

2023.02.26 - Resting - Eliminating Hurry

So What? Slowing ourselves allows us to be aware of God.

Feel What? Peace

Now What? Beginning Practice: Invite a friend out for coffee or a meal and allow the conversation last as long as possible. **Baseline Practice:** Pause twice during the day to pray the Examen.

VISION CASTING

The mission of Mosaic Church is to unite people in the Way of Jesus.

INTRODUCTION

Today, we are continuing our series on the topic of Resting, which is a part of our Rule of Life. If you're just catching up with us, you can visit mosaicmhk.com/ruleoflife to find more resources, including a digital workbook that takes you through crafting a Rule with us here at Mosaic. Those are also available at the back doors and at the Welcome Table.

Last week, Pastor Sarah painted a picture of Sabbath and how we can enter into it to find peace and centering in God. In today's teaching, we're going to talk about the second of our Practices that enable us to rest, which is eliminating hurry. This might be a surprise to some, that we would address hurry and try to eliminate it from our lives.

If you're a teenager or in your 20s, I'll tell you up front that you won't believe me when I tell you these things, so file this away for later. I mean, I remember being in college, eating garbage for three meals a day, getting 4 hours of sleep, and feeling just ready to go, no coffee needed. Now, in my mid-40s, if I sneeze there's a possibility I'll get a crick in my neck, and if I stretch at the wrong angle, I could throw my back out. Daily reminders that I need to slow down.

As I will argue shortly, eliminating hurry may be one of the most crucial Practices to incorporate. Because if we are always in a hurry, meaning we're trying to fit too many activities into too little time, we probably won't get around to any of the other spiritual rhythms and habits to become health, mature, and deep disciples of Jesus.

Ronald Rolheiser, *The Holy Longing*: “Today, a number of historical circumstances are blindly flowing together and accidentally conspiring to produce a climate within which it is difficult not just to think about God or to pray, but simply to have any interior depth whatsoever.... It is not that we have anything against God, depth, and spirit, we would like these, it is just that we are habitually too preoccupied to have any of these show up on our radar screens. We are more busy than bad, more distracted than nonspiritual, and more interested in the movie theater, the sports stadium, and the shopping mall and the fantasy life they produce in us than we are in church. Pathological busyness, distraction, and restlessness are major blocks today within our spiritual lives.”

As Rolheiser says, there are a number of circumstances that are colliding, busyness being one of them. But sometimes, when we can identify the right pressure point, it sets off a cascade of change. And I believe identifying hurry in our lives and actively resisting it will set off a domino effect to help us slow down, increase joy, and experience God's presence in a deeper way.

Now, when I say to eliminate hurry, I don't mean that there are times when we shouldn't rush. If you're trying to relive your high school glory days on your softball team by stealing third base, by all means let loose. If your toddler is headed toward your leather couch with scissors in hand, yes hurry over and intervene.

But whereas there are occasions like these to hurry, what I'm talking about is a life marked by exhaustion because every moment is filled with work or distraction. A way of being where you feel like there's never enough time, too many 'yeses' when you really need to say 'no', a shallow relationship to God, and the constant looming feeling like your letting someone down because you're not doing enough. Hurry is feeling like you're always behind and you're missing something or missing out on something. Hurry is not leaving enough time between meetings. Hurry is constantly being distracted and never being fully present to the person in front of you. Hurry is wishing you could speed up actions and slow down time—it means to be in a disagreement with God on how he created the metaphysics of the universe.

Ruth Haley Barton, *Embracing Rhythms Of Work And Rest*: [Ronald Rolheiser:] “There is a kind of hurry that is a form of violence exercised upon time that is detrimental to our health, to our families, to our communities, and to our relationship with God. Admittedly, there are times when the demands of relationships, family, work, school, church, childcare, shopping, health,

appearance, housework, meals, bill payments, commuting, accidents, interruptions, illnesses, and countless other things eat up more time than is seemingly available. Living under pressure is part of life. Still we have to be careful not to rationalize. God didn't make a mistake in creating time; God made enough of it. When we cannot find enough time and, as the psalmist says, find ourselves getting up earlier and going to bed later because we have too much to do, we can see this as a sign to make some changes in our lives. When we allow ourselves to be driven like this for too long, we end up doing violence to time, to ourselves, and to our blood pressure."

