



Wiping the Tears:  
A Caring Response to Abuse

*Triumphant Life Church*

*Sunday Morning*

*November 9, 2008*

*[www.safeharborministries.org](http://www.safeharborministries.org)*

A lit candle in a holder, with a person's hands visible in the background holding a book. The candle is the central focus, with a bright flame. The background is dark, with the person's hands and the book providing a subtle context. The text is overlaid on the candle and the background.

# Scripture Texts

Isaiah 61:1-3, 7-9

Luke 10:30-37

# Why do we need to talk about abuse in the church?

- Christians should not be ignorant about the nature, prevalence, and severity of abuse that exists in our world, our neighborhoods, and even our churches.
- Violence against women exists in every country and among all people groups.
- Research consistently indicates that the rates of family violence inside and outside the church are similar.
- Some statistics

# Two Categories of Abuse

- Domestic violence, sometimes called battering, is a pattern of behavior where one person tries to control the thoughts, beliefs, or actions of a partner, friend, or any other person close to them.
- Sexual assault is a problem rooted in the very fabric of our society. It is a crime of violence that affects women, men, and children.

# Child Sexual Abuse

- Sexual abuse is any contact or interaction between a child and an adult (or a child who is older or has more power) in which the child is being used for the sexual stimulation of the adult or another.
- This ranges from exposing the child to sexual information to full physical sexual contact.
- No matter if it happens once or multiple times, with coaxing and promises or threats and violence, any sexual abuse is extremely harmful to the child and has long lasting results.

# Sexual Assault and Rape

- Rape and sexual assault are not sexually motivated crimes; they are crimes of violence that stem from aggression, rage, sexism, hatred and determination to exercise power over someone else.
- While it is perpetrated mostly by men against women, anyone can be a victim or a perpetrator.
- Far too often, those who have been victimized are victimized again by stereotypes and questions about rape that blame the victim. This often leads to further guilt, shame, and self blame, leaving the victim alone and isolated.

# Domestic Violence/Battering

- A pattern of behavior where one person tries to control the thoughts, beliefs, or actions of a partner, friend, or any other person close to them.
- People often think of domestic violence as physical abuse. Physical abuse includes slapping, pushing, punching, kicking, choking, using weapons and murder.
- Domestic violence also includes many other behaviors, including emotional, verbal, psychological, sexual and economic abuse

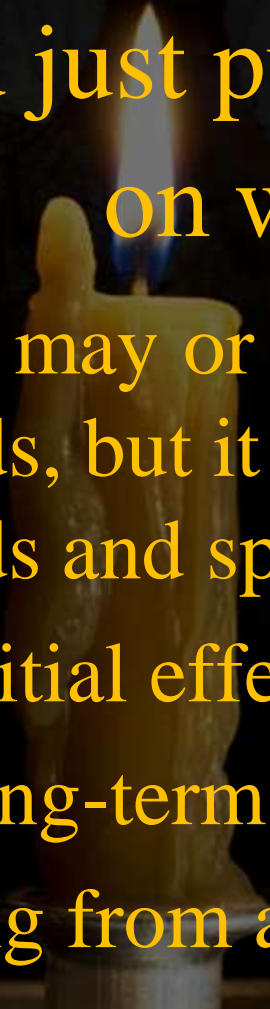
# It's All About Control

- Batterers use abuse to gain power and control over their intimate partners.
- Abuse is behavior that harms (psychologically and/or physically ) or creates fear in the victim.
- Batterers are not “out of control” due to poor anger management, stress, or substance abuse. They use anger and abuse to get what they want.
- The U.S. Department of Justice estimates that more than 90% of all domestic violence victims are female and that most abusers

“Why do victims of domestic violence  
allow themselves to be treated this way?  
Why don't they just leave?”

