



GOING DEEPER

DISCUSSION GUIDE

January 22, 2017

Discussion Guide

THE GIFT OF SELF-CARE

CONNECTING:

45 MINUTES

(THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS ARE INTENDED TO PROVIDE YOUR GROUP WITH A WAY OF CONNECTING WITH ONE ANOTHER SO THAT YOU MIGHT PARTNER IN THE WORK GOD IS DOING IN YOUR LIVES.)

- IN WHAT WAYS DID GOD MOVE IN YOUR LIFE THIS WEEK? IN WHAT WAYS DID YOU RESPOND TO HIM?
- WHAT WAS YOUR BIGGEST CHALLENGE THIS WEEK? IN WHAT WAYS, IF ANY, DID YOU INVITE GOD INTO THIS CHALLENGE?
- HOW HONEST HAVE YOU BEEN WITH US? (GRACIOUSLY THANK GROUP MEMBERS FOR THEIR HONESTY IF THEY STATE THEY HAVE HELD BACK.)

GETTING STARTED:

10 MINUTES

- DO YOU FEEL THAT YOU GET ENOUGH REST? COULD YOU ELABORATE?

DIVING INTO THE TEXT:

60 MINUTES

(THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS ARE INTENDED TO PROVIDE YOUR GROUP WITH A SIMPLE ROAD MAP THROUGH THE TEXT. FEEL FREE TO USE THESE QUESTIONS IN WAYS THAT BEST FIT YOUR GROUP AND THE DYNAMICS OF YOUR OWN MEETING.)

- USING THE NOTES, DISCUSS THE SPIRITUAL IMPORTANCE OF REST.
- READ MARK 6.30-46 ALOUD, SLOWLY. PAUSE. READ THE TEXT ONCE MORE, SEEKING TO EXPERIENCE THE TEXT AS ONE OF JESUS' DISCIPLES. PAY ATTENTION TO HOW YOU FEEL AND WHAT YOU NOTICE AS A DISCIPLE.
- IN WHAT WAYS, IF ANY, DO YOU SEE A RHYTHM OF WORK AND REST IN THE TEXT?
- IN WHAT WAYS, DID WORK ENCROACH UPON THEIR REST? WHAT EFFECT, IF ANY, DID THIS HAVE UPON THE DISCIPLES? WHAT WAS JESUS' RESPONSE TO THIS ENCROACHMENT?
- WE WERE CREATED TO LIVE BY A RHYTHM OF WORK AND REST (GENESIS 1.26-28; 2.2). WOULD YOU SAY THAT PEOPLE LIVE BY THIS RHYTHM? COULD YOU ELABORATE?
- DO YOU FIND THAT YOU LIVE GOD'S INTENDED RHYTHM OF WORK AND REST? COULD YOU ELABORATE?
- REST IS A FORM OF SELF-CARE, A DEVOTION TO THE NEEDS OF OUR BODIES. WHAT, IF ANYTHING, HAPPENS WHEN WE DO NOT HONOR THIS FORM OF SELF-CARE? WHAT SPIRITUAL IMPACT, IF ANY, DOES NOT RESTING HAVE UPON US AS WE SEEK TO LIVE AS THOSE MADE IN THE IMAGE OF GOD?
- WHAT MIGHT IT TAKE TO ENGAGE IN A REGULAR PRACTICE OF REST? WHAT, IF ANYTHING, KEEPS US FROM TAKING THESE STEPS?
- WHAT MIGHT IT LOOK LIKE FOR THIS GROUP TO PURSUE THE PRACTICE OF REST TOGETHER?