Hurry is a soul sickness that needs to be addressed as such. Even people in secular workplaces are looking for help—consider the mindfulness movement where apps like Calm and Headspace take you through relaxation exercises. Or techbros who talk about going into monk mode for hyperfocus and deep work. Everyone is in a hurry to get stuff done and get ahead. So, consider this conversation with pastor and author John Ortberg and the late Dallas Willard:

John Ortberg, *Soul Keeping*: "Entering into a very busy season of ministry, I called Dallas [Willard] to ask him what I needed to do to stay spiritually healthy. ... There was a long pause—with Dallas there was nearly always a long pause—and then he said slowly, 'You must ruthlessly eliminate hurry from your life.' I quickly wrote that down. Most people take notes with Dallas; I have even seen his wife take notes, which my wife rarely does with me. 'Okay, Dallas,' I responded. 'I've got that one. Now what other spiritual nuggets do you have for me? I don't have a lot of time, and I want to get all the spiritual wisdom from you that I can.' 'There is nothing else,' he said, generously acting as if he did not notice my impatience. 'Hurry is the great enemy of spiritual life in our day. You must ruthlessly eliminate hurry from your life.'"

Are you as surprised at this as I am? On one level, there's a deep resonance with the problem of hurry. We're all so, so busy. But, if given the chance to answer what the great enemy of spiritual growth and vitality is, what would you say?

But, no. Dallas Willard has said that the great enemy of spiritual life in our day is hurry and our perceived lack of time. What this means is when you're crafting a Rule of Life and when it specifically comes to rest, the greatest battle you face will be in the arena of actually taking time to do what you set out to do. And this is one of the main reasons we've started out with Practices that undergird a life of Rest. We want you to

understand that to be an apprentice of Jesus—meaning to be with him, to be like him, and to do what he does—**instead of adding activities into an already jam-packed life, you will need to first subtract some things.** It really is this Practice of eliminating hurry that makes all the other Practices in our Rule of Life possible. It's this Practice that enables all the others to take root so we can be fruitful in our lives as apprentices of Jesus.

So, in order to journey further into God, you'll need to let go of some things. You will need to slow down, learn to rest, and be content with the putting the results into God's hands. King David seems to be addressing this when he wrote Psalm 46. It begins with a grand statement of God's ability.

Psalm 46:1-2, 10, NIV: God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble. Therefore we will not fear, though the earth give way and the mountains fall into the heart of the sea...He says, "Be still, and know that I am God."

And, here, it ends with our rightful response to God's strength: We must pull aside and recognize we are not him. We do not have his ability. We do not have his majesty. We must offer ourselves to him and put our lives in his hands. And we trust him with the results.

You see, God is grand, powerful, and magnificent all on his own, even without our attention. He was before any of creation. But the question for us is, Will we recognize him working in our lives? Do we have the attentiveness to God to see where he's working and to partner with him? Will we yield ourselves to his work by taking our attention off what we fear most and allow God's goodness to have its way?

Transition: And we see Jesus doing exactly this.

SOLUTION

John 11:1-7, NIV: Now a man named Lazarus was sick. He was from Bethany, the village of Mary and her sister Martha. (This Mary, whose brother Lazarus now lay sick, was the same one who poured perfume on the Lord and wiped his feet with her hair.) So the sisters sent word to Jesus, "Lord, the one you love is sick." When he heard this, Jesus said, "This sickness will not end in death. No, it is for God's glory so that God's Son may be glorified through it." Now Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus. So when he heard that Lazarus was sick, he stayed where he was two more days, and then he said to his disciples, "Let us go back to Judea."

John 11:17-27, NIV: On his arrival, Jesus found that Lazarus had already been in the tomb for four days. Now Bethany was less than two miles and many Jews had come to Martha and Mary to comfort them in the loss of their brother. When Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went out to meet him, but Mary stayed at home. “Lord,” Martha said to Jesus, “if you had been here, my brother would not have died. But I know that even now God will give you whatever you ask.” Jesus said to her, “Your brother will rise again.” Martha answered, “I know he will rise again in the resurrection at the last day.” Jesus said to her, “I am the resurrection and the life. The one who believes in me will live, even though they die; and whoever lives by believing in me will never die. Do you believe this?” “Yes, Lord,” she replied, “I believe that you are the Messiah, the Son of God, who is to come into the world.”

John 11:38-43, NIV: Jesus, once more deeply moved, came to the tomb. It was a cave with a stone laid across the entrance. “Take away the stone,” he said. “But, Lord,” said Martha, the sister of the dead man, “by this time there is a bad odor, for he has been there four days.” Then Jesus said, “Did I not tell you that if you believe, you will see the glory of God?” So they took away the stone. Then Jesus looked up and said, “Father, I thank you that you have heard me. I knew that you always hear me, but I said this for the benefit of the people standing here, that they may believe that you sent me.” When he had said this, Jesus called in a loud voice, “Lazarus, come out!” The dead man came out, his hands and feet wrapped with strips of linen, and a cloth around his face. Jesus said to them, “Take off the grave clothes and let him go.”

