

Well, good morning.

This series has been really refreshing. Right? If you haven't been here, we've been talking about how our world lives at this crazy, unsustainable pace. We work hard, we play hard. We even vacation hard.

It's common for people have shared how it's common for us to get back from a trip and think, oh, my goodness, I need a vacation from that vacation. As a culture, we just don't rest. Well, anyone else heard something from Sean the last couple weeks, and you thought, you know what? I do that. And now that I think about it, that's not good.

But thankfully, our father's mercies are new when every morning. And for many of us, this series has been a welcomed recalibration, a reminder that in the midst of our fast paced lives, God invites us to come into steps with his rhythms of rest. We've talked about how these rhythms that were founded within the creation of the world and have been helped, have been upheld by God throughout the years. And how God, who created us and knows us even better than we know ourselves, knows that we have limits. Anyone else heard that cardinal story last week and have it pop up in your head?

God, I did it again. I keep running into the glass window.

We can only push ourselves for so long before bumping into our limits. And when we do, it can be really painful. But here he comes again, dishing out more and more of his fresh new mercies. And in his grace, our father continues to invite us into daily, weekly, even seasonal periods of rest where we can find the kind of rest that's not just for our bodies, but also for our souls, too. And when I pause to think about that, well, that sounds delightful.

When we hear the word Sabbath, we often think of a day. But God also invited his people into longer celebrations. God gave his people feasts and festivals to be extended times to rest together with a larger community and reconnect with him. In the book of deuteronomy, it records these teachings of Moses, really, in the final weeks before his death. And this aged man is pouring out his heart to a younger generation, and he knows they're about to enter into this promised land that they've been anticipating for so many generations, but he knows he's not going to go with them.

So under the inspiration of God, Moses says, hey, look, when you get to that land, don't forget the Lord. We've forgotten him before. Don't do it. He says, remember, teach your children. He says, remember, don't follow other gods.

We've done that one, too.

He said, when you get there, cancel debts and free your servants. The opportunity that lies ahead of you is wonderful. And then right in the middle of the book, we have this chapter 16

where Moses pauses and he tells them, hey, when you get to the land, rejoice. Enjoy what God is giving you and celebrate when you go through. Chapter 16.

Verse one. Celebrate the passover. Verse ten. Celebrate the feast of weeks. Verse 13.

Celebrate the feast of tabernacles. Verse eleven. Rejoice before the Lord your God. Verse 14. Be joyful at your feast.

Verse 15. Your joy will be complete. Reading this chapter, it brings to mind romans 511, where Paul says, we can rejoice in our wonderful new relationship with God because our Lord Jesus Christ has made us friends of God. We rejoice in God. This is a character of the christian community.

This is a distinguishing mark of the church. I love this picture. I love it when it pops up every once in a while. I think about, like, so often, spirituality. We think of in, like, these somber terms where we're just like, we're quiet, we're collected, we're reserved.

I love to think about a couple of nuns who say, you know what? God has given us snow today. So maybe the holiest thing I can do is scoop down, put together a ball, and whack my friend in the face and rejoice in what God has given me. In this day and in this moment, we are the people who rejoice in God. And God says to his people, hey, here.

Observe these special occasions. Observe these events with the single purpose of cultivating joy.

See, we have reason to celebrate, and it's important for us to put those celebrations in our calendars. Moses specifically highlights three festivals in this chapter. There's other feasts, other festivals mentioned in the Old Testament. Moses picks out these three to talk about. These feasts were specifically tied to specific events.

They had a special significance to the people of God in celebrating these events every year. It strengthened their faith.

Something wells up, you remember your strength and faith, and it increased their joy.

You see, what you know can leave you unaffected. I can know lots of things. I think about even that video of a mission partner right there. I can hear them talk about it, and I can know there is cool stuff happening over there. You ever been on a trip?

We went on a really cool trip recently, and I took pictures, and I thought, I am looking at this, and then I am looking at this newest phone option that you have with really cool cameras, and that is way different than this.

You just have to have it change you by experiencing it. What you know can leave you unaffected. What you celebrate can shape your life. I kind of think it's sometimes like you just can't explain it. Sometimes you have to experience it.

What we celebrate is very important, and it says a great deal about us. You can tell a lot about a family or a church or a community or even a nation in what they celebrate. What do you celebrate when someone sends you a birthday text? You get a little shot of joy. You're glad because someone out there values your life.

