

Well, good morning. Happy Mother's Day. Only the woman responded. Listen, when I say happy Mother's Day. Who all has a mother in here?

It's all right. I was telling that this morning. One of the boys said, I'm not a mother. I said, well, you're not Jesus either, but I say, merry Christmas to you. So when I say, happy Mother's Day, what do we all respond?

Happy Mother's Day. Yes, yes. We're in a great series here. I will say this may be the most important sermon I've ever preached in my life, but I don't want to set the bar so high that you'll leave disappointed. So I'm just going to say this.

This is a very important sermon. Pay attention, all of us. When we were growing up, we lived for two years on a little island in Guam. Anyone know where Guam is? Could you find it on a map if you had to find it?

It's a little tiny. It's smaller than Lawrence county in the middle of the Pacific Ocean. Dad's job took us there. I was in 6th and 7th grade there. Miserable time when I was there.

I look back at it now and go, that was amazing. Most of our lives are like that. We look back with a lot more rose colored glasses than we actually experienced in the middle of it. But one of the most amazing things was this place called Talafo fo Falls. Now, I was telling them about there in the back, and they said, it sounds like you're having a mini stroke when you say that.

Talafo fo Falls. Talafofo Falls was this place out in the bush, back in the wilderness. And you would hide on this red clay, dusty dirt for it seemed like hours. I think it was probably 20 minutes it took you to get there. But my 6th grade mindset was, we'll never arrive.

We'll die on this path. We get there, there's this beautiful waterfall. I mean, gorgeous. Looks like something. Something out of a picture, which.

That is a picture, but it is amazing. The water comes down. There's a little cave tucked behind one of those. The falls, I think, over on that side. You can get back in there.

All the big kids would swim out and go in the cave. I never risked that much because we were there one day. It was sort of a church youth group trip. Dad was one of the chaperones, thankfully. And I was just having a lovely time in the water, splashing with friends and stuff.

And I got into sort of this. I don't know if you can see it, but right there where that little glimmer of blue is light there. I got to about that point and something started sucking me under. It was not a wild beast. It was the undercurrent, the undertow that falls were creating so much pressure.

It was pulling me under. I was a pretty good swimmer, but I could not get. I could not get purchased to get my head up. I would get it up just a little bit, grab enough air to just sink back down, and then I'd struggle to get. And it was.

I mean, even today I can sort of get a little panic attack about that moment. I thought that was the end. I really felt like I was going under. I could not survive this. Thankfully, my dad was on the bench on the.

On the rock on the side, and he saw me. The few times my dad was actually watching us as children. But thankfully, he was at that point in time. He saw me and he jumps in and he grabs me and. And pulls me even.

It was maybe a foot or two to get me out of that spot where I could sort of get. Get my head up and I could get my head above water and just breathe for a little. And I remember swimming over to the side, getting up the water, thinking, I am not going back in those. In those waters again. Well, 15 minutes later, I was back in there avoiding that spot.

I can tell you. I'm so glad that my dad was there keeping an eye on me. I wish this was a Mother's Day story, but mom was home. Dad gets credit for this one. So I'll tell you, the schedule at our house reminds me of that moment.

We at our place right now seem to be stuck in this sort of pattern where an undertow, maybe, that keeps us at times from getting our heads above water. I feel a little bit overwhelmed sometimes with all the stuff going on. It's a new world for me and trying to figure all this out. Parents, you understand this just a lot of stuff. Kids are going opposite directions, lots of demands on their time, just friends and schedules and family and stuff.

And I say to myself, you know what? And in the middle of it, see this beard right here? I'm in the middle of this crazy thing going on. And I say to myself, in two weeks, things are going to get back to normal. But I remember back in November and in January and in March saying, in two weeks, it's going to get back to normal.

Anyone know what I'm talking about?

So today I'm preaching a sermon that I need to hear, because God's plan for you and your family, whatever that family looks like, if you're here single or you're here with a very unconventional world right now, God still has put you in a position of influence. You still have a family. You still have your people. We like to say here, whatever your family looks like, God's plan is for your family to experience his Sabbath rest. This is a Sabbath rest that was established a long time before any tribes or religions or anything like that formed.

This was way back in Genesis, where God said, I'm going to give you every seven days the opportunity. It's a gift from me to you to rest. That means it's not just about Jewish tradition. It's about the human need. We all need it.

