

You Matter

Rest without Rigidity series

by Chris Famisaran

Let's pray, Lord, as we close out the teaching portion to our series on Rest without rigidity. Lord, be with us. In Jesus name. Amen.

Thank you, everyone, for braving the rain. How many of you drove extra slow to get here today? How many of you love parades? A few of you. How many of you have ever braved going out to the Rose Parade? How many of you did not have seats for the Rose Parade? Okay, you are warriors. You are warriors.

I have a love, not loving relationship with the Rose Parade. You know, it's a wonderful, fascinating production. But when you are out overnight the night before, twice in the freezing cold, saving seats, by the time the parade started, guess what I was doing? I was sleeping. I missed the whole parade. And I don't regret it one bit, because now I can watch the Rose Parade from the comfort of my Lazy Boy with a blanket and a cup of hot chocolate.

The parades are interesting because they're magnificent displays, especially the Rose Parade, where everything is decorated and beautiful. What I love most about parades, though, are marching bands. The drums. Oh, the drums. Perfection. And not just standing still, but as they move forward. It's a beautiful, beautiful thing. A team of people working together. Then, of course, not to mention all the other instruments. They're all, when they're in sync. Mmm. So good.

Hypothetically, though, what if, let's say you got a lone ranger. The tuba player decides that he doesn't want to hang out with everybody else and be in sync, and starts to play his own solo. And not just plays his own solo. He turns around and heads backwards, playing his own solo. While everybody is moving forward down the path to get to the end of the parade round. Some of you are thinking, why would a tuba player do such a thing? Obviously it'd be very confusing. But sometimes, you know, people are thinking, well, is he part of the band? What's going on? And the music is no longer harmonious. It's not pleasing to the ear.

And sometimes does that feel like faith. When we're out all on alone, we sometimes feel like we're not part of the group. We're trying to do our own thing, trying to get back. But yet maybe we're scared to rejoin. Maybe we left for various reasons. But when you're not part of the body, are you singing and in harmony with the church moving forward? I think sometimes when we tend to go off solo or to isolate ourselves, we may still be making a noise, but I think we're also missing the harmony and the beauty of being part of a community and having a shared purpose, moving forward. Does that make sense?

Now, throughout Scripture, we can see, especially in the New Testament, Jesus and the disciples regularly got together. And for the most part, actually it mentions that they studied, but they also, you cannot study without having some kind of fellowship. Right? And so, you know, Bill brought up last week, where was Jesus in Luke 4? He was in the synagogue. He gets up to pray. He gets up to stand and to read something. And continuing on, there's many, many stories.

We know that in Luke 13, Jesus healed a woman who'd been crippled for over 18 years. And there was a confrontation. How dare Jesus heal somebody and give her rest on the Sabbath. Amen. But John 5 also talks about a man where Jesus heals him at the pool of Bethesda on the Sabbath. But being that the disciples also, they were Jewish, they observed the Sabbath. So even in Luke 23, after Jesus crucifixion, the women who followed him rested on the Sabbath.

Acts 13, 14, 15, Paul and Barnabas go into a synagogue on the Sabbath to preach. Acts. Paul reasoned in the synagogue, as was his custom for three Sabbaths. We also know of on the Sabbath day where Paul and Barnabas, again, they went into worship. They were invited to speak. Acts 13, verses 42 to 44. Their message was so compelling that they returned the following week because others, including the Gentiles, wanted to hear Acts 16. There wasn't even a synagogue, but they found a place to try to pray. And there they began to speak to several people. In Acts 17, verse 2, as was his custom, Paul went into a synagogue, three days, worships there. Acts 18, 4. Paul is preaching in Corinth about ministry.

So we see that the disciples, Jesus, the early Christians, early believers, excuse me, met regularly and worshiped and studied together on Sabbath. I believe, as we. Well, actually, let's go through. Here's a couple of passages that we're going to look at today. If you're following us online, this is your first time joining us today, especially if you're on YouTube. Click on the description. There should be a link to some resources, a handout, but let's follow along.

I want to go to Hebrews chapter 10. Okay. Hebrews chapter 10, Hebrews 10. And I initially said 22, but actually I want to go to verse 19. I was rereading this earlier last night and I thought, you know what, I think we need to actually read the whole part. So Acts, sorry, Hebrews chapter 10. I don't want to start at verse 19. Okay. Prior to is, the author is talking about how Christ sacrifices once and for all, for everyone. And in verse 9 he says 19.