We celebrate anniversaries because we value marriage. In our culture, we have, like hallmark holidays that we celebrate, right? We celebrate Valentine's Day because we value love. Just last week we had Mother's Day. We want to celebrate and lift up and celebrate mothers.

Father's Day coming up in a few weeks. My personal favorite day of the year, thanksgiving. This celebration of God's goodness and sustaining life. Our country celebrates Independence Day with fireworks and parades. On the 4 July in a church, we celebrate a person's surrender and union with Christ.

We celebrate when there's a baptism and that union is sealed weekly. We celebrate with communion or the Lord's supper. And we celebrate that that union is sustained over all the world. Christians celebrate Christmas, the incarnation of the son of God. We celebrate these things, Easter, the death, the resurrection of our Jesus.

Celebrations matter because they identify what we value.

This chapter in deuteronomy is really important to us because it highlights some things that are really worth celebrating. What is there that's so important that you want to get it beyond the level of what, you know, that phone picture, right? And you want it to get worked into you so it shapes your very life.

So in that context, Moses says to his people, hey, celebrate the feast of the Passover. It's a big lead off. You may be familiar with the story. If not, God's people were slaves in Egypt for over 400 years, generations upon generations. You can read about it in Exodus twelve.

When God took action to bring liberation to his people, he came through on his promise to not harm those who marked themselves as his. So when this 10th and final and horrific plague came against their oppressors, his mercy protected his people.

God gives you, he's saying to these people, God gives you this feast so that you won't live the rest of your lives as if you're still a slave.

Through Passover, God's people saw that God had put them in an entirely new position. He's saying, no matter what your difficulties are in life, you're no longer a slave. This is the

same thing. This is what God's saying on the cross. You may face all kinds of battles in your life, but you're not a slave.

You're redeemed. You've been set free by the blood of Jesus. Sin will always be your enemy, but no longer your master. And that's worth celebrating. Moses invites him.

Do this on an annual rhythm. He said, celebrate the feast of weeks. Feast of weeks is connected with the harvest. Exodus 20 316. This festival is called the feast of the harvest, and it's tied to the beginning of harvest.

You can read about it in numbers 28. The day of first fruits was the day when people brought the first sample of a harvest gift, and they gave it back to God. The feast of weeks. The feast of first fruits. It points us to the resurrection of our Jesus and to the gift of the Holy Spirit, Jesus great promise.

It ties these two together. He says, I'm not going to leave you as orphans. That's the promise of the resurrection. And guess what? I'm going to come to you.

That's the promise of the Holy Spirit. It's saying, christ is with us. And Moses says, you know what? That's we're celebrating.

Thirdly, he says, to celebrate the feast of tabernacles. My boys would have loved this one. They actually built a shelter out of leaves and sticks. This was a campout. My boys have already been in the backyard this year.

Dad, will you put out the tent? They've already camped one night outside. Hey, dad, when's the feast of booze? Can we build a fort in the backyard? You want to stay out with us?

The idea of this festival is to remind God's people that when they came out of Egypt, they didn't live in houses. They lived in tents or they called them booths. They lived there for 40 years. And he's saying, hey, you're going to be living in these wonderful houses. You're going to be in the promised land.

So I want you to live in a booth for one day a year to remind you that this earth, this ain't it. This is not your home. One day, this tent, our bodies, they're going to be destroyed. But that won't be the end of us. This points to the second coming of Jesus, the great inheritance that will be ours one day, that one day when faith will be turned to sight and our lowly bodies will be changed to be like his glorious body, and we're gonna be forever with him.

Christ is gonna bring us home. And when he does verse 15. In this chapter, your joy will be complete. That's worth celebrating. Moses says three of these things.

Build them into your annual rhythms and celebrate. Celebrate God's goodness, everything about him. And remember, come back to these moments. Now we're in a different time in

history than when Moses is talking with God's people. We have the vantage point in history to see that the risen Christ Jesus is the fulfillment of all of these festivals.

And right now, we actually have some freedom and agency in how we set our calendars. And to be honest, there's a significant downside to that, because we're at risk of not building those in.