Jesus said, the Sabbath was made for man. That means that whether you're a believer or not, Sabbath is God's gift to you. If you're an overworked mom or an overwhelmed dad or part of an overwhelmed family, God commands you to lead out in experiencing with your family what God calls a Sabbathon, a special day of rest. Now, if that responsibility intimidates you or makes you feel just a little bit guilty that you're not doing it, you are not alone in the room. I, too, am very intimidated by this responsibility, and I feel guilty that I don't do it the way I should.

But as we open the scriptures today, I'm praying that you get some hope, you get some strength to lead your family into healthy and God honoring rest. And on this mother's day, I am glad you are here. Let's pray. Heavenly Father, we thank you for the rest that you invite us into. Father, we pray that you would coach and coax us into this place where we really experience your intention for us.

In Jesus name, amen. So many of you have commented on the beard. I say commented and not complimented because I've not gotten a lot of compliments yet, but I've got lots of comments. And this beard is because I'm playing the rabbi in the little theaters production of Fiddler on the roof. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Mazel tov. Mazel tov. That's my lines right there.

You don't even have to see the play. Now. You know what? I do. But there's a scene, a very special scene at the, sort of the beginning in act one of this play, where the family gathers together for the Sabbath meal.

And the other night we were rehearsing, and I'm back sort of behind with the rest of the, sort of the crew, the troupe, while the leads are sort of doing the main acting there and they're lighting candles and they're breaking bread and they're pouring wine. And then they sing this song. And it's an invitation. It's a prayer. It's a song prayer, an invitation for God to be present with them in this moment.

And a blessing over their daughters. There's five daughters in this family, and so there's a prayer of blessing over their families. And the song, you have to go to hear the song. But it's based on an old Testament blessing. And it's found if you want to look it up later, you can.

But here's how it goes like this. May God bless and protect you. This is a prayer that, that jews today all over the world still pray when their families gather together. A special prayer for the boys, a special prayer for the girls. But what they have in common is this prayer right here.

May God bless and protect you. May God show you favor and be gracious to you. May God show you kindness and grant you peace. And all over the world, on Sabbath, jewish mothers and fathers pray that prayer over their children. And then they eat together and

they recount what God has done in their lives and their family and the history of their people.

There's an opportunity to just refresh and restore and reconnect with the people that matter most. It's a beautiful moment in the play. And as I'm standing back there singing this song with them, I'm thinking, oh, my word, I need these kinds of moments. My little family needs these kinds of moments where we just kind of stop and we just rest. Deuteronomy 5:14 says this.

The 7th day is a Sabbath. A Sabbath on a special day of rest to the Lord your God. And on it you shall not do any work, neither you, nor your son or your daughter. And get this, nor your male or your female servants, nor your ox, nor your donkey or any of your animals, nor any foreigner residing in your town so that your male and female servants may rest just as you do. Again, this invitation for everyone, no matter their color or creed, God invites all of us into this very special, meaningful and important act of rest.

We need a moment in our family to do that, to remember that in the middle of the laundry and homework and chores and sports and laundry and the fights and squabbles and meals and sleepovers and laundry and dishes and errands and grades and laundry. There's a lot of laundry. For some reason, in the midst of all of that, God is doing something quite beautiful. New parents sort of get this the baby comes home to a special room, and there's a scripture verse over the crib, and there's a little Noah's ark over here on the side. And the parent holds a little baby, and they rock him, and they sing little songs to them.

They understand. They pray over them. When they tuck them in, they understand what a beautiful gift God has given to them. But as kids get older and parents get tired, those sweet practices get less and less. Am I the only one that thinks this happens?

Before you know it, you're simply living in this place of survival. Get up, get out. Get in, get home, get over it. All those. Those moments of rest and reflection seem to evaporate as you juggle the various responsibilities of parenthood.

And moms seem to bear the brunt of it. Proverbs 31. A proverb written by a guy named King Lemuel. I don't know who this guy is, but he wrote this proverb, and it's based on his mother. And one of the things that he talks about in this proverb, and you can read it when you get home, is some of her responsibilities.

And here's how he describes just a few. These are just a few. She gets up while it is still night. My alarm clock is set earlier than it has ever been set in its life. She provides food for her family.

Thank you, moms. She watches over the affairs of her household. She does not eat the bread of idleness. Now, moms, if you feel guilty for occasionally eating the bread of idleness, can I just remind you, you need a Sabbath, too. The fourth commandment,

remember the Sabbath and keep it holy, is not just for working dads and guys, but it's for working moms who are doing a lot to keep their family fed and clothed and rested and loved.

