



SUMMER DAZE • NEW HOPE CHURCH

God in Our Rest

August 9, 2026 • Rusty Coram

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Good morning. I don't know how many times I've spoken here. I love what I get to do. I have not liked this message at all. I'm being really serious. I don't like it. It has caused me to have to think about a lot. This is how bad it is. My daughter, Sarah, is my assistant part-time. And so she, whenever I turn in message notes, I send them to her on Friday by before noon, and she edits and proofs them. And, you know, most of the time it goes okay. This week when I sent it to her, she started laughing at me. The topic is rest, and this is what she said. You never do, and you might think, oh, he's a hard worker. Don't draw any conclusions yet. It's not true that I never rest, but there's a point she was making.

And it really, I mean, I've been thinking about this since we came up with the series. And it was fine thinking about it in theory. It's when you start looking at the reality of it and say, oh, man, what have I gotten into? This whole thing of rest bothers me. Part of it is I grew up in a home where not resting was modeled. Mostly my dad. He worked constantly, traveled a lot. Even when he wasn't working, he was kind of working. I would caddy for him sometimes when he'd play golf. He was not relaxing, and consequently, I didn't either. It was just this idea that if you're doing something, you've got to go after it full bore constantly. Some people would call that perfectionism. I've never been plagued by that, but I've been around it.

My dad retired when he was 87, if that gives you any clue. He had his own business for several years. And when you have your own business, you kind of fall into the farmer's mentality of make hay while the sun shines. You're constantly working. Any of you have grown up on ranches or farms, you know there's, you don't really, you don't really get to call in sick. You get to work while you're sick. um stuff has to get done you can't stop it and um later on for me i started i started my own business and um i loved what i got had got to do but i was constantly working even when i wasn't working i was working making sure we had work to do um and And some people would say, boy, that's really admirable. You're something. I am something, but it's not admirable. I never wanted to be called a slacker. I never wanted anyone to look at me and say, he just mails it in. He doesn't really do his job.

And really, that kind of shows bigger concern about what other people think. and maybe what my creator thinks um i had this mentality that um rest was for weenies um and if you're taking a break then you know there's something wrong with you you're just you're just not doing that you don't really care i mean there's a lot of things about it but let me tell you, for me, there were a couple things going on with my working like I did and like the habit I've had of not resting is that I never really felt like I measured up, and so I've got to keep

going and going and going, and some of you are in jobs like this now where you're afraid if I slow down, they're going to get rid of me.

We've just come through a season, and we're probably still in it, where a lot of people are losing their jobs, and you think, I've got to do all this and more, or I'm gone, or I won't get a promotion, or I'll be stuck where I am. So there's some of that. I'll tell you, for me, a lot of the times... It was easier for me to work nonstop than to deal with some other things in my life. I was using work to avoid some things that I really need to pay attention to. Becky and my kids have paid a price for that over the years. Because I could handle work, but this relationship stuff, whoa, what do you do with that? Well, I don't have time to talk about that. I need to work. And it was easier to avoid some things.

So I've been in the process of trying to figure this out. How do you relate to it? What is it like? And this whole thing of rest is just, as you can tell, it's really uncomfortable. In fact, I could probably pick, you could come up with any other topic, and I'd probably be happier doing that one. Over the past several years, I have learned some things. I've learned that... rest handled rightly is it it can help you be healthy and faithful along the way my dad actually helped me and if i have time i'll tell you what he did going from being a workaholic to giving advice to his son the one i've learned most about this is from Jesus though and i'm going to tell you a story in Jesus life that really illustrates this. It's surprising what Bible study will do.

I don't know where any of you all are. I know a lot of you feel overwhelmed, you're swamped, you've got a lot going on. It could be work that you're doing, it could be paid, unpaid, it could be at your home, it could be in the neighborhood, it could be at an office somewhere, you may be traveling. We have people watching us online that are deployed. It could be you're volunteering in the church, in the community, I mean, you're busy. Working is really, really important. This side of heaven, I don't think there's ever a time we shouldn't be working. It doesn't mean you're always doing the same work, but we ought to be busy and productive. We ought to be engaged. We ought to be representing God wherever we are and always putting his interests first. And that's where this rest thing gets confusing.