Therefore, brothers and sisters, since we have what confidence, not meekness and quietness, confidence to enter the most holy place by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way opened through us, opened for us through the curse, and that is his body. And since we have a great high priest over the house of God, let us draw near to God with a what a sincere heart. And with the full assurance that faith brings our heart sprinkled to cleanse us from a guilty conscience. And having our bodies washed with pure water, let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is

faithful. And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, not giving up meeting together as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the day approaching. And so the early church, the believers were encouraged. We have this great confidence that Jesus has lived and he has died for us. What a wonderful, beautiful message. And that message wasn't just for them, but also for us. And as followers of Jesus, how do we move forward? And as the authorized encouraging to spur on acts of love and kindness and to encourage one another is one of the reasons why we are here today. Let's be honest. How many of you really want to drive through that rain today? How many of you have a well conditioned car right now that you have confidence driving to get here? How many of you have tires that are nearly bald and driving down the freeway and still came to church? Kudos to you. All right? Or maybe you got the engine light coming on and thinking, is it going to be okay? And you're still here. Kudos to you. Why? You are here because you love God. But also, I think you're also here because you also love one another, right? Otherwise he would not be here.

I'm not going to lie. I expected less people to be here. And it warms my heart that you came to learn more about God and to worship together. That is why we are also here. So community worship, okay? We are here because it creates a network of connection. Do we have connection here? I think we do. We're here to support. We're here to encourage and also maybe even help to bring accountability.

I'm just going to spout off some of the verses. I listed them earlier. They're on your sheets. John. Sorry. James 5:16. Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective. There's something about sharing what is on your heart or maybe having to bring reconciliation. Do you want to come into church being mad at somebody, or is that going to be a hindrance from being able to experience God, your anger and your unforgiveness, let's just be honest, it can inhibit your experience with God.

I think it's important that we try to find help one another, pray for one another first Peter 4:10. Encourage us to use whatever gift God has blessed you with to serve others. And yet even too, Ephesians 4, 15, 16 says, instead, speaking the truth, in love we will grow to become in every respect the mature body of him who is the head, that is Christ. From him the whole body, joined together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love as each part does its work.

There are several other passages in Ephesians and in Romans where it talks about how the body, the church, is just like the body, and at the head is Jesus. But every part has a part to play. Some are the hands, some are the feet, some are the stomach, the intestines, all right, the heart, the arteries, the blood. And we all come together and we work as it says here in Ephesians 4, that the ligaments, the things that bind the bones, and everything together.

But also we worship as a witness to the world. If you look around us, we all look and come from the same places. We do not. Okay, some of us come from different parts of

the world. Some of us are older, some of us are younger. Do we all think and agree of the same things? No, we don't. I can attest to that, as I've had conversations with you over the last six years. I think we're very well aligned on most things that we agree, but we don't necessarily always agree on everything. And what a witness that even if we don't agree on everything, we can still be representative of that which we're looking forward and have the hope in. Amen.

We look forward to being in heaven together. But why not also experience and practice living that now? And we see that the world is watching us. Can they truly love and get along with one another? And I'm so fortunate. When I came here six and a half years ago, I inherited a wonderful, loving church. And I thank you that you're still kind and loving towards one another and wanting to grow together, not only learning about Jesus, but also building this community up.

So we're a witness. We're a witness to the world. We can see that people can see that harmony and grace and purpose all molded together. So we're not just here to worship, but we're also here to be representatives of what the kingdom is going to look like. And we're also called to live life together.

How many of you love fire? I know Sergio does. If you were here a couple of weeks ago at our parking lot party, what did Sergio do? He built a really great fire, actually, a couple of fires. I love fire. And one of the things about fires is they just have this sense of warmth and calm. I can't wait. I wish I had a fireplace for this afternoon. It would be perfect. Amen.

But you build a good campfire, you put the logs together and it builds on and it grows, okay? And each log contributes, each stick contributes to the fire. And when the flames, it gets lit. And especially a good roaring campfire on a cold day or a cold night, you see the flames in sync and dancing, and it shoots out the warmth. It shoots out the light. But then, now picture, okay? Picture just taking one glowing ember from the fire and setting it aside. At first it glows, but slowly but surely, what happens to starts to dim. It starts to get cool enough to where you can touch it, and eventually it dies out. Now, here, as a community, okay, as a Christian community, as a church community, as a family, when we worship together, we're all like the logs. We all, again, contribute. Whether you're a stick, a big log, whatever. We all come together. And when we're lit, we encourage one another. We share the burdens with one another. We lift one another up. And when, even when we're isolated, even if we start strong, however, that love and that fervor can still sometimes fade again.

Hebrews 10:24, 25, let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds. Not giving up, meeting together, but encouraging one another. The embers, the firepieces, all need to stay in sync, to be able to stay warm, to stay lit. It's not just a little bit, but it's a lifetime of journeying together.

I love how Galatians 6, verse 2 says, Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ.

