



DIFFERENCE MAKER • NEW HOPE CHURCH

You Were Made for This

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Two quick things. If you're a father, way to go. Keep after it. Be a good one. There's a photo booth. If you haven't had a picture, then they set that up for Father's Day pictures. The Mission Muffin folks are here. So if you didn't get your dad something for Father's Day, carbohydrates are the key. They've got everything you can think of there. I've not had anything that they make that's not good. And they even had some coffee still. I buy a five-pound bag every time, so I go through their coffee. But anyway, I hope you'll check that out. I want you to imagine with me for a minute. Now, it was easier at the 9 o'clock service because all the tech stuff went down. Everything went down.

Um, there was no AC, it feels so good right now. Um, none of the it was a, I'm not going to say a fiasco, it just happens. Technology fails. I don't know if you knew that. But it does. I want you to imagine for a minute that you're someplace you don't have any of that anyway. Where you're severely limited in all kinds of the things that you and I take for granted. There's no internet. You have no computers. You have no cell phones. No Wi-Fi? You don't need Wi-Fi because there's nothing for it to feed. I mean, this is where you live. Thank you. If you were looking at education, it's extremely limited, and the only ones that got higher education are the ones that had a lot of money and a lot of connections. Very normal life is just surviving. It's every day.

Your whole life. It's just, whoa, dude. Thank you. There's magic going on. This is what it was like for when Jesus grew up. Mary was a teenage mom. In a small village. And in many cases, this is the way it is throughout the world. I've been to places in Africa, Haiti, other countries, and this is kind of normal. Thank you. City folks like us don't really think this way. And we begin thinking. Wow, what a terrible life that would be. And I'll tell you, I've been around people that... living in those circumstances, and I don't hear many of them whining. I don't hear many of them complaining about how poor their life is. In fact, some of them feel sorry for you and me.

Because we've built so many props up that we can't live without. That we're really missing some of the things that God has designed us for. There is really only one limitation on us discovering the life God has for us. And it's something we have complete control over and it's our attitude. Attitude meaning a direction of my thinking or how I'm training my mind. I've watched people in desperate poverty. They would love to have more sure. But they rejoice in what they have. They're grateful for what they have. And in many cases, they're trusting God. Day in and day out. Jesus' mother, Mary, had a quality. And in the take-home sheet, I want you to read some of her story with some questions.

But the quality is this, and it's one that's available to every one of us, and that is faithfulness. Being faithful right now. To this creator God that loves me and cares for me. You have complete control over that, by the way. You have control over your attitude and whether you're going to be faithful. If you're a follower of Jesus, am I going to be faithful to this or am I going to be? Something else. Mary didn't have all the technology we have. She didn't even have the New Testament. She did have the Old Testament. She knew the stories of what God had done. And I want to read to you a passage she would have been very, very familiar with from Proverbs. It says, 'Never let loyalty and kindness leave you.'

Tie them around your neck as a reminder. Write them deep within your heart. Then you will find favor with both God and people, and you'll earn a good reputation. I can be faithful right this minute in my life.' And I can guarantee that God sees that and God's going to honor that. Then it goes on to say, 'Trust in the Lord with all your heart. Do not depend on your own understanding. Seek his will in all you do, and he will show you which path to take.' There is not a single circumstance you and I can be in that will limit us from experiencing God's love and his presence and his purpose. The only thing that can stop us is our attitude. Am I willing to be faithful?

Am I willing to trust Him now? Or am I going to go a different direction? Faithfulness looks for, and acts on, opportunities that are in front of us today. I'm a. You're not going to believe me when I tell you this, but it's true. You can't be faithful tomorrow. You have no control over tomorrow. You have control over right now. You have control over today. And you and I can choose to be faithful today. Or we can go a different direction. One thing I love about the military families that we've had here, and we've had a number of them, is they'll come and they might be here for two, three years. And a bunch of them that have come in and said, 'Look, we're only going to be here two or three years.' And instead of saying so, we're not going to really do much.

It's what can we do now? How can we get connected? What can we do? How can we use the talents and abilities and experiences God's given us so we can make a difference? That mindset. I wish it wasn't rare. But I'm afraid it is. Listen to what Jesus says. He says, 'If you are faithful in little things, you will be faithful in large ones. But if you are dishonest in little things, you won't be honest with greater responsibilities.' I'm pretty careful about... expressing frustrations, but I'm going to express one. I've been thinking about it because I know that my time here is... It's winding down. In fact, I was praying for whoever takes my place. This morning, I don't know who it is. They don't know what he's doing right now.

But praying that God will be preparing him and his family and whatever's going to happen whenever that happens. But there's a frustration that I have that I, I mean, I love my job. I love it dearly, but there's this frustration that's the biggest one, and that is this. When I watch and listen to people make excuses with their words or their actions, where they say, you know, they're not willing to serve or to give, and they'll say things like, 'Well, I just don't have enough time. I don't have enough money. I'll do it later.' You don't know what you're going to have tomorrow. You have right now. You and I can be faithful right now, today.

