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[00:00:03] Chapter eight this morning. Romans Chapter eight. We're taking a break from our Encounter Jesus series. So if you brought your journal, don't write in that probably because it might just mess up all of your notes. And because we're going to be taking a break this morning from that. Romans Chapter eight. Crazy week we have this week with the passing of Queen Elizabeth. She's an amazing leader, a historic influence, inspiring legacy, 70 years of service, 15 different prime ministers, 13 different presidents. She served and influenced crazy. But Elizabeth wasn't just a daughter of a king here on Earth, but a daughter of the king of kings. Pretty amazing. This is one of her quotes from 2002. I know just how much I rely on my faith to guide me through the good times and the bad. Each day is a new beginning. I know that the only way to live my life is to try to do what is right, to take the long view, to give of my best in all that the day brings, and to put my trust in God. It's an amazing legacy to remember. But I've learned this this week that on the on October excuse me, on September 12th, the next day after the September 11th attacks, the queen broke a 600 year old royal tradition and requested the playing of The Star-Spangled Banner during the changing of the Guard. Pretty amazing where it was a signal to the world that we would not fight this evil alone. And she said, Grief is the price we pay for love. Today marks 21 years since the 911 attacks on our country. I don't know about you, but I still remember the day. I still remember where I was that day when everything happened, what I felt.

[00:01:52] And it's something that we should never forget. Something that we should always remember and never forget. Still, 21 years later, there are massive effects of this terrible these terrible attacks. If you guys have noticed on the news that first responders of that day that are continuing to pass away from illnesses that they that they received from responding to that day. So let's continue to pray for for them continue to pray for those who were affected by this, who continually are affected by this, and for our country because we need Jesus more than ever. Amen. God, we thank you so much for your word this morning. And. Lord, we thank you, God, for. Your presence, Lord. We thank you, God, that your presence is here. We thank you, Lord, that we can pray your presence to be with the people that were affected by. I know all of us were affected by those terrible attacks 21 years ago. But, Lord, there's still families that still feel the effects of it. We pray that you would intervene on our behalf. Lord, in your presence would be with them. God remembering the legacy in the life of Queen Elizabeth. Lord, we're I just think, Lord, I know I've said this that at last service in the and on Thursday but I just think about how honored we would be to be able to have someone like the queen the Queen Elizabeth to be in the room with us, to be in the same room with us as one of the 13 presidents or 15 prime ministers to be in the same room to ask her things to to talk things through with her or to ask her questions. And we don't want to miss out this morning that the king of kings is here in this room with us and how honored we are for you to be in our presence.

[00:03:37] God. To be able to hear from you, to glean from you, to receive your word from you this morning. Lord this morning as we approach this next service, as we approach this next teaching. Lord, we know that for you. This is not your second service. We're not. You're not coming to this Lord wanting to do the same work as you did before God. We want to hear from you specifically in a new and fresh way today. Because God, each of us coming into this service this morning, Lord, you want a unique work with them, with each and every one of us. God, you have a special word for us this morning, Lord. So God, I even I even prayed, Lord, as I as I speak this morning, Lord, whatever you want to say to this group of people, Lord, to each and every one of us, God, this morning, Lord, we open our hearts to Your Spirit, to the work of Your Spirit. We don't want to just approach this as we have every Sunday morning, Lord. We want to approach this God with it. Expecting you to move in a new way. We surrender to you, Lord. We thank you for this time in Jesus name. Amen. Hey, man. Well, thank you again. I want to publicly thank you guys for praying for our sabbatical. If this is your first time here with us or your new with us. The church was able to bless my wife and I with a two month sabbatical this summer. We spent on sabbatical the month of June in the month of July. And I really, really want to thank you guys for not only giving us that, but even just your prayers as we just really took that time to be intentional.

[00:05:17] We really wanted that time to really be intentional, but I'm so thankful for that time. My wife and I, I've been on staff here now for 14 years and it's been a blessing to be able to serve alongside you guys and to be able to serve with you guys. And my wife has been here even longer than I have. And so it was just an amazing time to really get away and to see the face of God. And one of the things that we were thinking through as we were approaching and this year, when we found out that we were going to go on sabbatical, we just felt like this was such a unique gift. Not everybody gets a chance to just pause for a couple of months or for an extended period of time. So we just we thought, man, what an amazing, incredible gift that we have in this. And so as we are praying and praying over the year, just what God wanted us to do and how we should approach the two months. One of the things that God put on our hearts is we don't want to waste a day we wanted to be intentional with every day. We knew God would be intentional with us. And so we didn't want to waste a single moment, we didn't want to waste a day. And we believe God answered that prayer for us. And He was so faithful to us. He spoke to us in such incredible ways, such amazing ways. And as we were approaching closer and closer, I began to really pray through God, what do you want me to do for this time? You know, we took one month out in California. We went away for for a month and the month of June to California, just to kind of get away from the heat and get away from, you know, just the life of Las Vegas and just the routine of our own life and just almost in like a monastic way to go to a different place, a different setting, to really seek the face of God, to put things a way to put things to the side and really just seek his face.