- Fear
- Finances
- Shame
- Fantasy of change





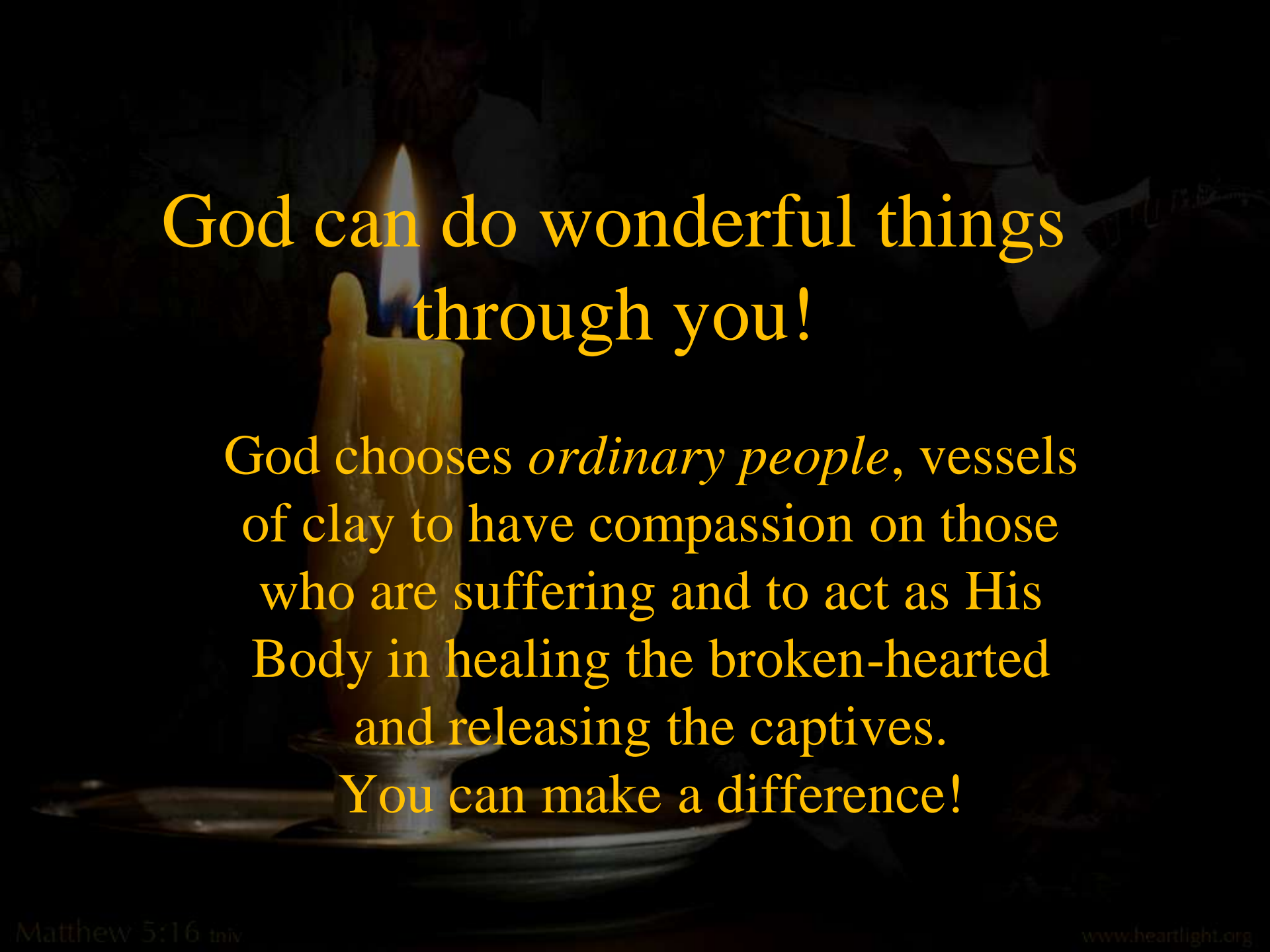
“Why can’t someone who has been abused just put it behind them and go on with their life?”

- Abuse may or may not produce physical wounds, but it always causes emotional wounds and spiritual confusion.
- The initial effects
- The long-term effects
- Healing from abuse
- The subject of forgiveness



“What can one person or a congregation do to help?”

- Take a stand against violence  
Ps. 11:5-6, Jeremiah 22:3
- Listen to their stories
- Ask what you can do to help
- Practical acts of service
- Spiritual comfort



God can do wonderful things  
through you!

God chooses *ordinary people*, vessels  
of clay to have compassion on those  
who are suffering and to act as His  
Body in healing the broken-hearted  
and releasing the captives.  
You can make a difference!