CONTEXT AND BACKGROUND

REST

REST INVOLVES THE CESSATION FROM ACTIVITY FOR THE PURPOSE OF EXPERIENCING A REPLENISHMENT OF OUR BODIES AND MINDS. WE ALL NEED REST, A FACT MADE EVERMORE EVIDENT WITH THE RISE OF ILLNESSES CONNECTED WITH THE ABSENCE OF REST. MORE AND MORE EVIDENCE IS BEING GATHERED THAT INDICATES THAT A FAILURE TO REST INCREASES HEART DISEASE, STROKE, OUR RISK OF CATCHING A COLD, DEPRESSION, MEMORY ISSUES, AND OUR WEIGHT. THAT REST IS IMPORTANT TO OUR BODIES IS HARD TO DENY. YET, THE ISSUE OF REST IS OFTEN RELEGATED TO THE REALM OF MEDICINE AND PSYCHOLOGY RATHER THAN BEING VIEWED AS A SPIRITUAL ISSUE. BECAUSE OF OUR TENDENCY NOT TO VIEW REST IN SPIRITUAL TERMS, IT BECOMES EASY TO REJECT THE PRACTICE OF REST ON SPIRITUAL GROUNDS BECAUSE IT DOES NOT BEAR THE WEIGHT OF BEING AN ASPECT OF THE LIFE GOD INTENDS FOR PEOPLE. IN FACT, BELIEVERS WILL GO SO FAR AS TO DECRY AND DENIGRATE REST AS SOMETHING WE WILL DO "WHEN WE ARE DEAD" BECAUSE OF THE IMPORTANCE OF CARRYING OUT OUR SPIRITUAL OBLIGATIONS. OUR FAILURE TO UNDERSTAND REST IN SPIRITUAL TERMS IS SOMETHING WHICH NEEDS TO BE ADDRESSED BECAUSE IT DEMONSTRATES A FAILURE TO PROPERLY UNDERSTAND AND EXPERIENCE THE LIFE GOD INTENDS FOR US.

FROM THE BEGINNING, GOD INTENDED THAT LIFE INVOLVE REST, AND THAT ON A REGULAR BASIS. WHEN GOD CREATED LIFE, HE RESTED (GENESIS 2.2). GOD'S REST WAS NOT DUE TO A NEED, AS IF HE WAS TIRED, NOR WAS HIS REST BROUGHT ABOUT BY THE COMPLETION OF HIS DUTIES. MUCH MORE WAS LEFT TO BE DONE WITH THE MANAGING AND SUSTAINING OF GOD'S NEW CREATION. GOD'S REST WAS ROOTED IN A CONSCIOUS CHOICE TO CEASE FROM LABOR FOR A PERIOD OF TIME. GOD'S CHOICE TO REST FUNCTIONED AS PART OF HIS CREATIVE ACTIVITY THUS WEAVING REST INTO THE VERY FABRIC OF THE RHYTHM OF CREATION. THAT GOD INTENDED REST TO BE PART OF THE RHYTHM OF HIS CREATION IS SEEN IN THE COMMAND TO REST THROUGH THE HONORING OF SABBATH (EXODUS 20.8-11).

IN EXODUS 20, GOD PROVIDED A BROAD OUTLINE OF THE LAW WHICH HE WAS ABOUT TO GIVE TO MOSES, AN OUTLINE WHICH WE REFER TO AS THE TEN COMMANDMENTS. THE FOURTH COMMANDMENT WAS THE COMMANDMENT TO MAKE REST PART OF THE RHYTHM OF ONE'S LIFE AND FOR PEOPLE TO EXTEND THIS RHYTHM TO CREATION ITSELF. FOR SIX DAYS, PEOPLE WERE TO WORK. HOWEVER, ON THE SEVENTH DAY, PEOPLE WERE TO REST, TO CEASE FROM THEIR LABOR AND TO EXTEND THIS CESSATION TO THEIR SERVANTS AND LIVESTOCK. IN LEVITICUS, THIS RHYTHM OF REST WAS EXTENDED TO THE EARTH AND ITS VEGETATION (LEVITICUS 25.1-7) AND WARNINGS WERE GIVEN AS TO THE IMPORTANCE OF HONORING THIS RHYTHM OF REST (LEVITICUS 26.34).