So if you're a mom here, you may be asking, I love the idea of rest. I would love to nibble on the bread of idleness just periodically. But how do I do that when there's so much physically, mentally, spiritually, emotionally at risk and at stake with these beautiful people that God has gifted me with? As we talked about last week, the first thing we do is we intentionally find our rest in Christ. And if you need to be reminded of that, look at last week's sermon.

But Jesus ended this endless striving for trying to please God and get it all done and trying to be perfect. He ended that on the cross. He becomes then the writer of scripture say, he becomes our Sabbath. He becomes our Sabbath rest. And he invites us.

In fact, he commands us, those of us who are in him, who are burdened and weary, to come to him for this place of rest. He says this, my yoke is easy and my burden is light. So, moms, if you're here this morning in the weight of caring and caring for your family is overwhelming. Jesus says, come and rest. That was last week.

This week. The point is that Jesus says, I want you as family leaders, to be intentional about resting with your family. So I was talking to Mason about this. Robert was out of the car, so I've not even got his permission yet to talk about this. But Robert, can I talk about this?

Robert doesn't even know what I'm going to say. It's good, I promise you. So I was telling Mason, I said, mason, I want to do something. I got to preach on this on Sunday, and so we can't be hypocrites. We've got to get intentional about this.

So I'm going to invite you guys to do something really, really daring with me over the summer. I'm going to invite you to join me in leading our little individual families into rhythms of rest. Now, what do I mean by that?

When kids are little, this is a little bit easier because you have a lot more, like, control. As kids get older, it gets a little harder. So right now, like I said, it feels like us, we're all going in different directions. And sometimes I feel like I see these kids for maybe an hour, 2 hours every day, and then we're all off to the next thing. And if I were to say, hey, we're going to take one day and just shut down and rest, I do not make enough money to afford that kind of bribe.

That's not going to happen. Instead, we're going to try something a little simpler. And this is the stuff that I'm going to invite you to do with me. One, we're going to just come together. We're going to find a time that works for our people and our schedule and our responsibilities and our stuff, and we're going to find a time where we're all in the same place at the same time.

And we're going to make that easy because we do not need another scheduling burden in our lives. Amen. So we're going to find the time that already works. I don't want to stress about the perfect time, and I don't want you guys to stress about the perfect time. Paul said, don't let anyone judge you about your sabbaths and your special days.

And so I'm taking him at his word. I don't have to do it like you guys do it. And you don't have to do it like me or your best friend. You do what works for your family. Do it when you can.

Maybe it's every week, maybe it's every other week. But you find a time. Maybe early in the morning, before school, maybe after school, maybe after Sunday's church service and some worship times. Maybe it's a Thursday night, maybe it's 3 hours, maybe it's 30 minutes. But find a time.

A time where you're all in the same place at the same time. Everyone in the household is there because it's something that God said everyone in your household should experience, even your ox and ass. And your kids may act like that sometimes, but they're not. They're your sons and daughters. And God says they should also have a sabbath.

So you come together, and then you be together. Do you know what I mean when I say that? Be with each other. Turn off the devices. Now, it's easy to point the finger at the teenagers and say, turn your device off.

But I'm telling you, I am as guilty as they are about keeping that thing on me at all times and checking it and flipping it over and put your phones down. And then I'm looking to see what the buzz was about. So you got to turn the stuff off. Moms, turn your stuff off. Adults, we can be worse.

We are terrified of losing our connection, fearful of losing maybe connections at work or those responsibilities that always seem to be around us. But look around. All the people that you love the most and are responsible for are right there with you in that moment. So turn the phone off. Put it down.

Better yet, put it away in another room.

Sabbath practices really do work best when all the devices are put away, shut down. And someplace where you can't hear that annoying little notification bell or buzz. So you come together, and then you just be together. You got those two things almost. You've almost done what you need to do, but then eat together.

Now, the pictures sometimes we have of these Sabbath meals are like Norman Rockwell. That's not how we live at 1318 15th street. It doesn't have to be the Norman Rockwell Thanksgiving feast someday. This may be such a beautiful family tradition that it can be that. But for right now, all we're doing is trying to establish rhythms of rest in our families.