No one got this better than Jesus. I mean, you read through his life, and he constantly stayed on mission. What I'm going to read to you in a minute was an episode in his life. He had, we think about the 12 apostles or disciples that follow him, but he had many others too. At one point, he had 70 of them, divided them up into 35 teams of two, and they went traveling around preaching and telling people the good news. as part of their training. When this was going on, at the same time, Jesus had been at his hometown and had been roundly rejected by the town. They liked good Jesus, but they didn't like him telling them the truth. And when he did, they, I mean, they were after him. They wanted to kill him. Actually, that's what it says. So he's left his hometown.

He's dealing with that loss and that hurt, and then he finds out that his cousin, John the Baptist, who really had been the trailblazer for him before his public ministry started, John had been arrested by the king. There were some people in the king's family that didn't like John, and so it ended up that John was executed. and Jesus now has lost his closest kind of ministry companion. That's the setup, and plus he's got all these opponents. The opposition to him is growing pretty rampantly. He's dealing with some hard things to wrestle

with. So this is where it picks up here in Mark 6. said the apostles returned to Jesus from their ministry tour and told him all they had done and taught. And then Jesus said, let's go off by ourselves to a quiet place and rest a while.

The first time I read that, I thought, Jesus is resting? I didn't have a category for it. It gets even better. He said this because there were so many people coming and going that Jesus and his apostles didn't even have time to eat. He can identify with you if you're in that place where there's all kind of pressure coming on, all kind of demands, and you're thinking, I can't handle all this. So they left by boat for a quiet place where they could be alone. It's the first mention of vacation that I remember seeing in the New Testament. I can't imagine what it was like for Jesus because he was carrying literally the weight of the world. He understood what was going on. And there's so many people coming at him, wanting something from him. And this idea of taking a break. really made sense.

I always, I grew up, if I ever thought of Jesus, it was always, he was kind of that calm, kind of cool guy with, you know, well-manicured fingers, and he would just talk like this, and everything was cool and calm and relaxed, and he'd never freak out. I don't know that he freaked out here, but he was worn out. If you ever wonder if God understands you, trust me, he does. Whether you're at work, you're parenting, you're a caregiver, whatever you have going on, he does get it. And he endorsed getting rest. This has been, it's something I've had to wrestle with. And the idea of rest for him wasn't to avoid responsibility. That's where I kind of fell into all kinds of things. It was not merely a goal to rest.

I've talked to people a lot, and they'll say, man, I can't wait until I can quit work and rest and golf and play more golf. And maybe even play some pickleball, but more golf at least. I mean, the whole idea is the goal is to get to where you can just rest. I'm going to tell you, I don't believe that. I believe God wants us to be active, actively engaged in things that matter, however long we have breath. That doesn't mean you have to constantly be earning a living. There's all kind of factors about this. But we ought to be actively engaged in the things that matter. And in our sphere of influence, let God keep using us. But we've got to handle it so that we're a benefit for the long haul. And that's where this rest thing comes in.

Mark 2, Jesus talked about the Sabbath. The Sabbath, it's actually just a word it means to rest. At that time, they had a Sabbath day each week, which would go from sundown on Friday till sundown on Saturday. They had a 24-hour break. And he said, he goes, Jesus said to them, the Sabbath was made to meet the needs of people and not people to meet the requirements of the Sabbath. So the Son of Man is Lord, even of the Sabbath. He's doing that because there was a problem that had come up. The religious leaders at the time had turned the Sabbath into something that was monetized and severely controlled. I mean, some of you all maybe live in a place where you have an HOA. And I'm kind of making fun of HOAs. Actually, I'm making a lot of fun of HOAs.