AS THE LAW OUTLINES LIFE AS GOD INTENDED PEOPLE TO LIVE IT (ROMANS 7.7), SUCH A LIFE CLEARLY INVOLVES REST. WHILE THIS PRACTICE OF REST DID STAND FOR SOME DEEPER SPIRITUAL REALITIES (DEUTERONOMY 3.20; 25.19; JOSHUA 1.13; PSALM 95.7-11; ISAIAH 63.14; HEBREWS 3.7-4.13), ONE CANNOT LOOK PAST THE PLAIN MESSAGE OF THE IMPORTANCE OF REGULARLY STOPPING FROM ONE'S WORK AS A RHYTHM BY WHICH GOD INTENDED LIFE TO BE LIVED. JESUS HONORED THIS RHYTHM OF RESTING IN HIS KEEPING OF SABBATH (LUKE 4.16) AND IN HIS PRACTICE OF WITHDRAWING FROM HIS MINISTRY ACTIVITIES AND CROWDS (MARK 1.35; MARK 6.31). IT IS IMPORTANT TO NOTE THAT WHILE JESUS OFFERED THE DEEPER SPIRITUAL REALITY OF REST TO PEOPLE (MATTHEW 11.28), HE HANDED OFF THE PRACTICE OF REST AS A RHYTHM TO HIS DISCIPLES (MARK 6.31). THEREFORE, REST FALLS SQUARELY WITHIN CONTEXT OF SPIRITUAL MATTERS, MATTERS WHICH ARE OF THE UTMOST IMPORTANCE FOR THE LIFE OF THOSE WHO FOLLOW JESUS.

THE TEXT

MARK 6.7-13, 30-46:

LIVING/RESTING AS ICONS OF GOD

IN MARK 6, JESUS EMPOWERS AND ENTRUSTS HIS DISCIPLES WITH HIS MINISTRY. CALLING HIS TWELVE DISCIPLES TO HIMSELF, JESUS SENDS THEM OUT IN PAIRS WITH AUTHORITY TO PROCLAIM THE MESSAGE OF THE COMING KINGDOM AND THE POWER TO DEMONSTRATE THAT KINGDOM THROUGH ACTS OF RESTORATION AND DELIVERANCE. JESUS' INSTRUCTIONS ON HOW THIS MINISTRY WAS TO BE CARRIED OUT PLACE THE DISCIPLES IN A POSITION WHERE THEY MUST LIVE UPON THE PROVISIONS GLEANED FROM GOD'S KINGDOM AND NOT UPON THEIR OWN RESOURCES. WITH THESE INSTRUCTIONS IN HAND, THE DISCIPLES WENT FORTH PREACHING AND HEALING MANY.

WHEN ONE CONSIDERS THIS SCENE, IT CAN APPEAR THAT JESUS IS MOVING TO EXPAND HIS MINISTRY IMPACT. WHILE THERE MAY BE SOME TRUTH TO THIS VIEW, IT IS CERTAINLY NOT THE PRIMARY MOTIVATION OF JESUS. JESUS' SENDING OUT OF HIS DISCIPLES IS NOTHING SHORT OF HIS REDEMPTIVE MISSION WORKING OUT IN THE LIVES OF HIS DISCIPLES, A MISSION WHICH WAS THE RESTORATION OF LIFE AS GOD INTENDED IT.

WHEN GOD CREATED PEOPLE, HE CREATED THEM AS HIS ICONS/IDOLS (GENESIS 1.26). WHILE THIS VERBIAGE IS FOREIGN, AND SOMEWHAT OFFENSIVE TO US, IT WAS READILY UNDERSTOOD BY THE ANCIENT READER. IN THEIR MIND, AN IDOL WAS THE PHYSICAL REPRESENTATION OF A GOD, A REPRESENTATION WHICH WAS TASKED WITH CARRYING OUT THE WORK OF THAT GOD ON EARTH. SUCH IS THE CASE WITH PEOPLE. AS THOSE CREATED IN GOD'S IMAGE (HIS ICONS), THEY WERE TO REPRESENT HIM AND CARRY OUT HIS WORK ON EARTH (GENESIS 1.26-28). WHEN PEOPLE CHOSE TO LIVE LIFE ON THEIR OWN TERMS (GENESIS 3), THEIR