And so for us, it's probably going to be pizza that we order in for your family, it could be a bowl of cereal, it could be cheese. And crackers. It could be a bag of popcorn that you all just munch on together when you're in the same place at the same time. But it's something that you do where you share a meal with each other. So what are we doing?

We're coming together. We're being together. We're going to munch on something. We're going to munch on something and then we're going to talk. That's a new thing.

We used to do this. We're going to try it again. We're going to talk to each other. You can share a devotion. You can share a Bible verse.

You can share a little lesson from the Bible. That's very appropriate. But remember, this is not primarily a Bible study you're inviting your family to. It's a time of rest, refreshment. It's a time to connect.

So you talk. You talk about, hey, what was the best thing that happened to you today? What was the most challenging thing? The hardest thing? And kids, and adults answer these questions.

Let your kids know, hey, you faced some hard stuff. You faced some challenging stuff. Who did you have lunch with? Who did you play with? What do you like about them?

That's always fun. What do you like about that friend? Now, parents, this is not the time to question your children's choice of friends. It's not the time to air grievances. This is not festus, where feats of strength and airing of grievances is part of the tradition.

This is not the airing of grievances time. No rehashing of previous infractions. The past is in the past, and this is a moment to rest and be refreshed. If you want your kids to not grumble and complain, then you should not be grumbling and complaining either. Amen.

Amen. This is a time for your kids to also rest. It's for you to have the opportunity to model what rest looks like. It's a chance for you to model what listening looks like. It's a chance for you to model what forgiveness and acceptance looks like.

It's where you get to model the kind of rest that Jesus invites you into. It's a chance to model what it means to pray for each other, and that's the next thing you pray together. So I love that tradition that the Jewish families have of praying a blessing over their family, and you certainly have permission to do something like that. But what that really is is just pointing out what you see in their life that you're thankful for and what you're proud about the specific things that you love about that kid, and then you pray for them. And you pray about the things that matter to them.

And then Robert is going to get a chance to pray for me about the things that matter to me. You pray for each other. He's thinking, I wish I hadn't come into church this morning. I could claim ignorance, but now he's in it.

And the last thing is that you have fun together. One of our values here at Sherbet Oaks is we want to be a place that is. That is fun and refreshing. We want people to leave here glad they came, that something happened that made their life a little bit easier or a little bit better. This is going to be a hard one, but it's going to make your life better and easier.

I know this is true, but we want to have fun together. So much of parenting is about directing your kids. You pick up the toys, you bring down the laundry, you tidy the bathroom, you mow the yard, you finish the assignment. And for this moment, whether it's 30 minutes or 3 hours or all day, you give it a rest. You give it a rest.

Now, what you do that's fun for your family is really your family stuff. Maybe you're game players. Maybe you like to go riding your bikes together. Maybe it's time where you go on a picnic. I don't know, do something fun.

If you have some questions, go online. There's plenty of family fun events that you can look up online. But the prophet Isaiah says that the Sabbath is a day of delight in the Lord, a time when God's people ride on the heights of the earth. Watching an Avengers movie with your kids may not quite aspire to riding on the heights of the earth, but it's something you can do and relax with them. And if you close your eyes very briefly and snore very quietly, maybe no one even notices.

You come together, you be together, you eat together, you pray together, you talk together, you have fun together. And how you do it is up to you. But that's a place to start. I was telling the boys on the way over, one day summer is coming and I am terrified of summer. I'm scared of it like I've never been scared of it before because I'm nervous about the unpredictableness of the schedule that we're getting ready to go into with a lot more free time.

There's a lot more time, let's be honest, for trouble. But theoretically, with more free time, there's also this opportunity to relax and enjoy one another. But we know how this works. If we do not get intentional about this, September is going to roll around and we're going to look back and go, oh, we were going to practice rhythms of rest over the summer and we didn't do it. So here's what we're going to do.

We're going to make a plan right now. And again, if you're a parent, this is easy for you, but what if you're not? What if you're a single person? What if you, what if, what if you just got a couple of buddies or a couple of friends together and said, hey, here's, I want to do this. Will you do this with me?

We're going to make a plan. And maybe it's just you. Maybe it's just you, but you, but we're going to make a plan. So if you got your notes and you want to take some notes, that's great. If you got your phones, I'm going to give you permission to get your phones out and open up the notes section and just, and just take a few notes right now because we're going to take a moment, I'm going to walk you through my plan.

And we're holding it lightly right now. But this is the plan. We're trying to be as intentional as possible. And so here's my intentional plan. When we were in school, we learned what are the rules of an interview.

