

Informal moments

-If you would like to support our ministry through financial means, we have e-giving set-up on our website, or you are welcome to make use of the offering plates. Thank you in advance for your generosity, and I thank you for the other expressions of generosity you share outside of your finances, such as your time, your energy, and acts of service.

-As we get closer to the start of Summer, I also want to remind you that we are always looking for volunteers to help with the Vacation Bible School we are putting together for July 25, 26, and 27. For more information on how to get involved, please talk with Katie Peterson.

-Our Charge Conference has approved not only the new leadership model, but affirmed our new slate of officers! Their first official meeting will be on July 20th, though they may not officially take ownership of the various ministries until later. Those leaders are, in no particular order, Melissa Caslin, Jeff Peterson, Katie Peterson, Lexy Klinkhammer, Darin Johnson, Carrie Severin, and Scott Nordlund.

-Prayer initiative cards

***Call to Worship**

Leader: Come, all you whose souls thirst for the living God.

People: We come in search of help and hope.

Leader: Come, you who are acquainted with grief or oppression.

People: We come bearing our doubts, our wounds, and our fears.

Leader: Come, you who are in need of good news.

People: We come in search of joy, truth, and light.

Leader: Come and find refuge in God your rock.

People: Let us again praise the One who is our help and our hope.

***Song**

God of Love and God of Power

UMH 578

Pastoral Prayer

-Coronavirus around the world.

-Those in our Church and families fighting cancer, addiction, depression, and other illnesses.

-Our Jamboree worship last week collected \$1,078 towards the local food pantry! This is more than double our offering from last year, so thank you for your generosity!

-Our nation's leaders, as they discern and work on solutions related to gun regulations, Roe v. Wade, and the other matters driving a deeper wedge in our country.

-War in Ukraine, and for safety for the refugees and others who are caught in the midst of the conflict.

-Afghanistan experienced the worst earthquake in two decades on Wednesday. Around 1,000 people have been killed, with 3,000 more injured. Those numbers are likely to increase due to an outbreak of cholera, starvation, and lack of shelter.

-A shooting in Oslo, Norway has left two dead, and 21 others wounded. It's being called an act of Islamic terrorism, though the investigation is ongoing.

-Lastly, as a part of our prayers, I want to speak a little to the recent ruling regarding Roe v Wade. The official United Methodist position on abortion is that "we believe in the sanctity of unborn human life, and so are reluctant to approve abortion. But we are equally bound to respect the sacredness of the life and well-being of the mother. There are circumstances in which there are tragic conflicts between the two; conflicts that can happen to any pregnant woman, anywhere, at any time in her pregnancy. Critical to preserving life is ready access to proper medical care. This includes access to medical care that may include abortion when that is the way to preserve the most life possible. That said, we do not NOT affirm abortion as a means of birth control. We reject abortion as a means of gender selection and eugenics. And we reject late-term abortions except where the mother's life is in danger, or in cases of severe fetal abnormalities incompatible with life." That is the official stance of our church, which may not be as pro-life as some may want, nor as pro-choice as others may want. Some of you may be celebrating, others grieving. As a pastor to people on both sides of this decision, I see you and I love you. There will be hard conversations to be had for us all, but I hope you will learn to listen to the stories and experiences of those on the other side. And through it all I hope you will continue to love your neighbors, care for the least, the lost, and the broken, care for the mothers, the born, and the unborn.

Lord's Prayer

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily

bread, and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.

Children's Moment

-Have you ever looked at your parents calendar? I bet it's got a lot of things written in on it. I know mine does. There's lots of stuff we need to do! Do any of you ever feel busy? What do you get busy with?

-We can get busy doing a lot of good things, but do you think it's important to rest, too? It's very important to rest. In fact, the Bible tells us that even God rested. God worked for six days to create the universe, but then rested on the seventh day. Do you think God was tired from all that work? We would be tired after working all week, but God doesn't get tired. Still, God rested. And if God rested, that means we should rest, too.

-How do you like to rest after you've been busy? Sleep, watch TV, read, play games... Those are all really good ways to rest. One of the other ways we rest as Christians is by coming to church. We've been so busy with school and chores and homework and going to do things the rest of the week, but when we come to church, we just get to rest and visit with God for a little while. God likes it when we just rest in Him.

-Dear God	Thank you for giving us	So many good things to do
To keep us busy in the week.	But we also thank you	for the chance to rest.
Help us to rest in you	And in your love.	We love you
And we praise you	For all that you are	And all that you do.
It's in your name that we pray.	Amen.	