ROLE AS ICONS OF GOD WAS MARRED. HOWEVER, GOD INTENDED TO RESTORE PEOPLE TO THEIR RIGHTFUL PLACE. WHEN JESUS CAME, HE CAME AS GOD'S IMAGE UPON EARTH (JOHN 1.14; HEBREWS 1.3). WHILE THIS BEARS THE DEEP MEANING THAT JESUS WAS HIMSELF GOD, IT ALSO BEARS THE MEANING THAT JESUS LIVED AS A PERFECT ICON OF GOD, DEMONSTRATING WHAT IT WAS TO BE HUMAN IN THE FULLEST SENSE OF GOD'S INTENT. IN THIS ROLE AS GOD'S ICON, JESUS WENT ABOUT TENDING CREATION, ACTING AS AN AGENT ON BEHALF OF GOD'S KINGDOM (MARK 1.14-15) AND DOING THE HEALING, RESTORATIVE WORK OF GOD. BY INVITING AND THEN SENDING THE DISCIPLES INTO THIS WORK, JESUS IS DOING MUCH MORE THAN EXPANDING HIS MINISTRY. HE IS ACTUALLY INVITING THE DISCIPLES TO FULFILL THEIR ROLE AS LIVING ICONS AS GOD INTENDED. HOWEVER, AS ICONS THEY MUST TAKE UP THE FULL LIFE OF GOD, WHICH INVOLVES MORE THAN WORK. TO TAKE UP THE FULL LIFE OF GOD IN HIS CREATIVE INTENT ALSO INVOLVES REST (GENESIS 2.2). IT IS THIS ASPECT OF THE LIFE OF A DIVINE ICON WHICH COMES TO THE FORE IN MARK 6.30.

THE DISCIPLES COMPLETE THEIR MISSION, CARRYING OUT MINISTRY AS JESUS MINISTERED, THUS LIVING AND WORKING AS DIVINE ICONS. THEIR WORK HAS BEEN SUCCESSFUL, SO SUCCESSFUL THAT THE CROWDS HAVE SWELLED TO THE POINT THAT THERE IS MORE TO BE DONE THAN JESUS OR THE DISCIPLES CAN PHYSICALLY ACCOMPLISH. THE ACTIVITIES OF MINISTRY SWELL TO THE POINT THAT JESUS AND HIS DISCIPLES NO LONGER HAVE SPACE TO ENGAGE IN SIMPLE NECESSARY ACTIVITIES LIKE EATING. AT THIS POINT, JESUS INVITES THEM TO WITHDRAW FOR THE PURPOSE OF RESTING. HERE WE SEE THE INVITATION TO DO MORE THAN TAKE A BREAK. WE ACTUALLY SEE THE INVITATION TO A FULL LIFE AS LIVING ICONS, A LIFE WHICH INVOLVES WORK AND REST (GENESIS 1.26-28; 2.2).

TROUBLE ARISES WHEN JESUS AND HIS DISCIPLES ATTEMPT TO WITHDRAW. IT APPEARS THAT AN EFFORT WAS MADE TO DISGUISE THEIR WITHDRAWAL, BUT SOME IN THE CROWDS RECOGNIZED JESUS AND HIS DISCIPLES AND FOLLOWED THEM AS THEY SAILED TO A REMOTE LOCATION. AS BOATS DURING THIS TIME NAVIGATED BY STAYING WITHIN SITE OF LAND, IT WOULD HAVE BEEN EASY FOR THE CROWDS TO FOLLOW THE BOAT BY RUNNING ALONG THE SHORE. WHEN JESUS AND HIS DISCIPLES LAND, THEY FIND A CROWD WAITING FOR THEM. SEEING THE CROWD, A DEEP COMPASSION WELLS UP IN JESUS BECAUSE HE SEES THEIR DEEP NEED FOR SHEPHERDING. THEY NEED SOMEONE TO CARE FOR THEM. SO, HE BEGINS TO TEACH THEM. HOWEVER, THE DISCIPLES ARE NOT INTERESTED IN CARING FOR THE CROWDS. THEY URGE JESUS TO REMEMBER THAT IT IS LATE AND THAT HE SHOULD SEND THE PEOPLE AWAY TO FIND SOMETHING TO EAT. IN KEEPING WITH HIS SHEPHERDING DESIRE, JESUS INVITES THE DISCIPLES TO JOIN HIM IN CARING FOR THE CROWDS.

