down the engineers. You're building down the builders. You're building down those men who have the fiber to create a world that in which life can thrive and our women folk can use their unique genius to raise our children in a place where they can be unmolested by the hands of wicked and ungodly men. In short, men matter. Now, what is a man? When you think of a man, what comes to mind? What's the target? That's also important, defining the target. I remember hearing a story about a man in a train driving through the countryside of England, and he saw this barn. And on the barn, there were targets. And on the targets, at the middle of every target, there was an arrow, right in the middle of the bullseye. And then he looked, and he saw a young boy with a bow and arrow. And he thought, wow, this boy's a crack shot. And as he's kind of moving through the country, he watches the boy. And the boy goes out, and he pulls back the bow and fires. And to the man's shock, the arrow lands thud in an empty piece of the barn. He thinks, that's strange, he's hit every other target he's missed. And then

to his shock, he watches the boy walk across, pick up a can of paint, go over to the arrow, and he paints the bullseye around the arrow. A perfect shot. If you don't define the target before you shoot, you'll hit it every time. What is the target of manliness? Well, the young boys here, now, as you grow up, your target is probably the heroes, right? You've got Spider-Man and Superman and Iron Man and Aquaman. And these great heroes on the silver screen, you look at them and you think, oh, I want to be like that when I grow up. As you get a bit older, your definition of a hero might graduate a bit, you'll move on from Spider-Man, maybe to Indiana Jones, or Jason Bourne, or one of the other kind of tough guys on the screen, The Rock, and those movie stars, right? Or Han Solo. I hope you all boys want to be like your father. What do all these figures have in common? Well, they're strong. They're mentally strong. They're physically strong. They're emotionally strong. They're brave. They're courageous. They're determined. They take

initiative. They're competent. They have character. At least the old heroes did in the old days. The old heroes were men who had character. You could trust them not just to get things done, but to get the right things done. A lot of the modern heroes, like Iron Man, well, they're a bit more self-absorbed, a bit more metrosexual. Their character is unraveling as our culture unravels. They're the kind of men, though, that you can depend upon in a tight spot. Well, this evening, I want to turn your attention a little bit away from the silver screen. I want to talk to you about Paul's definition of manliness. And we find it in his little

short pastoral epistle of Titus. And Titus, as we've been telling First Presbyterian Church here, is all about building strong, healthy churches. And Paul has three building blocks for a strong, healthy church. And there are three chapters in Titus. Chapter one, Paul says, if you want a strong, healthy church, you must put good men in leadership. Paul says, for this reason I left you in Crete, that you would set in order what remains. The church in Titus is out of order. And Paul's first recipe for putting it back into order is to appoint elders in every city as I directed you. Namely, if any man is above reproach, the husband of one wife, and these are men to take leadership in the church. You can't have a strong church if it's full of weak men. That's chapter 1. Chapter 2, Paul says, have good men in leadership, chapter 1. Chapter 2 is preach good doctrine from the pulpit, and that's where we're going to be this evening. And chapter 3 is practice good works from the pew. We haven't got time to go there this evening. I want to look with you at chapter 2. Now, if you look at chapter 2, if you have your Bible with you or your phone with you with a

Bible on it, you'll notice there's a structure. Paul says, but as for you, teach the things which are fitting for sound doctrine. And he goes, first of all, to

the effects of sound doctrine. Older men are to be temperate, dignified, sensible, sound in faith, in love, and perseverance.

Older women, likewise, are to be reverent in their behavior.

They're to teach the young woman to be sensible, pure, to love their own husbands, to love their children, to be sensible, pure, workers at home, kind, being subject to their own husbands

so that the word of God will not be dishonored, and then urge

young men, likewise, to be Sensible, Paul says. Now, if we notice

the structure, it begins and ends with who? The men. He doesn't go older men,

younger

men, older women, younger women. He goes older men, older ladies,

younger ladies, younger men. That's interesting. Paul flanks

the women folk with men, fore and aft. Older men, older women,

younger women, younger men. It's almost as if these men are

flanking the woman, protecting them, preserving them. And I

was looking at this actually for a conference last year that

I spoke at, and I'm going again tomorrow to Maryland for round

two, and it suddenly occurred to me when I was looking at it,

you know, what is the biblical definition for manhood? And suddenly

it jumped off to me at the page of me, Paul here tells you. He gives you the four basic elements

of an older man. Paul is painting the target on

the barn, and he wants you men to aim at it. When Paul thinks

of what is a mature, godly, stable, earnest man, what's he look like? Paul says four things. He's temperate. He's dignified. He's sensible. and he's sound. He's sound in