***Song**

Spirit, Spirit of Gentleness

TFWS 2120

Scripture

1 Kings 19:1-15 (NRSV)

Ahab told Jezebel all that Elijah had done and how he had killed all the prophets with the sword. Then Jezebel sent a messenger to Elijah, saying, "So may the gods do to me and more also, if I do not make your life like the life of one of them by this time tomorrow." Then he was afraid; he got up and fled for his life and came to Beer-sheba, which belongs to Judah; he left his servant there.

But he himself went a day's journey into the wilderness and came and sat down under a solitary broom tree. He asked that he might die, "It is enough; now, O Lord, take away my life, for I am no better than my ancestors." Then he lay down under the broom tree and fell asleep. Suddenly an angel touched him and said to him, "Get up and eat." He looked, and there at his head was a cake baked on hot stones and a jar of water. He ate and drank and lay down again. The angel of the Lord came a second time, touched him, and said, "Get up and eat, or the journey will be too much for you." He got up and ate and drank; then he went in the strength of that food forty days and forty nights to Horeb the mount of God. At that place he came to a cave and spent the night there.

Then the word of the Lord came to him, saying, "What are you doing here, Elijah?" He answered, "I have been very zealous for the Lord, the God of hosts, for the Israelites have forsaken your covenant, thrown down your altars, and killed your prophets with the sword. I alone am left, and they are seeking my life, to take it away.

He said, "Go out and stand on the mountain before the Lord, for the Lord is about to pass by." Now there was a great wind, so strong that it was splitting mountains and breaking rocks in pieces before the Lord, but the Lord was not in the wind, and after the wind an earthquake, but the Lord was not in the earthquake, and after the earthquakes a fire, but the Lord was not in the fire, and after the fire a sound of sheer silence. When Elijah heard it, he wrapped his face in his mantle and went out and stood at the entrance of the cave. Then there came a voice to him that said, "What are you doing here, Elijah?" He answered, "I have been very zealous for the Lord, the God of hosts, for the Israelites have forsaken your covenant, thrown down your altars, and killed your prophets with the sword. I alone am left, and they are seeking my life, to take it away." Then the Lord said to him, "Go, return on your way to the wilderness of Damascus; when you arrive, you shall anoint Hazael as king over Aram.

This is the Word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

Song

All the People Said Amen

Sermon*Called To Self-Care*

Good morning, Church! Today we are continuing the worship series we began a couple weeks ago on how God calls us... Calls us into community, into divine relationship. Sometimes that calls pulls us away from areas where we have caused harm, or fallen short. Sometimes that call is an invitation to walk a path of maturity, a call to discipline and refinement. No matter how that call is heard, God invites us, calls us into something better, fully, and more holy. Today, we are going to explore what it means for God to call us to self-care. As we do, will you please pray with me? O Lord, may the words of my mouth and the meditations of each and every one of our hearts be holy and pleasing to you, our Rock and our Redeemer. Amen.

One of the things that we sometimes forget is just how radical and counter-cultural the Bible can be sometimes. It challenges us to think differently, live differently than those who aren't committed to the ways of Christ. Sometimes it can be confusing, or even frustrating, but ultimately the ways that God calls us to live differently is for our own good. And perhaps one of the best examples of a radical and counter-cultural idea that we can see in Scripture is that of the Sabbath. Jewish law dictates that on the each Sabbath day of the week, there was to be no work. The idea is that when God created the universe, God rested on the seventh day, we are to follow God's example and rest from our labors on the Sabbath. The only ones who could work were the priests as they tended to their duties at the Temple, but even they were allotted time elsewhere to make up for their lack of Sabbath rest.

This commitment to rest was such a high priority that God even made it part of the top 10 list of Jewish laws. One of the 10 Commandments, handed down to Moses, commands us to honor the Sabbath Day and keep it holy, set apart, protected.... This

instruction is right up there with don't murder, don't steal, and worshiping God alone. And yet, for us, as Christians, especially in the United States, it is probably the most ignored commandment.

We don't guard our day of rest like we once did. Instead, more often than not, we find ourselves bringing work home with us. Recent studies show that in the United States, we are working longer hours than ever before, get less vacation time, and have later retirement than anyone else in the industrialized world. Especially now, with the labor shortages that are affecting so many different industries, people are having to work more and more to compensate. The result is many people suffering from heart problems, lack of energy, poor sleep, depression, anxiety, and other health conditions.

The idea of taking even a single day in the week where we do no work sounds radical in comparison to our current culture. But it is also hugely important to our health and wellbeing, and something that God has called us to adopt for ourselves. To help further illustrate the importance of taking time for self-care and rest, I want us to take a look at one of my favorite stories of the prophet Elijah. Elijah had accomplished many wondrous things for God as he spoke out against the manipulations and evil actions of Queen Jezebel and King Ahab. Shortly after a huge victory over the prophets of the false god Baal, Elijah received death threats from Jezebel. He understandably feared for his life, so he retreats into the desert where he hopes to die. He is overwhelmed by disappointment, danger, and defeat. In his lowest and darkest moment, God calls to him, drawing him in from physical and emotional isolation.