Because I've been where they've been before, and it seems like they're constantly, there's a whole group of people that just parade around the neighborhood trying to catch you screwing up. You never get an award for doing well, but if your grass is a little too tall, you put in the wrong color paint, they're always after you. Well, that's kind of how they treated the Sabbath here. They were constantly trying to catch people doing it

wrong. You walked too many feet from your house, and you did this and that. And Jesus said, look. The whole idea of Sabbath was to get a rest. It was God's intent to help you be sustainable for the long haul and take a break from your regular work so that you can decompress and you can be ready and you can go for the long distance.

And the model for this was God himself. You read back in Genesis, in creation in six days, six periods of time, God created and then on the seventh day he rested. And just to be sure about this. Jesus, before he ever came and took on human flesh, he was the Son of God. He was part of the Trinity. He was the agent of all creation. So he is speaking with the absolute authority of one who knows. And he's saying, this is built in. This is what the Creator designed this for you to be able to have rest. Jesus modeled it for us. He explained it. And it apparently is really, really important. So my main point of this message is getting healthy rest will sustain my ability to be productive for you. Getting healthy rest will sustain your ability to be productive.

Have some of you experienced this? Let's show this video. Have you ever seen that on your phone or your laptop? Maybe your TV. You may be looking at it right now because you're tired of this message. And you're like, oh, shoot. I hate that. Some of us call that the wheel of death. Some people think it's a beach ball, just kind of having fun. But what it's saying, there's something wrong with my device. and there's something needs to change. And sometimes they'll even put you a message, say, "Give us a minute." No, no, that's, no. You're talking about a week. It can take forever for this thing to ever cure. And you know what the number one way you cure these things? Unplug it. Becky's parents thought I was an electronic genius. I would go to their house. Something wasn't working. The TV, their phone, whatever.

And I'd go back and one of the first things every day, I'd unplug it, wait 30 seconds, plug it back in. And almost always it worked. And he goes, amazing. I have no idea what I did. I unplugged it. Some of you, if you want to be a hero at home or at work, unplug something and see what happens. You and I need the same thing. There are times when we get spinning, but we just keep going. We keep going. Some of you are feeling it right now. You just feel overwhelmed with all this stuff going on. You don't even have time to eat. And this whole idea of rest seems so foreign. It seems so terrible because you're thinking, well, if I rest, then I even have more stuff to deal with when I get back.

Rather than seeing that if I rest, maybe I'll have the capacity to handle what right now is handling me. Let us run with endurance the race God has set before us. We do this by keeping our eyes on Jesus, the champion who initiates and perfects our faith. God is interested in us being around for the long haul, not just wearing ourselves out in the moment because there's so much stuff to do. We need to be restored. We need to be reset. We need to be recalibrated, come up. Here's a word we use a lot, recreation. It's really, it says re-creation. The idea is that I do something or I'm a part of something that allows me to be re-created. I get re-set. I'm back to healthy. Rest allows us to be able to function well.

Otherwise, we're going to get locked up, and we're going to burn out. I have friends that have had heart attacks, and when it came back to it, it was because they had not taken care of themselves. They just kept going and going and going. It could be because they were perfectionists. It could be because they felt pressure. They had to keep doing it, or in my case, where they're avoiding all kinds of stuff. So you just keep

busy with this so you don't have to deal with this. get wrapped around the axle and anxious and worried, exhausted, frustrated, fixated on small things, begin to mistreat others around us because they're getting in the way of us getting the work done. There is a time where we need to unplug and reset and unwind to get perspective.

If Jesus needed to, what does that say about you and me? Now, it's not because we're going to live to just relax. It's we're resting so that we can continue and be faithful and move forward. We want to be productive in a way that God would say, well done. The thing I've learned also about this is that healthy rest is not one size fits all. I have really struggled with this one. I'll give you the passage that guides me, and then I'll give you some examples. Luke 6, do not judge others, and you will not be judged. Do not condemn others, or it will all come back against you. I have never liked nappers. Napping? What a waste of time. I'm married into a family of nappers. I would go to Becky's house, and in the afternoon, everyone's napping.