Can you imagine? Jesus is asked to save the life of his friend, and he actually delays? We know on this side of things, that Lazarus will turn out fine, but the emotions of the moment are so high.

All of Jesus’ steps are both focused and purposeful, even the steps he doesn’t take. He says elsewhere in the Gospel of John, “The Father and I are one. I only do the things I see him doing.” So Jesus is attentive to his Father and in step with his will. What we see Jesus doing is what the Father is doing. So when Jesus slows down instead of hurrying like he’s expected to do, there is a collision coming between evil and darkness and this new, in-breaking Kingdom of God.

It’s as though Jesus wants the deck to be stacked against him as much as it can be so he can show off what God is capable of. We have to see this as more that Jesus just

making a point about who he is. He is actually revealing what is possible if we follow his example in the ways of God. And that way is to embrace God's slowness, even when it doesn't make sense, so we can make room for what God wants to do.

Because in a world that is spinning faster out of control, what is needed is a people who can step back, wait on God and his timing, and offer something that's counter to the pressure and frenetic energy that clouds decisions and contributes to the problem. No, Jesus slows down and invites us to adopt his pace, which is the pace of love that makes room for others.

Kosuke Koyama, *Three Mile An Hour God*: “God walks ‘slowly’ because he is love. If he is not love he would have gone much faster. Love has its speed. It is an inner speed. It is a spiritual speed. It is a different kind of speed from the technological speed to which we are accustomed. It is ‘slow’ yet it is lord over all other speeds since it is the speed of love.”

It's not just that Jesus is the Resurrection and the Life when we die, though that does give us persevering hope. It's also that he is inviting us into a way of being that represents him to our world. It's a pace where we participate in resurrection now and imparts to us a fullness of life now.

John Mark Comer, *The Ruthless Elimination Of Hurry*: “Love, joy, and peace are the triumvirate at the heart of Jesus's kingdom vision. All three are more than just emotions; they are overall conditions of the heart. They aren't just pleasant feelings; they are the kinds of people we become through our apprenticeship to Jesus, who embodies all three ad infinitum. And all three are incompatible with hurry.... Not only does hurry keep us from the love, joy, and peace of the kingdom of God—the very core of what all human beings crave—but it also keeps us from God *himself* simply by stealing our attention. And with hurry, we always lose more than we gain.”

When we hurry, we lose the ability to be near Jesus and fully receive the grace he wants to give us. Instead of being full of love, joy, and peace, we are full of fear, loathing, and anxiety. That's what hurry and distraction forms in the human soul because it's disconnected from the life source—the resurrection power of Jesus.

If Jesus is slowed-down love, and he is actively working make us into a people of love, joy, and peace, how do we yield our sped-up ways and become more like him?

Transition: Let's get a bit practical here and talk area where a slowed-down pace can affect us.

APPLICATION

Intentionally stretch your patience. Don't reach for your phone. Get in the long line at the grocery store. Don't speed up when the light turns yellow.

Relationships. An unhurried life with positively influence our relationships. We all know what it's like to sit across from someone who is barely there. They're physically present, but they are always eyeing their phone, answering calls, interrupting your sentences, or just be self-absorbed in all their issues and problems. But unhurried souls will make space for each other. Eye contact will be prioritized. Question will be probing and open-ended. Welcome isn't just a scripted word on a farmhouse sign in their kitchen, but a lived reality where people step in and through a force field of hospitality.

You can begin offering slowed-down friendship in a couple ways:

- Put down your screens. I've heard of friends putting their phones facedown for a meal and the first one to pick it up pays for a meal. I double dog dare you.
- If you're married and/or have kids, give special attention to them during important times of the day. I learned from Elisha Hillegeist, our Family Pastor, that there are nine most important minutes of your child's day: The first three when they wake up, the first three after school, and the first three before they fall asleep. This little observation drastically changed my interaction with our boys.

Recreation. Recreation is different from amusement, as amuse literally means "without inspiration." Often we binge watch and scroll mindlessly as an escape from our world, and it doesn't give us rest not does us recharge us.

- Find a leisurely hobby, particularly one that is slow and takes skills you don't use at work. If you work at a desk, try woodworking. If you are a skilled laborer, try learning a foreign language. Or, maybe recover one of the pandemic activities you did when you had more time. People in my group last week mentioned guitar playing, puzzle making, and baking bread as all things they did during lockdown. Just let it be something that you don't have aspirations to turn it into a side hustle!
- Join a social club. A book club. Bowling. Rotary. A group at church. Something that connects you with others and asks that you commit your time to it regularly.