[00:07:07] And only that for us, man, was an amazing experience. And as we were trying to as we were approaching it closer and closer, we're like, Okay, what things do we not want to bring with us? What are some of the things that we want to do to make sure that we are seeking the face of God and just approaching his throne for those two months? And so we begin to pray God, what do you want to get out of our lives or what things do we need to put on pause? Or What things do we need to just surrender to you? Submit to you one of those things I was able to fast from my phone for two months. I turned off my phone and put it in a drawer and I just left it. I left it at home. I never looked at it. I got a flip phone. You guys remember flip phones? I got a flip phone, like, intentionally so that there was like no Google, no emails, no social media fasted from social media. I fasted from the news and go figure I didn't miss anything without two months of news like they miss nothing. So the only thing I missed was gas prices went up and they were really elevated in California. So then that that part. But got to be I got to just have this flip phone that only was used for emergencies. Remember how like satisfying it was to like when you hung up the phone to close the phone, it was like so satisfying for some reason. Just close it and be like, I hung up that call, you know? But it was just a phone, just for emergencies. I think I'd charged it like five times throughout the whole month or a whole couple of months away and stuff like, you know, you charge your phone every day.

[00:08:37] This one just lasted forever. It's crazy. But I just wanted to to fast from some of those things, some of the things that just are noise and distractions and disruptions in our life. And I can't tell you how freeing just that alone was. We were, as we were praying, a theme that kept coming to our mind and into our heart was the theme of identity. The theme of identity. Again, I've been on staff for 14 years here. I've had different responsibilities, different things that I've done here. And it is easy to get tied up in our identity. But being the wrong thing, having our identity be in our gifts or our talents, or having our identity be in our position or our career, having our identity be in our credentials or our ministry. Did you know, even with ministry, that ministry can become an idol? You know, that that ministry itself can even be an idol where we stop serving God. But we're just serving the ministry, just serving our pastor, or just serving the worship ministry for me or just serving whatever. Fill in the blank of of that even becoming its own idol. Of going, I need to do this or I need to accomplish these things. I need to get these things done because if I don't, the ministry is going to fail instead of looking at it as God, I just want to do this for you no matter what this is. I just want to do this for you. I remember even for me, this really push came to shove really from me a few years ago. I was leading worship a lot more and using my voice a lot more and I wasn't really stretching my vocal cords as I should have been and taking care of them and taking care of it as I should have been.

[00:10:18] And I started feeling kind of the effects of it. And I went into into the doctor and the doctor went down there and saw that I was starting to develop nodes on my vocal cords. And for anybody who knows anything about vocals and vocal chords and everything, that's like the worst thing that can happen to you that can really affect you for the rest of your life, where you can't use it as you once did for the rest of your life. And really, for me, as I was going through vocal therapy and going through these exercises and praise God, God reversed it for me where I didn't have to get surgery or anything like that. But in that time, as I was praying and I was I was going through vocal therapy, I really came to this, like, pivotal moment in my life of going, what if I never led worship again? What if I never sang again? What if I could never play guitar again? What if I never led worship again? Would I still find my satisfaction in my identity in the Lord? Or is all my identity wrapped up into this thing that I do? What if I never had the opportunity to do it again? What? I still be fully satisfied in my identity with the Lord. So as we approached the sabbatical, this was really kind of the theme for us was this this theme of identity, God, we don't want we're going to put down all of the other identities that rise to the surface so often in our life. We're going to put all the things down and we just want to remember our relationship with you. We wanted to approach the sabbatical, just remembering God. We want to just foundationally just get back in right relationship with you and to hear you again and to listen to you again.

