

## IT HURTS!

*People brought all their sick to him and begged him to let the sick just touch the edge of his cloak, and all who touched it were healed. (Matthew 14:35-36, NIV)*

**S**UDDENLY IT'S RATHER PAINFUL TO BE AN AMERICAN GOLF FAN. That's because many of the country's best players are themselves hurting. The old stalwarts, Mickelson and Woods, have struggled with chronic pain for several seasons. Newer leaders Jason Dufner and Matt Kuchar have already had to call it quits at the PGA Championship this weekend. At least Ryder Cup points leaders Bubba Watson and Jim Furyk put competitive scores on the board to open the season's last major. Maybe not everything hurts.

Sometimes that's about all we can say. Roughed up by slow business, a major repair, a contentious friendship, or a nagging illness, we might only be able to take comfort in the fact that not everything hurts—not all at once, anyway. We wrench on a smile and do our best to keep going.

On such tough days, we may play the good Christian, leaning on Philippians 2:14 to “do everything without grumbling.” We swallow the grumps and get back to work. Wouldn't want anyone to think we're not trusting Jesus...

But here's the thing—when Jesus walked the roads of Israel, people brought him their troubles all the time. There was sickness and demon possession and arguments among families. They came looking for him to *do something*. This was seen as trusting God, asking him to do what they could not.

Everything God asks us to do and to be for others, he wants us to do and to be for him as well. So how about honesty? Will you be honest with God about your troubles? Will you trust him to hear your cries of pain?

Whining isn't bad just because it brings down everyone around you; it's bad because it's worthless. But we don't consider it whining when you take your sicknesses to the doctor. We call that putting your troubles in the hands of the qualified.

Let us do the same with God. The difference between fussing and prayer has everything to do with their aim. We don't need pity from people, we need healing from the Father. We show him this by coming to him with our pain and trouble, trusting him for the deliverance he can provide.

**Opening questions** How do you react when it looks like you will miss a good opportunity due to circumstances beyond your control? When have you “bucked it up” only for this to be a bad decision?

**READING** Judges 10:6-16; Psalm 46; James 5:13-16

### Jephthah's prayer

What brought trouble to the people in Jephthah's time? How did their prayer and repentance reflect a renewed trust in God? How might you renew your own trust today?

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### The God who is strong

Psalm 46 extols the abilities of God when we are in trouble. What lines do you lean on in this psalm?

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### Employing prayer

What do the words of James charge us to do? When do you find yourself ignoring such instruction for the sake of your own strength?

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