It's like, what is wrong with you people? I couldn't get it. Have you ever? Well, there's some of us that aren't nappers. My problem is I wake up from a nap, and I feel drugged. It's like, whoa. But apparently, the nappers. feel refreshed. Do not judge. Do not condemn others. Some people like to read. That's how they rest. Some people like yard work and gardening. Wow. I used to own a landscape business. The last thing I want to do is go work in my yard. That's why they call it yard work. It's not yard rest. But there are some people that love it. This is where they shine. They feel all the stresses of life have melted away because they're working in their yard. Nope. Hobbies. And they're all kind of hobbies. And some of them can be a lot of fun.

Some of them can... Some of them can wear you out because you treat your hobby like work. I like exercise, and I like to work out. My problem with working out, though, at times, I would get to where I was competing with myself. I had to lift this many pounds for this many reps. And if I didn't, I'd beat myself up, and the next time I had to come in really good at running. You've got to run a certain distance in a certain time. it wasn't refreshing. It was not resting. I was just beating myself up, which can be healthy in some ways, but what we're talking here about something that restores you, something that recreates you. For me right now, I'm at a point in my life, I couldn't do this when we had young kids, is I can play golf.

I don't get to do it all the time, but I try to, if I can, once a week. I like to, I'm still pretty cheap, so I'll drive out to Front Royal. I get an hour and 23 minutes in my truck. I can look at the mountains. I can pray. I can think. I can do all kinds of things. We get out there. One of the rules when I play is I walk and don't carry a phone. This is free. Your phone is killing your rest. for many of us. You have it on. Well, I've got it on silent. Yeah, but you feel it every time it vibrates. Airplane mode is your friend. There's some way to disconnect. I don't keep score when I play golf. I am not competing with anybody.

I'm trying to come home with more golf balls than I took, but that's because I spend a lot of time in the woods hunting. But it's refreshing. I feel better when I come back. There's some rest that's taking place. There's a connection with some friends of mine. This is where my workaholic father... We used to have this thing we would say, permission to meddle. And it was a good friendship where we could help each other be accountable and stretch each other. for several years, he said, you need to play more golf. You're not

decompressing. You're not taking a break. He knew for me that was it. He knew I wasn't going to nap, but I would like to play golf. And so I've been trying to figure out how do I build this in my life?

Because it just, it's not natural, but it is really, really healthy. Listen to this. This is, some of you have heard Psalm 23 before in different translations, talks about God as our Heavenly Father, He's like our shepherd taking care of us. And it says this, He lets me rest in green meadows. He leads me besides peaceful streams. He renews my strength. He guides me along right paths, bringing honor to His name. A good shepherd knows how to take care of the sheep. knows where to take them, where they can get grass and water and all this, and also knows when they need to take a break, if they've been in a mountainous area or something where they... Sheep are... If anyone says you're as smart as a sheep, that is not a compliment. Sheep are not bright.

They may be fluffy and cuddly, and I don't know about that, but they're not the smartest animals in the world. They will overgraze. They'll get into moving water, and it'll suck up in their... wool and be they'll be gone they don't know when to stop a good shepherd watches out for the flock make sure they get food they have water and they have the rest they need so they can be sustained for whatever else they're going to do that's what our heavenly father wants for you and me there are some times and some of you have experienced this where you had a forced break And you found out later what it was like. You had a broken ankle or leg or you had something and you were forced to take a break and you realized, I really needed that.

I want to encourage you, don't wait until that happens. We need to figure out how to build rest into our daily life. and not make excuses like me avoiding or just trying to prove that I'm valuable. Figure out in your life, where can I have some deliberate time where I'm breaking away from daily responsibilities to the degree I can. If you've got a six-month-old, you're on the job pretty much. If you're a caregiver. you're on the job a lot. But there are ways to do this where you can get refreshed, you can get reconnected. And I'll get into some application here in a minute, but I want to make this last comment about rest, and that is that interruption should be expected and prayerfully evaluated.