You asked the who, what, when, where, why and how. And so this is, this is what we're going to do. We're going to go through the who's and the whats and the whens and the wheres and I'm going to tell you mine. And then you guys have permission to open it up and think about it with your family. So in our household, the who is me and Robert and Mason.

Now, it's very often that our house is filled with more people. We've got two little neighbor kids that spend a lot of time there and two little neighbor girls that would love to spend a lot of time there. So it's, the household is flexible, but whoever's in your home, this is a moment. You invite them in. And so that's the who.

The what? I told you what the what is. Here's what we're going to do. We're going to order pizza and we're going to try to have a bible verse. It's very aspirational to do a bible verse a week.

I'm telling you right now, we will probably have a bible verse for the summer. That's what? We will do a bible verse for the summer that we're going to memorize and we're going to learn. And when are we going to do it? Well, early on, we established Thursday as our potential family night.

And with softball and other things and practices, that sort of has gone by the wayside. So I'm using Thursday as a placeholder right now because I think it might work, but it might not. So we're aiming for Thursday. But if it doesn't happen on Thursday, we're going to find another night that works. Where are we going to do it?

The dining room or the front porch? Maybe the living room? Maybe at a park. I'm very flexible on the where right now, but how are we going to do it? Well, here's how I'm going to set a reminder.

Two days out and a day out and 2 hours out, so that I don't let my own busyness make me forget that this is what we're going to do. Because I'm going to be honest with you, my intentions are always amazing. My follow through, if you can use the word sucky in church, that describes my follow through. And so I need to be real intentional about this and set a reminder. If anyone else needs reminders, I'm doing reminders, too.

So that's what I'm doing. Just to remind me. So we can start talking about it and planning for it, so we don't forget it and miss it. And then why? Well, here's why.

Because Sabbath is a gift to us that matters to God. As parents, life can be as overwhelming as being caught in the undertow at Talafofo Falls. You'll never forget Talafofo Falls. Now, the demands of work and family keep us caught in this crazy pattern of getting our heads up and taking a big old suck down of oxygen and then diving back in until we try to get up again. But we're continually pulled back by forces that honestly are stronger than us.

And so our father invites us to take hold of him so he can pull us away from that pattern and invite us into a place where we can breathe, where life is good and fun and safe and beautiful. And the way he does that is this pattern of Sabbath in our lives. Ken Shagamatsu says it this way. Sabbath is ceasing from what is necessary. And there's plenty in life that is necessary.

It's ceasing from what is necessary and embracing what gives life. So this summer you have permission, moms and dads, to embrace what gives you life and what brings life to your home and your family and to enjoy some much needed, guilt free rest. But be intentional about it. Savor the beauty God surrounded you with. Appreciate his goodness and celebrate.

Especially celebrate the ones he's put in your life and then send them to bed early so you can have some peace and quiet. Amen. Let's pray. Father, we thank you for your blessings. We thank you for the blessing of rest that we do not enjoy enough.

I feel like not in a way that honors you. You intend us to pause so that we can be restored. Intend for us to stop so that we can savor what's good and beautiful about the life that you've given to us. Call us to this place of just seeing beauty and recognizing it and appreciating it and living, as we sang earlier, living in the goodness of God, living in your Sabbath. So, as we said earlier, call us and coach us to this place where we are living the way you intended us to live intentionally in your restaurant.

We pray this in Jesus name as we prepare for a time of communion. The work of parenting is never done. My mom told me that. I believe her now. The work of parenting if you're a mom, you know this.

The work of parenting is never done, even on the Sabbath. But as believers, we can rest in a work that is done on the cross. Jesus said, it is finished and we cannot add anything to that which is finished. Instead, we enter into his rest. Ellie we receive life and grace and mercy and forgiveness and freedom that God intends for us every day of our lives.

We want to live in the Sabbath. Rest of God. Heavenly Father, as we prepare to take the cup and the bread, we remind ourselves that you are lord of the Sabbath. You are lord of rest.

And as we come to this time where we take bread and cup that represents your love and your sacrifice, we're reminded that you did the work.

You accomplished what needed to be accomplished. There's nothing left for us to do other than just love and live and praise you with our lives and our affections. You endured the cross so that we could enter your rest. You've set us free. And he whom the Son has set free is free in deed.

We give thanks for that freedom. In Jesus name, amen.

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