AT THIS POINT, AN INTERESTING DIALOGUE BEGINS BETWEEN JESUS AND HIS DISCIPLES, A DIALOGUE WHICH IS MOST LIKELY HAD TO PROVE A POINT, A POINT ABOUT THE NECESSITY OF REST. JOHN RECORDS THAT JESUS' INVITATION TO FEED THE CROWDS WAS NOT MEANT TO MOVE THE DISCIPLES TO ACTUALLY FEED THE CROWD. JESUS ALREADY KNEW HOW HE WAS GOING TO FEED THEM (JOHN 6.6). JESUS' INVITATION HAS ANOTHER POINT, ONE SEEN IN THE QUICK RESPONSE OF THE DISCIPLES. THEY ARE LESS THAN WILLING TO FEED THE CROWDS. THE UNWILLINGNESS TO FEED THE CROWDS IS BASED UPON A CLAIM THAT IT COST TOO MUCH. SOME ASSUME THAT JESUS DID NOT HAVE THIS AMOUNT OF MONEY, BUT THIS MAY NOT BE THE CASE. MANY PEOPLE CONTRIBUTED TO JESUS' MINISTRY, SO MUCH SO THAT ONE OF THE DISCIPLES WAS DESIGNATED TO BE THE TREASURER, AND THERE WERE ENOUGH FUNDS SO THAT HE COULD PILFER FROM THEM AND NOT BE CAUGHT (JOHN 12.4-6). IT IS POSSIBLE THAT THE DISCIPLES DID HAVE ENOUGH FUNDS, BUT WERE UNWILLING TO GO TO THE EFFORT OF USING THEM TO FEED THE CROWDS. THEY RESIST THE INVITATION TO SHEPHERD; THAT IS, THEY RESIST THE INVITATION TO LIVE AS DIVINE ICONS. BUT WHY? THE CONTEXT DEMANDS THAT THE REFUSAL IS SOMEHOW LINKED TO THE ABSENCE OF REST. THE DISCIPLES HAVE PREVIOUSLY FUNCTIONED WELL AS DIVINE ICONS, BUT THEY HAVE WORKED SO HARD THAT THEY NEED REST, BUT THIS REST HAS NOT BEEN AFFORDED TO THEM. WITHOUT THIS REST, THEY CAN NO LONGER SERVE. JESUS ASKS WHAT THE DISCIPLES HAVE THAT THEY ARE WILLING TO GIVE AND A FEW LOAVES AND FISH ARE PRODUCED, FOR WHICH JESUS GIVES THANKS AND MULTIPLIES, FEEDING A CROWD OF OVER 5,000 PEOPLE. JESUS THEN SENDS HIS DISCIPLES AWAY TO REST AND ENTERS REST HIMSELF. WHILE THE POINT OF THE MIRACLE UNDERSCORES GOD'S ABILITY TO PROVIDE, WITHIN THE CONTEXT, IT UNDERSCORES GOD'S ABILITY TO PROVIDE REST. WHEN THE DISCIPLES LIVED AS DIVINE ICONS, PEOPLE RESPONDED OUT OF GREAT NEED, A NEED WHICH SURPASSED THE ABILITY OF THE DISCIPLES TO PROVIDE. THEY NEEDED TO WITHDRAW AND REST, BUT THE NEEDS OF PEOPLE PUSHED IN UPON THEM. IN THIS TIME, THEY WITNESSED THAT REST WAS POSSIBLE BECAUSE GOD WAS ABLE TO PROVIDE WHEN THEY WERE NOT ABLE. THEY COULD WITHDRAW AND GOD WOULD FEED THE CROWD. IT WAS POSSIBLE TO LIVE AS A DIVINE ICON BY RESTING AS WELL AS SERVING.