You may come up with a system and you've got every, you know, every Saturday or every Sunday, in my case, Sunday's a work day, so I might have another day. That's my day off. And I'm going to be militant about my day off. Well, be careful with that. Well, it's good to have a pattern. There may be some times when there's an exception that comes up. Interruptions can happen and not all of them are important, but some of them can be. I told you that story about Jesus. He's with his team. They've been on these mission tours, and he's dealt with a lot of grief and hurt and loss, especially losing his cousin. And so it says this. Let me read the rest of the story. It says, so they left by boat for a quiet place where they could be alone.

And then here comes the infamous but. But many people recognized them and saw them leaving. And people from many towns ran ahead of the shore and got there before them. Jesus saw the huge crowds as he stepped from the boat. And he said, get out of here quick. This is what's amazing to me. He saw the huge crowds. He stepped from the boat, and he had compassion on them because they were like sheep without a shepherd. So he began teaching them many things. This was a case. Jesus, I'm sure that he saw this crowd. He's thinking, this is what we were trying to get away from.

But as he prayerfully considered it, he realized this is the opportunity we need today. remarkable about this, if you've read much of the New Testament, is there were thousands of people there and he ended up doing what's called the Sermon on the Mount. It's the longest stretch of teaching that we have recorded that Jesus gave. When that was done, he did this amazing miracle proving who he was when he fed 5,000 people with a small meal. I think sometimes if we're not careful, we can be over-regimented. We can miss the opportunity God has for us. The pattern is this. We need to build healthy, God-honoring rest into our lives. There are going to be exceptions along the way. We need to prayerfully consider, what should I do? How should I respond to this? And it doesn't mean I'm going to make everybody happy.

If that's your goal. That's not a good one. Can I make my Heavenly Father happy? Do I have reason to believe that He'll be proud of me for what I've done here? Again, rest isn't the goal, but it's a tool. And it's a tool to help me stay productive and faithful for the long haul. It helps me stay connected with God, with others around me. It helps me be physically, mentally, and spiritually composed. If you struggle with how to do it, and because there are all different circumstances we're in, get around some people that know you, some people that are wise. people that maybe either are or have been in the same stage or age you're in, and ask them, how do we do this? How is it that you're a stay-at-home mom and you've got some kiddos? How do you find a break?

There are ways to do it. Get around some people that have. You may be at a point in your career where you feel constantly the overwhelm of things being left undone. Don't become a slave to that. Figure out how to do it. Have some people that'll be honest with you. You can with them. You can pray with each other. You can support and encourage each other. There was a time in my life I was working 70, 80 hours a week. I had two businesses I was running, and Becky was really concerned, partly because I enjoyed it, but I was leaving a lot of other things undone. And she had a friend of mine that was a CPA. He understood seasons, and he and I met, and he gently but very firmly corrected me and said, you know, you're taking a season and making that the standard.

You've got other things. If you're not careful, you may succeed in work, and you're going to kill your family. grateful for a friend like that all of us need people like that so here's what i want to encourage you to do look at your life right now ask some people to help you the take-home sheet you can get that online or you can get outside either of these doors ask someone to join in with you do as a family there's some of you that your whole goal in life is to rest that ain't what God wants you to do. There are others of us that aren't resting, and we and others are paying the price for it. I'm not talking about balance as much as just building into our life something healthy and good where we can be sustained for the long haul.

And God sees us as instruments that he can use well. Let me pray. God, this has actually been a little bit miserable. I'm sorry it's taken me so long. You have work that you want us to do. There's your church. We have been given the greatest assignment to help others understand who you are, what you offer, why you came, and why we need you. And yet, there are times when we misplace our loyalty and our time. We don't sustain ourselves well, and you love us, you care about us, you want us around so that we can make a difference in your name. Forgive us for when we get distracted or when we misuse the opportunities we

have. Please speak to us about this. Help us to see Jesus' example as the model to follow. Help us to listen and to learn for his sake. Amen.