[00:11:57] And to seek your face. This morning, there was four things that God showed us on our sabbatical that I think are a message for each of us today. Four things this morning that God showed us on our sabbatical that I think are a message for us today. And it all started June 1st with a phone call. It all started on June 1st with a phone call. June 1st was our first day on sabbatical. We woke up, we got the car all packed up for the month. We were just about to head out. And my wife, Nikki, her grandmother, her grandmother's name is Nita. She's amazing woman of God. Amazing woman of prayer, just a prayer warrior. Inspirational prayer warrior, honestly. And she really intentionally prayed for our sabbatical before, during and now even after. She really just was was intentionally praying for us. And she called this that morning and she said, Man, as I was praying last night, I really believe God gave me a word for you. Can I share it with you? And we're like, Knock yourself out, because I need to hear everything from God in this time. I mean, anything from the Lord, please speak it to us. And so she, as she was saying, she was praying for us. She said she was praying through God. What do you want to do in their life? What do you want to show them? And she first said, God, I, I pray over them. A road to Damascus experience like Paul, where you knock them off their they're a horse and you just speak to them. And she felt like God said to her, That's not what I want to do with them in this time. And she said, Okay, Lord, what do you want to do with them? And as she continued to pray, she felt like God said, I want them to have a Lazarus experience.

[00:13:43] And she said, okay, so this is something dead that needs to get brought to life. Is there something dying or something that needs to get brought to life? And and she believed that the word for us that God gave to Nikki and I was no, Lazarus was a friend of God. I want them to become my friend again. I want them to become a friend of God. And that's our first point this morning, to become a friend of God. You know, for us, like all of those identities, being a pastor, being a worship leader, being a husband, being a father, being, you know, all of these other things a guitar player, a songwriter, a singer. I wanted to put all of those things aside. I believe God wanted me to put all of those things aside. Same thing for my wife and to remember how to be his friend again, to become a friend of God before anything else. When we were on on our on her time in in June. Romans Chapter eight was something that was prophesied over us, a word that was just prophesied over us. And it became a theme for me. The whole chapter became a theme from my time, from both months. It just something I continually read, just have to kind of pray over my life. And I wanted to share a couple of scriptures with you this morning in regards to our four, four points. Romans Chapter eight, verse five. It says, For those who live according to the flesh, set their minds on the things of the flesh. But to those who live according to the Spirit, set their minds on the things of the Spirit, for to set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the spirit is life and peace.

[00:15:27] For the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God, for it does not submit to God's law. Indeed it cannot. Those who are in the flesh cannot. Please God. To become a friend of God is not to set our minds on things of the flesh. But to live according to to the spirit, to set our mind on life and peace. According to the Spirit. Set their minds. On life and peace. I love that in verse six for to set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the spirit is life and peace. Who wants a mind of life and peace in here. Right. I mean, what is it like to have a mind of life and peace in our time, in our day and age? When was the last time your mind was at peace? When was the last time that you lay your head on, on your pillow, in your bed and you thought, I have no worries about tomorrow. I don't care about what happened today. I can just rest in peace tonight. When was the last time that your mind was at peace? I mean, with all the things with all of just the influx of different news and things that are happening and life and trials and tribulations and not to mention, like our jobs and like the inflation of everything in life, of all of the things that we're paying for in life and all of these kind of things. Now, when was the last time you remembered your mind filled with the life of God and at peace? And being a friend of God. Being a friend of God, this is one of the blessings of being his friend. Is the Spirit of God fills your mind with life and peace.

[00:17:24] And I thought, men, I want that. We want that for this time. So we began to think what were the what are the characteristics of being someone's friend? If we're supposed to become a friend and that was really the foundational piece for the rest of our time on our sabbatical was How do we become a friend of God once again? So we started to think through like the characteristics of being His friend and being a friend of somebody else, the characteristics of a friend. You talk often, you know, with your best of friends, you're you maybe you have a group chat or you've pinned it on your, in your messages, their chat or, you know, you talk to them about everything. As soon as something happens in your life, you're like, Man, I can't wait to tell so-and-so what has been going on in my life or what happened today. You talk about the important things. You talk about nothing. You know, if you have those kind of friends where it's just like you don't even have to talk about anything, you just love talking to them and spending time with them. You hit them up when they're when you're bored. They know everything about you. The good stuff, the bad stuff. You enjoy spending time with them. And I thought, Man, this is what I want to be like during this time. I want to remember this, enjoying my time with the Lord and just talking with them, not even to ask them things, but just to talk with them, just to spend the day with them. There was there was times where because I had a flip phone there, there was a one at one of the times in July. We went to Portland for a weekend and I my wife went home with with Ella to to put her down for a nap.