It's an isolation many among us have probably experienced at one time or another... If we're honest about our own struggles, we may notice the signs and

symptoms of our own exhaustion and struggle. In this wilderness, Elijah does what was probably the best, first step for any of us who are struggling with despair and exhaustion... He takes a nap. Periodically, his other needs would be met by God through an angel. He found no answers to his questions, no resolution to his despair... At least not yet. Instead, he had his immediate needs tended to first. He found rest, he was nourished by food and water, and he was given the strength he needed to continue his journey. Sometimes God's divine providence is amazingly simple. Even when we might want answers to the most difficult questions, what may really be necessary is simply for our basic needs to be met. Doubt, confusion, and frustration are all symptoms of a lack of self-care.

To get to the point of having his needs met, Elijah first had to be quiet and still. Like him, we have to learn how to set ourselves aside and rest. It is only in the strength of God's presence that he could hope to continue his journey. He was ready to give up. We've all been there, maybe not to the degree of wanting to die, although that's certainly possible. Maybe someone you love has been there. It's a place of despair, of surrender. It is not a place for condemnation or shame, but silence... stillness.

But God is not done calling to Elijah just yet. Once his physical needs are met and his strength is renewed, Elijah is guided to Horeb, called the Mountain of God, so that his spiritual strength might be renewed as well. At this holy mountain, Elijah finds shelter in a cave, where the "word of the Lord" spoke to him. Elijah whines to God, complaining that he is all alone. In response, God lets Elijah experience a rock-shattering wind, then a mountain-shaking earthquake, and then a raging fire. But the text says that God was not in the wind, or the earthquake, or the fire. In the loudness of

this terrifying experience, God was not in the destructive forces. So, where was God? The text says that God was in the silence... Some translations say God was in the “still small voice.” It is a moment of serenity... An echo of a presence. It’s the voice you hear in the back of your mind when you are preparing for a difficult task. It is the voice of encouragement, the voice of presence — the still small voice that is hope.

It is in this faint, but discernible whisper, that God spoke to Elijah. Not through impressive, awesome means, but through silence and stillness. In this moment, God called Elijah in, not with a booming voice, but a quiet presence. In the presence of God, Elijah lifts up the fullness of his grief and his despair... And God receives it. In the moment of the prophet’s greatest needs, God meets him with food, rest, and the blessing of God’s own presence. These simple things are enough. Renewed in body and soul, having experienced true rest and peace with God, Elijah goes on to leave that cave, pick up right he had left off, and continue to serve as a champion of God’s will and power for all the people to see.

And even though Elijah was doing great and miraculous things, it wasn’t until he’d reached his breaking point before he realized how truly broken and desperate he really was. He had worked so hard, he had neglected to take care of himself, physically and spiritually. If we are to learn from his story, his mistakes, then we need to learn to make a space and place where we can nurture our own selves, physically, mentally, and spiritually, so that we can hear the divine and gentle whispers of God. Elijah had to run to the wilderness to find such a space, but in finding a place to rest and recover he found the God he was longing for. He moved from despair to hope, fear to mission, and got back to work for the God he served.

We need to make that time for stillness, for rest, for Sabbath, and for self-care, especially when so many of us are worn out and exhausted by political polarization, conspiracy theories, economic hardship, deferred dreams, dislocated populations, and the specter of global war. For us to recognize the subtle movements of God, and for us to have the strength and well-being to follow wherever God is calling us to go, we need to step back from what society is telling us is important. We need to recenter ourselves, focus on the stillness and the silence that God has called us to experience, draw strength from God's presence on a regular basis, and allow that presence to send us where we are needed the most.

So my challenge for each of us is to make time for intentional rest each and every week. Accept God's call and commandment to practice rest. It may take a radical re-scheduling of your week, but it truly is for your own good. It will help you endure the trials and brokenness of life, and renew your ability to live as God's chosen and called people. In my own life, I've learned just how easily I can get burned out if I don't care for myself like God has asked me to. It has forced me to be much more organized, much more intentional about how I spend my time during the rest of the week, but the rest I get as a result of those efforts is absolutely worth it, and it makes me a better pastor and a better person. The same can be true for you.

So take care of yourself... Prioritize your own health and wellbeing, because it is only by experience true rest and life that we can be provide such health and life to others, and continue our ministry of making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world. Let's pray.

***Song**

For the Healing of the Nations

UMH 428

***Benediction**