But that's paired with a really cool freedom and an opportunity to do this really well. Israelites, when they were doing this, they would travel as a community to specific locations for these gatherings. They would pack up for a road trip. They would sing songs that went along with whatever particular event they were going to. They had the rhythms that they were into.

They were like, this is our routine. This is the song we sing for when we're taking our family trip to this place. This is the song we sing. I want to be like the women that we read about in Exodus 15. If you look at verses 19 and 20, it says, when Pharaoh's horses and chariots and charioteers rushed into the sea, the Lord brought the water crashing down on them.

They're newly liberated. They're experiencing freedom. They're stepping. They're like, wow, we just walked through. There was a wall of water on each side.

We were on dry ground. That was exhilarating. Is this actually the time? Is it coming to fruition? All these times, we thought maybe it was then.

Is this it now? And then you start to get a. Who know? Here they come, and the chariots and the horses and the. All the people are coming, and their oppressors are right on their heels again, and they look back.

Whoosh, they're washed away.

Their response is, their oppressors for hundreds of years are eliminated. It says, miriam, prophet Aaron's sister, took out her tambourine. I could just see all the women taking arms. Like that scene at the end of one of the marvel movies, right? All the women come in and save the day.

They're taking arms, they're bringing out their tambourines, and they start, what do you do? Shake a tambourine, wave? Whatever you do with a tambourine, you make noise with it, right? And they're like, we're bringing our tambourines. We're ready to go.

They're armed and ready? And Miriam sang this song, sing to the Lord, for he has triumphed gloriously. He has hurled both horse and rider into the sea. I want to take a page out of the playbook of these women. They were ready to celebrate at all times armed with their tambourines.

I want to live in that kind of a posture. I want to be ready to party over God's goodness at any given time.

So I'd love to ask you today, how might you infuse intentional celebration into your rhythms of rest?

What do you need in your life right now? Maybe to be reminded of what do you need to experience if you're a parent? What does this, what does your family need? What does your family need right now? What does your family need over the course of the year to come to build into your annual rhythm?

How might thinking through being intentional in this space change your family dynamics?

How might intentionality in the area of celebratory rest change how you experience God?

How might it change how you experience each other? How might it change how we experience even this summer or anything in our lives? Friends, this is a journey of discipleship. It's for ourselves. But also, again, if you've been blessed with the opportunity to steward and lead a family, this is discipling our kids.

But is my vacation really holy? Well, it can be holy. Is this holy? Is dedicated and consecrated to God. It becomes sacred when we center it on God.

James 1:17 one of my favorite passages in scripture, every good and perfect gift comes from above, coming down from the father of heavenly lights. What if we think about our vacations through that lens? When we frame our celebration through the lens of gratitude, they become sacred. How do we do that? A few weeks ago, Shawn encouraged us to curate what we consume.

That line has stuck with me. I love that. What if we expand that to our heart posture and make sure we're curating and consuming gratitude?

What if we set a cadence for gratitude on a trip? It might look like this. Maybe you either break away by yourself and you find some time. I love to be by the water, whether it's a river or a lake or an ocean or whatever. I love to just break away and have some moments just with me, sitting with the father, walking with the father.

Or maybe you're on a packed full of van and you got iPads and goldfish and all the things that go on in a van, and you say, hey, we're going to pause all the tech for a minute and we're going to be together as we anticipate this trip let's talk through these questions. Since the last time we were in this space, since the last time we took a trip, since the last time we paused to celebrate. What has God done?

What has God done in the months or the year? We take a family trip to Ohio every year to a place. I've gone there every summer, my entire life. I want to. On the drive, I want to ask these questions.

In the last year, how has God sustained us? How has he shown up? What has he done? I so want to take time right now for us to just sit in this space, to just sit in each of these questions. But instead, I'm gonna give it to you as homework.

And I wanna encourage you to do this so you can sit in these questions as long as you want or as long as you need. Cause hopefully there's gonna be a lot of things pop up in your mind and in your heart. What has God done? And then when you've taken some time with that one, what is he doing? What right now?

In this day, right now, what is God doing? In my life, in my friend's life, in my family's life, in our church, what is God doing? And then lastly, what's he gonna do? We've reflected a little bit. We've sat in the moment a little bit.

What's on the horizon? What might be God up to next? Isn't that cool to dream and just say, what if? What if God might be moving in this space and invite him into that? I love another kind of way of doing this.