And I've heard people say, 'Oh, well, later on when I've got more time and money, I'll be glad to do that.' And my response is, 'No, you won't.' Whatever habit I have today is what I'm going to use for tomorrow. However, I'm developing my stewardship of the resources I have now, that's what I'm going to build on, and that's

what's going to lead me tomorrow. And somehow we've got to get this thing in our head that I've only got today. And if I'm willing to be faithful today. That changes everything. And the truth is, if I'm a follower of Jesus, this is one of the things I understand: is all of my time really is His. I get to manage it. All of my money and my resources really are His. Well, you sang that song, I Surrender. Well, have we really? Or do we just do it periodically?

I can only be faithful today. I don't have any... Control over tomorrow. And when I am faithful, to give God free reign in my life today. I will discover His purpose and His power, His presence, and all of His provision for my life. Guaranteed. 2 Chronicles 16 says, The eyes of the Lord search the whole earth in order to strengthen those whose hearts are fully committed to Him. Is there anything God would not give you or me to help us be faithful and to fulfill his purposes? The answer is he'll give me everything I need and even more. I have to supply the faithfulness.

I've been frustrated watching people make excuses, but I've also been inspired by people. That have chosen not to, that have decided I'm going to be faithful, people that they don't have a lot of time, they don't have a lot of money, but they use it, and they said, 'God, whatever you want to do, I'm going to do everything I can.' And I've watched them, and they're people that don't make headlines. But they have sure made an impact. There's a difference between pursuing excellence and excuses. Excuses, all they do is just rob us. Some of you have not felt close to God in a long time. And part of that reason is. Because you've distanced yourself from him because you've chosen not to be faithful today.

And I'm not saying this to make anyone feel guilty. If you do, you take it up with your father. But I am saying we've got work to do and there's no time to waste. Jason said in that video, you can be a producer or a contributor. Cheers. Faithfulness recognizes that God is working through us. And that our efforts will never be wasted. It may never make the paper. It may never be broadcast all over, but I want to tell you. Thank you. When you and I are faithful, over time, God's going to use that in a way to have a huge impact. We had this, when you came in, you got this brochure about call to action. We're trying to get people to volunteer. We should have a waiting list for every team in the church.

But a lot of us give ourselves a pass. I don't have time. You know, I've got this and that. I hope you're hearing me say this. Don't say that to me, please. You can take that up with your Heavenly Father. See what he says. Galatians 6: 9 says, so let us not get tired of doing what is good. At just the right time, we'll reap a harvest of blessing if we don't give up. I'm going to give you a quick example. I've done this before, and it's one that I live with, and I've seen it over and over again. My wife, Becky, I guess for 25 years has had this thing called fibromyalgia. It's an autoimmune deal. Your body's kind of fighting itself. She lives with regular chronic pain and fatigue and all this kind of stuff.

There's medicine for it, but The problem with the medicine for her is that she says it's like having 50-pound weights tied to your feet. You're just kind of dragging. Be alert and in pain, then dull the pain and be kind of... Otherwise, and by the way, some of you may have some home remedies you think are great. Please don't offer them to her. We've had someone send us, I'll mention one. I won't mention the other one. That was weird. But it was... Get 60 pounds of vegetables and juice it and drink that, and you'll be fine. Please don't

offer any of those. And you may have great intentions, but look, we've seen the best specialist you can find, and this is where she is, living in chronic pain and fatigue.

And again, she's not a whiner and complainer about it, but it's there. I see it all the time. She still invests in people's lives, and I'm so grateful. Several years ago, I had a friend. His wife was coming to New Hope, and she would drag him. I think basically he came just to keep the peace at home and to have lunch. I don't think he, and I don't really believe he wanted to be here. But anyway, he came. And we built a friendship. We would hang out with Ed and Marcia, some and do some things. And Ed started getting more open. And one day he called me and said, 'Rusty. I'm ready to get baptized.' And I thought, do you even know what that means? Because. He was not...

No one ever would have said, 'Ed's a spiritual guy. He was a force to be reckoned with, but he was. He was a tough cookie. And so he called and said, 'I want to get baptized.' Yes, I know what it means. And I'm. I'm saying, well, what happened? And I'm sure he was going to say, that message last Sunday. Man, you nailed it. That got me. I was thinking, somehow he's going to brag on me, and I'll be humble about it, but yay me. This is what he said. He said, 'I've watched Becky. I've watched her deal with the pain, I've watched her deal with all this, and she's the real deal. I've been amazed at the strength and the courage she carries. He goes. I want what she's got.

This is a guy that did two tours of Vietnam and he signed up before he was old enough. This is a guy that ran a company that had 2,000 employees. He was a tough guy.' But he saw something in her. Thank you. I want that. Her being faithful in even when things were hard, offering what she had. Guys, we've got a sphere of influence and people are watching us. We have a chance to show them something good, something real, something. Um, of God. That when we've surrendered to him and we're faithful today. They can see it. We've got all kind of teams here in our church where people can, there are people right now that are watching kiddos. Providing security. And there are all kinds of things that are happening.

We do that and we create an atmosphere where people want to come, where people... have a chance to learn something that could change everything about their lives. What are we going to do about it? Am I going to be faithful and let God use my life, or am I going to hold it back and say, 'I don't have time, I don't have the money, I'm busy. I'll do that later.' I'm going to tell you, you won't. You got today. I want to mention another. Thank you.