faith, sorry, in faith, yes, in love, and in perseverance. I wanna spend a little bit of

time working through those with you. First of all, Paul says,

an older man, the kind of man, boys, Paul wants you to be when

you grow up, is temperate. Now, that's a big word. What

does temperate mean? Well, the word temperate means

It's used sometimes, it's described, I think the ESV has super-minded,

it's to be level-headed, right, level-headed. That's the definition,

level-headed. You might know Rodger Kipling's

famous poem, If, and he goes through if this, if this, if

this, if this, then you'll be a man, my son, right? Well, the

last line, Kipling says, if you can keep your head when all about

you are losing theirs, then you'll be a man, my son. Now, Kipling

mustn't have been married. Because if Kipling had been married,

he'd have said, no, if you can keep your head when all about

you are losing theirs and blaming it on you, then you'll be a man,

my son. If Kipling had been married,

he'd have said, if you can keep your head when your wife is losing

hers and blaming it on you, then you'll be a man, my son. And

that's often the way, men, isn't it? One of the hardest times

for you and me to keep our heads is when our wives have lost theirs. And Paul says,

if you're to be a man, you've got to learn to keep your head. Not to allow your emotions. to overwhelm you, not to allow your passions, your anger to overwhelm you, but to keep your head, to be sober-minded, temperate. Do you have that capacity, men?

If not, why not? When your emotions overwhelm you, you've got to always remember, men, every emotion you ever feel It's connected to thoughts. And the thing is, the emotion screams at you, the thoughts whisper. It's like when you're walking about Kroger or Publix, and there's background music up in the rafters, and you kind of hear, oh, this love lifts us up where we belong, and you kind of recognize the tune. But it's in the background. It's not like the organ on Sunday morning, which is loud. It's in the background, and our thoughts are kind of whispering in our ears. When you're anxious and you have this kind of tense feeling in your tummy, the feeling of tension and anxiety screams at you, and you often think, well, stop being anxious. But you can't deal with your anxiety until you know what thoughts are whispering in your ears. When you lose your temper and get angry, anger, it doesn't just happen. Anger happens because you are listening to yourself. when you should be talking to yourself. Behind every outburst of sinful anger, there's almost always fear, boys. Remember that. Fear is often the cause of all sinful anger. So remember, last time you got really angry and lost your mind, what were you frightened of? Maybe you were frightened that your wife doesn't respect you. Maybe you're really frightened that she's right not to respect you. And those thoughts started whispering in your ears, and suddenly the anger started boiling in your heart. And if you're going to be a man, you've got to learn to master your emotions. And you do that by mastering

your thoughts. And so whenever you find yourself in a day when your emotions are out of whack, whether it be anxiety, fear, panic, anger, whatever it is, go back to your room at night and think about it. What thoughts were whispering in my ear? Were they true or were they false? How was I thinking? How ought to I have been thinking? And we deal with that in our rooms before God. with his word open, and that's how we learn to be gripped with right reason. We learn to master our emotions by mastering our thoughts. That's the first thing Paul says. A man is temperate. He's level-headed. The next thing about a man, Paul says, is dignified. Now, dignified, boys, it sounds very Presbyterian and a bit stuffy, like an old pastor's preaching gown. But the word dignified in Greek literally means worthy of respect. What's a man? Level-headed, and he's worthy of respect. That's the target. Now boys, what's it mean to be respected? Whether you know it or not, boys, respect, especially the respect of a woman, is something you've wanted from your earliest days. Like your big sister brings her

friends around and they're really, really beautiful, right? What do you do? You run out into the garden and you try and climb the biggest tree in the garden. And then you try and pick up the biggest rock in the garden and show them how strong you are. Remember whenever I was a young lad, I sailed in the cold waters of Belfast Loch, and I was in the rescue boat that day, and there were these girls, and they capsized their dinghy, and they were trying to get up onto the centerboard, which is the dagger thing coming out the bottom of the boat, to get the boat back up again, and they couldn't do it, because when you get cold, your muscles kind of tie up, and they couldn't get up on the centerboard. And I got up, I was 13, dived into the water, swam across, and in one svelte move, 50 pounds to go, I got myself up onto the board and pulled the boat up again. These girls were 16, way beyond my league. But when I was walking back in, putting the rescue boat away with the instructor, I heard the boy say, did you see Stuart? He got up on that board, he got up on that center board as if it was nothing. And what I was feeling in my