Y'all like puzzles? I don't get puzzles. I do them to be part of the group. But I have never got a puzzle and completed it by myself. That doesn't mean, though, that I can't help. I think I'm just too impatient. You know what I love to do? I love to find the edges, the corners, because that's easy. That's pretty easy to find out, right? But after that, I lose my patience. Like, this is boring. I'm going to be honest. All right, so my father, he loves puzzles. And I don't get it, but hey, you know what? I'll keep trying.

But puzzles are unique because they, again, they all are their own separate pieces. But can you have a complete puzzle if one piece is missing? I can't stand it. Even though I'm not a puzzle person, I can't stand if there's one piece missing, it's gotta be found, right? Oh, how many of you have missed that piece? Oh, it's so frustrating. But again, just like fire embers, if you have that one piece missing, it's not complete. And especially in a puzzle, that one little piece is so valuable.

My last point I want to make is this. You matter. Doug stole my whole the rest of my sermon, so I figured we could end early. No, you matter. You all matter. If I had time, I would name each and every one of you. Ben, Annette, Philip, every one of you. You matter not just to God. You matter to me. You matter to everyone here. You know, I think it's November is men's mental health awareness. And I'm not just picking on the men, but I think men, we tend to just try to hide things and not say anything. We're supposed to be tough and strong, and yet why are so many men killing themselves? Why are so many suffering? Why are so many emotionally unavailable, angry and tired? It's hard when you're expected to provide, when you're supposed to be the strong person.

My only encouragement to you if you are struggling, reach out to somebody. You can reach out to me. You can reach out to somebody. You can call 9, 8, 8. If you're at that point where you feel like you may be in trouble and you want to do something. I don't bring this up lightly. I lost too many people to this. Seek help.

Several. Well, a while back, I was in a very difficult position because I had to deal with something. And I thought there were only two options, Option A and option B. And then I was listening to a podcast. Somebody said, you know, there is always a third option. And sometimes in our minds, we think that there is no other way. And I want to encourage you, if you are struggling right now, throw everything off the board and think about what other options could be to handle a particular situation. Even as crazy and, dare I say, zany. Never thought I'd say that in a sermon. There's always another way. Because it's so easy to think of things either this or that.

And it might be that you might have to deal with. One of the most scary things you'll have to do is by talking to somebody or sharing something. They may accept you and accept the situation. They may reject you. But you have to move forward with faith. And I want to encourage you, my friends, if you're battling with addiction, if you're battling with alcohol, if you're dealing with something, try to seek help, reach out. It's a very dark world because you matter. Not just in the eyes of God, because God loves you so much, but you also matter to me, and you also matter to this community.

If you're struggling, it's okay. I will admit, twice in my life I sought professional therapy. And it wasn't weird or crazy. You know what the individual did? He just asked me questions. Didn't tell me what was wrong with me, but asked me questions. And as I was able to talk and share, I was able to piece together the things that was missing for me to be able to understand how I can move forward or how I was a knucklehead and. And I can do better. And I know that's scary when you think you have to be so strong. Dump the phoniness. Dump the mask. You are a child of God. Your family and your friends love you. God loves you. You matter, each and every one of you in this puzzle at the Downey Florence SDA Church. You matter.

So to bring it to a more positive note as we move forward, what can you do? You know, we've done a whole small group series on the 12 people. Do you remember what your 12 people are? Are you still praying for them? Who are the four groups you're supposed to be praying for? Your unchurched four groups. Those of you who may be joining us for the first time, we did a series where there are four groups, as everybody has said, your family, your friends, your church peoples, and the unchurched.

And I want you to focus on, especially here at the church, who are three people here at church? Okay, so actually, I'm getting in myself. Who can you pray for and who can you serve? How can you serve one another? Okay, who can you pray for and how can you serve one another? Commit to praying for three people in our congregation here at Downey Church. Okay? I would actually, I want you to be praying for at least three people who are your family, your friends, but especially here at Downey Church. And then three people who are. We would deem don't go to church regularly. Okay? And I want you to pray for these three people till the end of the year. You can choose to mix it up at that point, but pray for three people.

And as you are praying for them, reach out to them. Just send them a text. Hey, what's up? How you doing? Maybe, what can I pray for? Okay, I know there's a few people who are just. They're praying for everybody, and I love that. But take time to pray for one another. This is one way that you can serve one another. Simply asking, hey, what can I pray for? Can do wonders for somebody. And even just saying hello to somebody you haven't seen to be thought of can also do wonders.

My friends, I cannot say it enough. You matter. You matter to God, you matter to me, and you matter to everyone here. May God bless you.

Father, as we see that Sabbath and worship is important because we're here to learn. But we're also a family. And as we build this culture of a family here, continue to raise it. Lord, lead and guide us. How can we better serve one another? How can we be faithful to you? How can we pray for. How can we help one another? How can we uplift and encourage one another? And also to be accountable to one another? Lead and guide us in this journey. And I pray for everyone here until we meet again next week. Amen.

Grace and peace, everyone.