

1 A Summary

- by Pastor David McCowan

2 Park Pointe – Men’s Group

- Last week, the Park Pointe Men’s Group started a new small group video series.
- The subject matter of the series is based on the true life story of Don Piper.
- Don Piper was a pastor who was killed in a car accident and spent 90 minutes in heaven, before his body suddenly came back to life.
- However, the story is not just about Don Piper experiencing heaven, instead it is more about him experiencing a living hell on the earth.

3 Summary of Accident

- On January 18th, 1989, Don Piper was driving home from a Pastor’s conference.
- That day about 85 miles north of Houston, Texas—crossing the Trinity River, he and his Ford Escort were run over by a speeding 18 wheel tractor-trailer truck.
- The truck also hit 3 other vehicles, but Don’s car suffered the most damage as it was hit head-on.
- In fact, 9 of the 18 wheels of the tractor-trailer truck not only rolled over Don’s small car but Don himself—crushing his body.

4 Summary of Accident

- When the accident happened, it was located in a rural part of Texas and it took several minutes for emergency vehicles to respond to the scene.
- When they did arrive, Don was pronounced dead and a tarp was laid over his body in the car.
- But a pastor arrived at the scene and demanded to pray for Don—saying that God has commanded him to pray for the man in the small red car.
- However, the highway personnel wouldn’t let him. They told him that it was too gruesome.
- But this pastor didn’t take “no” for an answer and pressed on to get permission and then climbed in through the rear hatch of Don’s car and started praying.

5 90 Minutes of Heaven

- When Don was struck by the truck, he was instantly killed.
- The next thing he knows is that he is standing in heaven at one of the twelve pearly gates—being greeted by those who had gone before him and had been instrumental in his faith.
- Don saw for himself that the streets were indeed paved with gold and his senses of both sight and smell were almost overwhelmed with beauty.
- He saw many people walking around and fellowshiping with each other and enjoying each others company.

6 90 Minutes of Heaven

- However, Don was most impressed with two things that he says he'll never forget.
 - The reassuring sound of angel wings.
 - The sound of constant worship unto the Lord and how the many different songs and forms of worship all blend together into perfect harmony.

7 Back into his Body

- When the preacher stopped praying for Don—as he laid dead in the car, he started singing the song, “What a friend we have in Jesus.”
- After a few verses, all of a sudden, the preacher found out that he wasn't the only one singing.
- He heard another voice—the voice of Don singing with him.
- All the paramedics and other personnel couldn't believe it. So they rushed Don to the hospital.

8 Don's Injuries

- Don's injuries were very extensive.
 - His forehead was crushed.
 - His chest was impelled on the steering wheel of his car.
 - Both legs were severely broken, and
 - His left arm was bent all the way behind his body and was resting on the backseat.
- The first two hospitals wouldn't take Don because of the extensiveness of the injuries, so they had to drive him 85 miles to Houston, Texas before he could be admitted.
- By the time Don was admitted to the hospital, it was 7 hours after the accident.

9 The Long Recovery

- Don's injuries were so bad that he had to rest on his back for 13 months.
- He also had to undergo 34 surgeries and had bone taken from one area of his body to replace bone in his legs.
- He also had to have braces put on his legs that were bolted into the bones of his legs to stretch them and help them to grow back in place.
- It was during this time that Don became very depressed and started to question God's goodness.
- His main question was why did God allow him to see heaven but then allow him to suffer so much afterwards.

10 Finding Purpose . . .

- When Don Piper came to the end of his rope where the old paradigm of purpose was lost, God gave him a new one.

- He could now use what he had learned walking through the valley of the shadow of death to help others.
- In other words, many of us think we need a mountain top experience to find purpose and gain a ministry.
- The truth is that there is more purpose to be found in the valleys of disappointment than there is on the mountain tops of warm feelings.
- Why? Because it is in the valley where character is produced, refined, and made ready to help others.

11 Finding New Purpose

- So then, if you feel that you are walking in the valley of disappointment, don't let the trouble overwhelm you, use the experience you're gaining to help others.
 - Who is more able to help young mothers with little children than mothers who have had children?
 - Who is more able to help someone care for a loved one with Parkinson or Alzheimer disease, than someone who has already had to do it?
 - Who is more able to help someone with rejection, than someone who has also experienced it too.
 - Who is more able to help someone with _____, than someone who has already gone through it as well.

12 Conclusion

- Boaz replied, "I've been told all about what you have done for your mother-in-law since the death of your husband — how you left your father and mother and your homeland and came to live with a people you did not know before. May the LORD repay you for what you have done. May you be richly rewarded by the LORD, the God of Israel, under whose wings you have come to take refuge." (Ruth 2:11-12 NIV)
- Ruth was a Moabitess, who left her country and people to be a help to her mother-in-law Naomi.
- She is the model of loving-kindness as she acts in ways that promote the well-being of others.
- Even though she was not a Jew, she evidently out of a good heart understood biblical principles and applied them.
- She is remembered today as the foremother of the Jewish Messiah and the great grandmother of David.