My friend Kelsey joined our staff probably two or three years ago, and she loves to do something on people's birthdays. We've actually made it. A part of our staff's rhythm is when it's one of our staff's birthday, we all go out to lunch together and we ask these questions, and it's just become a really cool thing as we sit with each other and get to hear someone reflect and process. But my friend Kelsey will ask these birthday questions to us, and she says, hey, what's one thing God's taught you in the last year?

What are a few highlights from your year? And to keep us humble. It's the most embarrassing moment of the last year. And she says, what are you looking forward to most in the next year? If we have time, we have a little bonus question that sometimes gets asked, what's your favorite birthday ever?

And it's so fun to get to see them and sit in that space as they're kind of in the hot seat with a spotlight on them, process, and you grow, and you see something even awakened. You know what? God has really been teaching me this. And it's cool. It's pausing to celebrate God and who he is and all of his goodness.

Do you see? Do you see how God is inviting you to rest and celebrate and how that can shift the role that these vacations, these getaways, these long lunches, what role that can play in our lives in 2018? I had served with youth for Christ for ten years, and they gave me the opportunity to go on a twelve week sabbatical. Sound familiar? So this is six years ago right now.

They said, we want to invite you. We believe the father is inviting you to rest. I was invited to rest for an extended period of time. And you know what I did in the first four days? Each day, I read a different book.

I read four books in four days. I'm gonna tell you, I don't read because I like to. I read because it's a discipline. I read to learn and grow and be challenged. It's actually not something that I'm drawn to, but four books in four days, and I felt the Holy Spirit speak to me.

Hey, David, chill. You're trying to accomplish something. You're trying to achieve something. You're trying to justify. You're trying to produce so you can come back and say, this is what I did.

I was good with my time. And the Holy Spirit said, chill.

Some of you met Matt Nussbaum recently, excited about everybody's going to get to know him more. He's played a key role in my life, been a mentor for me. He actually coached me through my sabbatical experience and met with me multiple times before to kind of set it up well. Met with us a couple times during and then following. He said, david, here's the question that you need to ask yourself continuously as you prepare for the sabbatical and as you're in the sabbatical.

He said, david, what makes your heart sing? You know what doesn't make my heart sing? Reading a book a day.

And so the rest of my sabbatical was formed. Does this make my heart sing?

The rest of my sabbatical, I read one book, slowly working through and sitting with what the father was talking to me about in that period of time that summer, I would say changed my life and set me up for a leadership transition and journey that I had no idea was on the horizon. And in a moment, I want to pause and pray for our pastor as he's in his first week of a sabbatical right now. I got to spend a couple of times with him this week. That dude. First morning of sabbatical, he wanted to go on a 25 miles road bike ride on the north side of town.

And I went with him for my first time. And it was definitely a pr at distance. I don't know how. My legs, I think. I think might be recovered today from those hills.

And then Friday afternoon, we got to go kayaking Lake Monroe. And he said, david, will you tell? He had actually texted me Sunday after church. And he goes, I feel so fortunate and grateful. My heart is going into this in a really sweet spot because of the send off that our church gave us, and I feel really loved and cared for, and that is cool.

And then Friday, he said, will you communicate that? Will you let him know he's doing great? I'm so grateful for this time. It was so cool to see normally, actually, when he and I go paddling together, he's like, we're logging miles. We floated a little bit more this time.

God's already ministering. If you want to know what God's working on, his heart. There's a new Phil Wickham album. I think it's called devotion or something like that. If you find that and sit in those space.

He said he's already listened to it three times this week because he has time and space to do that and let the holy spirit work. But if you were to walk into Sean's office, you'd see this passage. It says, are you tired? Are you worn out? Are you burned out on religion?

Come to me. Get away with me. You'll recover your life. I'll show you how to make a real. How to take a real rest.

Walk with me. Work with me. Watch how I do it. Learn the unforced rhythms of grace. I won't lay anything heavy or ill fitting on you.

Keep company with me and you'll learn. Keep company with me, and you'll learn to live freely and lightly.

Can I tell you something? I'm a pastor's kid. I am a very, very fortunate pastor's kid. But there is a generation of pks out there who don't really like the church. And a lot of them, it's not because they don't like Jesus.