heart was respect. It's what all men want. And most of the time, boys, you hear your mom and dad arguing, most of the time it's because your dad feels that your mom doesn't respect him. And your mom feels your dad doesn't love her. Women want love, men want respect. And women tend to communicate their lack of love in a way that men find disrespectful. And men try to express their frustration about not being respected in the way that women don't feel loved by, and they're off to the races. But they want to be respected. Now, what is respect? Respect

is a complex marriage of competence and character. You get things done, and you get things done the right way. You're the kind of person that can be trusted in a tight spot. That's Paul's second thing, level-headed and worthy of respect. The third thing that Paul says about manliness is sensible. Now, sensible, again, sounds very, well, sensible, doesn't it? Sounds very boring. But actually, the Greek word for sensible is *sufrunos*, and there's lots of different translations. But here's the best translation for it that I can put in one sentence. Being sensible means to be gripped in with right reason. It means, literally, to do what you know is right when you want what's wrong. It means to do what you know is right when you want what's wrong. And it's all over the book of Titus. Paul says elders are to be sensible, just, devout, self-controlled, sensible. Older men are to be temperate, dignified, sensible. Older women are to teach the young woman to love their husbands, to love their children, to be sensible. Later in chapter two, Paul says the grace of God has appeared, teaching us to live sensibly, righteously. godly in the present age. It's all over the book of Titus. Doing what you know is right when you want what's wrong. Now I'm going to come back and look at that in a second in more detail for reasons that will

become immediately apparent. Okay, doing what you know is right when you want what's wrong. And the last component of manliness, level-headed, worthy of respect, sensible, doing what you know is right, when you know what's wrong. The last component is sound and faith in love and perseverance. And the word sound means healthy. And for the sake of, I don't know, I hope memorability, let's call it sound mastering the basics. Because in anything in life, whether it be golf, or archery, or shooting a handgun, whatever it is in life you want to master, the basics are always simple, but they're not easy. In shooting a handgun, there only are several things you can mess up. The grip, right? The trigger pull, and your sight picture. That's it. There's only three things you can mess up, and yet it's easy to mess them up. They're simple, but they're not easy. mastering the basics. And Paul says when it comes to

mastering the basics, men must master the basics of faith, trusting God, love, serving others sacrificially, and perseverance, finishing well. You've got to master the basics

of trusting God, serving others, and finishing well. That is Paul's recipe for manliness, trusting God. is about reaching through the appearance of things and laying hold of what is really there. Being able to look at your circumstances, being able to look at your fears and your anxieties and maybe your dear wife is anxious and panicking and blaming it on you and all of this turmoil and faith. is the ability to reach through all of that, that is topsy-turvy and upside down and inside out and back to front, and to lay hold of what is really there and what is really true, which is always the Word of God. Who God is, what God has said, what God has promised. God is the rock upon which men base their faith. Faith is not jumping from the light into the darkness. Faith is jumping from the darkness into the light. It's the most rational thing

a man ever does when he chooses to trust his creator. Do you do that? Are you trusting your creator?

Are you reading his word and taking your marching orders from him? Mastering the basics of trusting God, serving others, love, Paul says, sound in faith and love, love. What is love? Love is laying yourself down.

While we were still without strength, Paul says, in due time, Christ died for the ungodly. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die. Yet perhaps for a good man, someone would even dare to die. But God demonstrates his own love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ laid, gave himself up for us. Love is about sacrificing yourself. It's not about using men to fulfill

your ends. It's about using yourself to help other men and women thrive and grow and be all they could be and should be. It's sacrificial. A friend of mine was remarking once, he was in Israel on a tour, and the tour guide had been saying that the shepherds in Israel always lead the flock from the