REAL LIFE WITH BLAKE:

SHAME. THE MORE I UNDERSTAND IT, THE MORE I SEE IT IN EVERY PART OF MY LIFE. I CALL IT DIFFERENT THINGS, BUT MY SHAME HAS WORKED ITS WAY INTO EVERY CRACK AND CREVICE. ONE AREA WHERE I SEE IT MOST PRONOUNCED IS IN MY WORK. WE WERE CREATED TO WORK. WORK IS AN EXPRESSION OF PART OF THE IMAGE OF GOD WITHIN US; THAT IS, WHEN WE WORK, WE ARE ACTING LIKE GOD, DOING THE VERY THING FOR WHICH WE WERE MADE. I DON'T HAVE A PROBLEM WITH THIS. MOST OF US WHO ARE HEIRS OF THE PROTESTANT WORK ETHIC ARE DOWN WITH WORK AS SOMETHING FOR WHICH WE WERE CREATED. WHERE IT GETS A BIT CRAZY IS WHEN I BEGIN TO THINK THAT WORK IS THE ONLY THING FOR WHICH I WAS CREATED. I MUST WORK, AND WORK, AND WORK, AND WORK, AND WORK. THERE IS ALWAYS MORE TO DO AND I MUST DO IT. IT IS MY SPIRITUAL DUTY. THIS IS PERHAPS EXASPERATED BY THE FACT THAT MY WORK FALLS WITHIN THE SPIRITUAL REALM, BUT REALLY ALL OUR WORK DOES. THERE IS NO REAL DIVISION BETWEEN THE SPIRITUAL AND THE PHYSICAL. ALL WORK IS A CARRYING OUT OF THE WORK OF GOD. SO WHAT IS THE PROBLEM? THE PROBLEM IS I WAS MADE TO WORK AND REST, BUT I AM TEMPTED TO ONLY WORK. IN FACT, I WOULD SAY THAT BY MOST DEFINITIONS I AM A WORKAHOLIC, AND IT IS EASY TO BE ONE. THE INVENTION OF DEVICES LIKE MY IPHONE AND THE INTERNET MAKE ME CONSTANTLY ACCESSIBLE AND WORK EQUALLY ACCESSIBLE. THE RISE OF THE KNOWLEDGE WORKER, A PERSON WHO WORKS WITH IDEAS AND NOT THEIR HANDS, MEANS THAT AT ANY MOMENT I CAN BE WORKING. I WORK WHEN I DRIVE, WHEN I WALK, WHEN I SHOWER, WHEN I EAT. I DO MY WORK IN MY HEAD, AND I TAKE MY HEAD WITH ME, EVERYWHERE I GO. IT IS EASY TO WORK AND NEVER REST, BUT I WASN'T MADE TO LIVE THIS WAY AND WHEN I DO IT HAS DISASTROUS IMPLICATIONS.

WHEN I LIVE CONTRARY TO THE WAY I WAS MADE BY WORKING AND NOT RESTING, I FIND THAT I FIRST GROW TIRED, AND THEN I BREAK. I SLIP INTO DEPRESSION, CYNICISM, SICKNESS, AND MORE. WHEN I AM IN THESE PLACES, SOME OF THEM MORE DARK THAN OTHERS, I AM NO GOOD TO ANYONE. I CAN'T WORK. WHEN I FIND MYSELF IN THESE PLACES I SEE HOW IMPORTANT REST IS FOR WORK. WITHOUT REST, I CANNOT WORK. IF I AM TO WORK, I MUST TAKE TIME TO DEMONSTRATE LOVING CARE FOR MYSELF. I MUST REST. I KNOW THIS TO BE TRUE, BUT UPON RECOVERY, I SLIP EASILY BACK INTO THE GROOVE OF WORK, A PATTERN WHERE I POUR OUT BUT DO NOT POUR BACK INTO MYSELF. WHY DO I DO THIS? YOU WOULD THINK THAT AFTER REPEATED EPISODES WITH BURNOUT AND DEPRESSION, I WOULD LEARN MY LESSON.