It's because they feel like they're. The church has taken their parents from them. And this church has said, not on our watch. And blessing Sean and the family with this sabbatical, I believe, is part of that continuous care. And I believe that Addie and Nora are going to know.

They're going to know through firsthand experience and the constant expression of this church's care, their church's care for their parents and for them that they are seen and that they are loved and that they are treasured and that they are delighted in. So we're going to pause and pray right now. I want to invite you. I'm going to pray out loud up here. I want to invite you to pray as you feel led.

You can pray out loud in your seat, you can pray just in your head and be quiet. But I want to invite you to engage in prayer right now on behalf of our pastor. So, Father, we praise you. We praise you for all that you have done in and through Sean Green's life and through amber and through Adeline and through Nora, all that you're doing in their lives to bring the kingdom of God more here in Bloomington and the surrounding area. God, I just thank you for that activity that you have done.

You have. You have. All of them are walking in a relationship with you. All of them are experiencing intimacy with you at their own developmental stage. You have made yourself known.

You have drawn them into you. And God, everything that you are doing in their life right now, we praise you for that. You are working mightily to help them secure an even greater identity as your kid and continuing to bring about so much goodness of your kingdom breakthrough right here and right now. You are giving them a season of rest. And we pray your covering over that.

We pray for your provision of everything that they need in that space. We pray that it is everything they dream it to be and then some. And God for what's to come. God, we pray for that.

The years on the horizon where you're gonna meet them every step of the way. You're gonna be waiting for them when they get there. You're gonna use them. You're gonna continue to form them. You're gonna bring the kingdom of God more here on earth because of the Green family.

God, we praise you and we ask for your covering. Hold each of them tightly and closely to you. God, thank you for the gift of this family. Hold them close. Hold them dear.

Let them know how much you love them and how much we love them. Amen. If you'd like to have some more focused prayer and be dedicated to praying through this summer with them, you can go on the app, there's a prayer guide there. You can go online, it's also there. Or there's actually printed copies out in the lobby in.

I invite you to grab one of those and put that in a place that you might remind. It might be reminded of how to pray. Now you, what do you need? What does your family need? How might you take what the Holy Spirit is stirring in your heart today and take action?

Maybe if you're single, it's putting a reminder in your phone to say, hey, I'm gonna call a friend this afternoon, and I'm gonna talk through and have somebody to process with what it might be to establish some rhythms of celebration. In my calendar, if you're married, maybe you schedule a date night with an agenda item to map out what this looks like for the two of you. If your parents. What might this look like for your family? I talked with a dad this week, and in their family, they have a birthday tradition that when it's a daughter's birthday, the dad takes them out for breakfast, just one on one.

When it's a son's birthday, the mom takes them out for breakfast one on one. You think that might add some significance to the moment? We have a seven year old who is very aware that he's going to turn eight in a couple weeks. I hear about his birthday 75 times a day.

It matters. Put yourself in that kid's seat. How fortunate the kids in this family are, how loved they must feel. What a great thing to have built into their life and to know it's coming each year to anticipate that special morning. Come on.

That's cool. That's discipleship.

That's really cool. And that's worth celebrating. Will you stand with me? Father, we praise you for all that you've done.

You, Jesus, you have redeemed us.

Jesus, we praise you for all that you're doing. Holy Spirit, you are with us.

Father, we praise you for all you're gonna do. You're gonna bring us home.

Jesus, you were crucified and rose. Jesus, you rose. You are risen. Jesus, you're coming again. And we say, yes.

We celebrate that. Come, Holy Spirit, if you are. This is a church that is valuing a space of response. We have boxes up here if you want to give. We have cups and wafers and all that.

If you want to take the Lord's supper, celebrate your union with Christ. Sustained baptism waters. What a party invitation that is. If you want to get baptized, there's that opportunity. If you have an orange lantern, if you'd go ahead and take your stations.

There are people here to pray. It does not have to be a catastrophe to pray. It might just be like, I don't even know what I want to pray for. I just I know what it's like to be prayed with and prayed over. I want to encourage you to engage in that way.

And there's no magic to the orange lanyards. But I'll tell you what, I've had the opportunity to maybe pray with everybody with the orange lanyard. There's some fire prayers going down. I'm gonna invite you into that space.

But let's celebrate who God is, what he's done and what he's gonna do. Come take communion, pray. Respond as the Holy Spirit is moving in your heart. Amen.

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