front, as the example, and that was the big lecture. And then they were going through this town, and they saw this man with sheep, and he was driving them behind with a whip. And someone said, you just said they lead from the front. So the tour guide stops the bus, gets out of the bus, runs down onto the street, speaks to the man, comes back and goes, he's not a shepherd, he's the butcher. And too many men lead like that. They're like the dogs that are fear biters. They're frightened. And so they're always leading with anger and the whip. And that's not what men do. Men love. Men lay themselves down, give themselves up, pour themselves out, serving their wife and their children, and setting the example. Gotta master the basics of faith, trusting God, love, serving and sacrificing others, and then perseverance, finishing well. There are so many men in this world who don't finish well. One of the things I love about this church are so many senior men with fire in their eyes and steel in their backbones, and they're just striving toward the line to finish well. That's what men are to be, temperate, level-headed, dignified, worthy of respect, sensible. They do what they know is right when they want what's wrong, and they're sound in faith and love and perseverance. I've mastered the basics of faith, trusting God, love, serving others, and perseverance, finishing well. Now, to finish well, no time to go there. Come back later. Boys, that's pretty daunting, right? Of those four things, which is the most important? Where do you start, young man, young man, young men? Where do you start? On the road to manliness. Well, Paul doesn't leave you in any doubt. What's he say to the young men? Urge the young men likewise to be what? Sensible. That's all he says. Urge the young men to do what you know is right when you want what's wrong. Here's why, boys. If you don't master your desires, if you don't master your desires for evil things and dark things, even though they might be fun things, those desires will master you and you will never master anything else in life that is worth mastering. If you want to be a man, you've got to learn to do what you know is right, even when you want what's wrong. Don't be the bug in bug's life. The blue light, it's so beautiful. Billy, don't look at it. Billy, don't. It's so beautiful. In my mind's eye. Some months ago, at the start of hunting season, I envisaged the old buck, Coach Buck, talking to all the deers. trying to help them avoid being on your table. Because if you look at your table, boys, you see a living, actually a dead example of what happens when you don't master impulse control. And he's giving the lecture, he's saying, boys, this is the Buck speaking. We're going to use the same playbook that we've used for the last 2,000 or 3,000 years. Listen to me, and don't look at me as if I'm some air student on a Delta flight flying out

of Atlanta, giving you the air safety lecture, and nobody listens. Take your earbuds out of your ear, son, and listen to me. It's simple, morning and evening, the does go out and eat first. There's more of you than there are of us. You go out, we appreciate your service, and you go and you eat, and you just keep it, and don't look over your shoulder into the forest at the handsome boyfriend in the forest. That's a distraction, and you're giving away our position. Put your head down and just eat. And don't be alarmed by any large bangs going off from the undergrowth. And if Flossie Anne falls dead beside you, it's just part of the circle of life. We're grateful for you. Spikes and young bucks eat next. This is really important. Older bucks. Stay in the woods until dark. And dark means dark. You'll be sitting there in the woods thinking to yourself, but I'm hungry, and my girlfriends are having all that food to themselves, and I'll go out for a wee snack. Think like that, son, and you'll be driving home in a pickup truck. I was talking to my friend up in Montana, Cousin Elf, Elk, sorry, not Elf, wrong movie. Cousin Elk, and he told me there are monster buck, Elder Buck, he made a rookie mistake a few years ago. He was there in the undergrowth, and then he began to get a bit hungry and to feel a bit horny, and he thought, I'll just walk out for a wee snack. And now his headless corpse is displayed for all eternity above the mantelpiece in the Limerick Plantation. Impulse control, boys. Impulse control. Stay in the undergrowth. Well, it's funny, but it's serious. Because all over this city, and probably in this church, there are young men, and impulse control is the last thing they've got. And your dads warn you, boys and girls, they warn you, sorry, no girls here, they warn you about the internet and dark, terrible things on the internet. And you go, yeah, yeah, dad, I got it, I got it. And when you tell your dad you got it, I promise you, getting it's the last thing you've got. If you want to be a man, you've got to learn to master your desires. desires for the darkness, and the devil is a master at making the darkness look bright. If you want to be a man worthy of respect, you've got to respect yourself, boys, and dads. And there's no man on God's green earth who spends his time viewing filth on the internet who respects himself. And if you don't respect yourself, nobody else is going to respect you. It's like that scene in Tombstone when Kurt Russell's character goes across to the man at the table and says, you're sitting on my seat. And the man looks at him and says, I'm not scared of you. He's a tough guy. And Kurt Russell says, he's Wyatt Earp. And he says, of course you are. I can see that in your eyes. And then if you are searching out the dark sides of the internet, which is eviscerating the men of our generation, you won't respect yourself and your wife will see it in your eyes. And how can she respect you if you don't respect yourself? So how do you become a man? That's what a man is. And