I THINK I KEEP WORKING AND REFUSE TO ENGAGE IN THE WONDERFUL PRACTICE OF RESTFUL SELF-CARE BECAUSE OF SHAME. SOMEHOW I HAVE BOUGHT INTO THE IDEA THAT UNLESS I AM WORKING, I AM NOT WORTH ANYTHING. UNLESS I TICK OFF EVERY ITEM ON THE TASK LIST, I WON'T HAVE DONE MY JOB. UNLESS I DO MORE AND MORE, PEOPLE

WON'T LIKE MY SERMON OR THE CHURCH WILL FALL APART. ALL OF THIS IS SHAME TALKING. IT IS SAYING, I AM NOT ENOUGH. THE REALITY IS, I WAS NEVER MEANT TO BE ENOUGH WHEN IT COMES TO WORK. I WAS MADE TO WORK BUT I WAS NOT MADE TO DO EVERYTHING. I WAS MADE WITH SOMETHING CALLED LIMITS AND LIMITS DON'T MEAN I AM NOT ENOUGH. LIMITS DRAW THE LINE BETWEEN BEING MADE IN THE IMAGE OF GOD AND BEING GOD. ENGAGING IN THE LOVING CARE OF MYSELF THROUGH REST IS NOTHING SHORT OF SAYING, I AM GOD'S CREATION, HIS BEAUTIFUL AND WONDERFUL CREATION. NOW, THAT IS EASIER SAID THAN DONE, BUT I AM LEARNING THAT WHEN I REST, NOTHING FALLS APART AND NO ONE GETS MAD. GOD SEEMS TO MAKE UP THE DIFFERENCE.

REAL LIFE WITH YOU:

SHAME. IT HIDES IN THE CROOKS AND CRANNIES OF EVERY ASPECT OF OUR LIVES, BUT WE DON'T SEE IT BECAUSE OFTEN WE HAVE ELEVATED IT AS SOMETHING TO VALUE AND PURSUE. PERHAPS THIS IS NOWHERE CLEARER THAN IN THE WAY WE WORK. WHEN GOD MADE US, HE MADE US TO LIVE BY A RHYTHM OF WORK AND REST. WE POUR OUT AND THEN WE CARE FOR OURSELVES BY STOPPING AND POURING BACK IN. IN THIS RHYTHM OF WORK AND REST WE FUNCTION AS THE DIVINE ICONS WE WERE CREATED TO BE, FOR GOD WORKED AND RESTED. HOWEVER, WE OFTEN VALUE WORK BUT NOT REST. WE SEE THAT IN OUR WORKING WE CARRYING FORTH THE IMAGE OF GOD, BUT CANNOT FATHOM HOW THE RESTFUL CARE OF OUR BODIES MIGHT ALSO SHINE FORTH THE IMAGE OF GOD. MUCH OF THIS IS DUE TO OUR SHAME. WE WORK BECAUSE WE FEEL THAT SOMEHOW OUR WORTH IS TIED TO OUR WORK. THE MORE WE WORK THE MORE WE ARE WORTH. THIS IS SHAME AT ITS BEST, AND IT IS DESTROYING US. WHEN WE LIVE BY A RHYTHM OTHER THAN THAT FOR WHICH WE WERE CREATED, OUR BODIES AND MINDS BREAK DOWN AND WE FIND WE ARE NO LONGER ABLE TO WORK. WE NEED BOTH ASPECTS OF THE DIVINE RHYTHM OF WORK AND REST. THEREFORE, THE RESTFUL CARE OF OUR BODIES IS AN IMPORTANT COMPONENT TO LIVING AS GOD INTENDED WE LIVE. THIS WEEK, CONSIDER TAKING TIME TO REST. CONSIDER SETTING ASIDE A DAY TO REST, SOMETHING CALLED THE PRACTICE OF SABBATH. CONSIDER ALSO, TAKING TIME TO REST EACH DAY. WHEN YOU LEAVE WORK, LEAVE WORK. TURN OFF YOUR CELL PHONE. DON'T CHECK YOUR EMAIL. DON'T TURN ON THE TELEVISION. GO HOME. EAT A MEAL. SPEND TIME WITH YOUR FAMILY, AND GO TO BED SO THAT YOU CAN GET AT LEAST 7 HOURS OF SLEEP. IN OTHER WORDS, REST. SEE WHAT THIS DOES TO YOU AND YOUR ABILITY TO WORK THIS WEEK. YOU MIGHT CONSIDER JOURNALING YOUR EXPERIENCE.



SENIOR
PASTOR
BLAKE
SHIPP

 twitter.com/blake_shipp

©2017 Union Center Christian Church