- Play. You may not realize it, but our God is a God of play. He created butterflies to meander in the wind, deer to dance together in the field, and brooks that babble and somehow restore our soul. Play and laughter are central to the redemption of this new kingdom we're invited into.
- Take a nap. When the fate of the world and the lives of his disciples rested squarely on his shoulders, Jesus still had time for a nap.

Habits. In our busy, noisy world, it's easy to get distracted and have important things be drowned out amongst the fierce competition for your attention.

- The discipline of noticing, sometimes know as holy noticing or divine attentiveness, is a spiritual habit where you intentionally slow down and make a thoughtful effort to see the beauty and goodness in the world. It may be as simple as driving the long way home to enjoy the sunset a bit longer or walking around the park without your earbuds in to listen to the sounds of the birds. In doing so, we notice the beauty of God's creativity that's been around us this whole time.
- The Daily Examen is a spiritual habit passed down from St. Ignatius of Loyola. There are many versions that have been passed down over time, but they all involve the same basic ingredients. Done twice a day, usually midday and late evening, you pause to become aware of God's presence, review the day with gratitude, pay attention to your emotions, and after noticing one consolation—a point where we moved towards God—and one desolation—where we moved away from God—then you pray for the comfort of the Spirit as you look toward tomorrow. In fact, if you've even been in a group that shared a high and a low, you've participated in this ritual.

Challenges. Do some things throughout your week that would normally irritate you because of how slow they are.

- Get in the longer checkout line at the store and don't pull out your phone to scroll.
- Engage in awkward small talk with a neighbor.
- Drive 5 miles under the speed limit.
- Parent your phone—put it away two hours before you go to bed.
- Instead of saying, "Yes" to additional obligations, politely say "No."

Transition: In hearing all of this, I can imagine that there may be questions that come up in your mind.

OBJECTIONS

You may be thinking, But wait, how can slowing down really happen in our culture? **Isn't this just for the privileged?** I don't think it is, and I hope I've made the case for how good it is for our soul and spiritual vitality. But, I will say that there are seasons in our life where rest, slowing down, and recreation don't come as easy. So, I'll say:

- To the overworked, stressed-out professional, we see you.
- To the teen trying to navigate school, a social life, sports and clubs, we see you.
- To the frazzled, sleepless parents of a newborn, we see you.
- To the always-on-the-go student, we see you.

We see you and God sees you. There are no easy solutions, but know that we, as a spiritual community, are here and we care. If there's something we can do to help lift even a little of the burden, please ask. Ask your group. Ask your pastors. My hope is that this message doesn't pile blame onto you, but it give at least some hope that God cares and he gives grace to those in need.

Transition: Finally, I want to leave you with this thought to sum things up.

INSPIRATION

Ruth Haley Barton, *Embracing Rhythms Of Work And Rest*: "There have to be times in your life when you move slow, times when you walk rather than run, settling into each step...There have to be times when you stop and gaze admiringly at loved ones, marveling that they have been given to you for this life...times when hugs linger and kisses are real, when food and drink are savored with gratitude and humility rather than gulped down on your way to something else. There have to be times when you read for the sheer pleasure of it, marveling at the beauty of words and the endless creativity in putting them together...times when you settle into the comforts of home and become human once again. There have to be times when you light a candle and find the tender place inside you that loves or sorrows or sings and you pray from that place, times when you let yourself feel, when you allow the tears to come rather than blinking them back because you don't have time to cry. There have to be times to

sink into the soft body of yourself and love what you love simply because love itself is a grace...times when you sit with gratitude for the good gifts of your life that get lost and forgotten in the rush of things...times to celebrate and play to roll down hills to splash in water or make leaf piles to spread paint on paper or walls or each other. There have to be times to sit and wait for the fullness of God that replenishes body, mind, and soul—if you can even stand to be so full. There has to be time for the fullness of time or time is meaningless.”

Just imagine yourself for a moment unhurried and unstressed. What things are you doing that you enjoy? What does that life look like? A simple step to take to eliminate hurry is to just go and do those things.

Transition: In particular, let me suggest two that I think may be helpful to us all. Here’s how to put it into practice.

CONCLUSION

Putting It Into Practice:

- **Beginning Practice:** Invite a friend out for coffee or a meal and allow the conversation last as long as possible
- **Baseline Practice:** Pause twice during the day to pray the Examen

Next Week:

- Pastor Ben will teach us about the practice of self-care.

Communion

Matthew 6:9-13, NIV: “Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.”