Paul

tells you. It's the grace of Christ. At the end of this long list of the effects of sound doctrine, Paul comes around to the actual content of sound doctrine. For the grace of God has appeared, literally epiphanied. Grace isn't an idea. Grace isn't God going soft on sin. Grace is a person. It's the son of God, the image of the invisible God, the firstborn above all creation, the one by whom all things have their being, the great son of the everlasting, ever-living God. And this great Christ came down. He appeared in a manger. For the grace of God has appeared, and he comes to you this evening, men, and he grabs you by the lapels, and he instructs you. to say no to ungodliness and worldly desires. You've got to learn to say no, and to say yes to live sensibly, doing what you know is right when you want what's wrong, righteously, taking everything back to his law, his standard, his example, sensibly, righteously, and godly, to walk with God, looking for the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Christ Jesus. In a sense, Paul says, Men become men, and women become women, too, but we're dealing with men this evening. By living between the two epiphanies, we look back to the Christ who has come, and we look forward to the Christ who will come, the Christ who comes in glory. And it's amazing, because Paul says, looking for the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Christ Jesus, who gave himself for us. Paul never gets away from the cross. As he thinks about the Christ who would come, full with all of the glory of God himself, he immediately thinks, this is the great Savior who gave himself. All gave some, and some gave all, they say, but none gave as much as Christ. He gave himself. His person in our nature, the son of God, he gave himself for us to redeem us from every lawless deed and to purify for himself a people for his own possession, zealous for good deeds. And that's the image of God that Paul sets before this evening. It's Jesus giving himself up, pouring himself out, laying himself down. That's how you become men. And that's the only place you and I'll become men. It's important men take our sons hunting and do manly things outside, and to get cold and wet and all those things, and to learn to shoot a gun. And those are all wonderful skills that our children and sons must learn. But that's not where you learn to become a man. You learn a man by walking with the man, the Son of God. If the only place you'll learn what it truly means to be a man is in the presence of the Son of Man, who loved you and who loved me enough to die in our place and for our sins and to rescue us from the darkness and bring us home to God. And Jesus is here to teach you to be a man. Are you listening? Are you learning? Because it's like having testosterone and testicles It's important to being

a man. It doesn't make you a man. It's the difference between shooting and killing. There's a great old Louis L'Amour movie that was shot some years ago, and Tom Selleck was in it. And at the end, he tries to avoid fighting the whole movie, as the gunfighters often do, the hero. And at the end, he's stripped down to his long johns, and he's being abused terribly by the bad guys. and he walks into the county store and he asks the guy, can I borrow a gun and a rifle and some bullets? And the guy gives it to him and he walks out, he's no holsterer, he's got his gun and his rifle, gets on his horse and he reverses the horse out and all the bad guys around, and he just starts chambering rounds into the Henry rifle and starts shooting the men, one shot, one kill, all around the town. At the end, the wee boy runs across to him and goes, wow, sir, that's some shooting. And Tom Kellogg says, no, son, that's killing, and there's a difference. Well, there's all the difference in the world between having testicles and testosterone and being a man. And if you wanna be a man, men, Jesus is the only one who can take you there. He's the only one who can fix and heal and redeem all of the broken pieces in you and in me that stand in the way and that tumble and toss our emotions and overwhelm us. He's the only one who can bring peace to our hearts and peace to our conscience and forgiveness for our sins. And Jesus says, the first step to becoming a man is not trying to redeem yourself. It's coming to me and letting me redeem you at the foot of the cross. Come to me, Jesus says, and though your sins are red like scarlet, I'll make them as white as snow. Though your heart is broken and your past is checkered, give me the broken pieces of your heart, the broken pieces of your life, and let me weave them all together again that you can see through my grace all of these broken things can be made new again. And in the wondrous providence of God can work together for your good and my glory. What's a man? Well, he's temperate, level-headed, and he's dignified, he's worthy of respect, and he's sensible, he does what he knows is right because he wants what's wrong, and he's mastered the basics of trusting God and loving others and finishing well. Did that vision excite you, men? Jesus says, come to me, and I'll make you a man, today, tomorrow, and forever. The kind of man you can respect and the kind of man your wife can respect, and the kind of man your young boys and girls in your home can respect, and you'll be a force to be reckoned with, to design, build, engineer, and protect all that is good and beautiful and true. And your wife will feel safe for all of the good things she does to run wild in the home, creating and nourishing and cherishing life. It takes a man for that. Let's pray. Father in heaven, we thank you for your mercies that are new every day. We pray, Lord, you'll come

this

evening. Work in my heart, oh God. Work in each of the men's hearts here. We're all deeply messed up. We're all deeply broken. We're all deeply insecure. Some of us cover it up with painted things like cars and nice coats and jackets and nice houses and the badges of little brief success in this world. But deep down in our hearts, oh God, we're little boys trying to find our way to manhood. And only Jesus can help us. And we pray, loving Father, for the glory of your son, Our elder brother, you will send your spirit to help us onward and upward to manhood. In Christ Jesus, our savior's name we pray. Amen.