[00:19:01] And she's like, why don't you just walk around for a little bit? So I got lost in Portland and it was really amazing. It was actually really awesome to just walk around and go, I have no idea where I'm going right now and I'm just going to figure it out and not even ask for directions. I'm just going to walk. And I honestly had such an amazing time with the Lord of just talking to him as I was walking of just like chatting with the Lord and that weird just chatting with my friend. And I loved it. It was amazing. But to be his friend, we need to do something. We need God to help us do something in our lives. Number two this morning to put to death the deeds of the body. Romans, chapter eight, verse 12, skip down a few verses with me. So then brothers. We are debtors. Not to the flesh. To live according to the flesh. For if you live according to the flesh, you will die. But if you. But if by the spirit you put to death. The deeds of the body, you will live for all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God. Notice I put this second that it's not put to death the deeds of the body first to become his friend. But there's an order here. There's an intentional order here. First, we need to become a friend of God. And second, we put to death the deeds of the body. Why is it that intentional order? Because often in our life, we try to get our hearts right first. We want to get all the things, all this stuff that we that are problems in our life.

[00:20:33] We want to fix all of those things first. We want to get all of those things right. And then we sit and think, once I get right, then I will become his friend. Once I fix all of these things, then I will reestablish my relationship with God. I need to I need to fix all of these things first. I need to become a better person first and to do these things that I know I need to do. And then I will become his friend. But God wants something different. He wants you to come just as you are and to be his friend. Why? Because he's the one that's going to help put to death the deeds of the body. He is the one that is going to help change you from the inside out. He's the one that's going to convict your heart to challenge you. Do you need that in your life? Do you want that in your life? Do you need those people in your life? Do you need this kind of influence in your life? He's the one that begins to search your heart and to say, Man, there's something wrong here. That's the the life relationship that we have. He begins to search our minds and our hearts and he says, that is not life right there. That's going to fill your mind with death and with pain and with trauma. We need to remove that. I want to fill your mind with life. You're you're anxious, you're uneasy. You're you're dealing with this in your life. And this pain is just causing. I want to fill your mind with peace. So I'm going to search your heart. I'm going to search your mind. And I'm going to remove those things and help you put to death the deeds of the body.

[00:21:58] This last year, my wife and I, we a couple of years ago, I read a book called The Emotional Healthy Church by Pete Scazerro. And and he talked about the importance of healthy spiritual rhythms in your life. And he said that often as Christians, we focus on a couple of rhythms and we think if we can get these rhythms right, everything else, I'll be a healthy Christian, I'll be a healthy father, I'll be healthy husband, mother, wife, fill in the blank. I'll be a healthy Christian if I focus on these things. And often those things are prayer and spending time in God's word. But then the problem is, is we become unhealthy in all of these other spiritual rhythms that everything starts to become unhealthy in our life. And what was he talking about? Well, different practices that as Christians, as we are trying to be like Christ and as we're trying to grow in our faith and to grow in our walk with him, God leads us in a different way of living, different practices, different rhythms that we should be practicing in our life. And when those things are out of whack, when we're not practicing those things faithfully, everything else, that's where unhealthiness really starts to rise to the surface. Practices like prayer for sure. Practices like spending time in God's word, but also help a healthy family. Practices of silence and solitude. Practices of Sabbath and rest. Focusing on our emotional and physical health practices of generosity. The practice of simplicity of life, the practice of service, the practice of missions, and the practice of community. And you see what Pete Scazerro was getting at here is as we're following Jesus as His disciples. If one of those things is unhealthy, it begins to really throw every other spiritual rhythm off.

[00:23:57] So you might today be like, Why am I so unhealthy? I'm spending time in prayer. I'm spending time at his word. Why am I still unhealthy right now? Why do I feel like everything is just kind of a mess right now in my life when I'm doing it all in isolation and I'm not practicing community? You see what I'm getting at here when I'm not practicing community, I'm not practicing generosity. I'm not being there with my family. But I'm spending time in prayer and I'm spending time in the Bible. Shouldn't that be it? But no, there as a disciple, there are practices and rhythms that we should be really looking to balance in our life and to serve God in to practice. Not only maybe it's it's man. I'm I'm spending a lot of time with family. I'm spending a lot of time in rest and I'm spending a lot of time in community. But I'm not spending time in God's word. I'm not spending time praying. I'm not spending time getting alone and just being in silence and solitude before God. And if a few of those things are out of balance, if they're unhealthy, it really affects everything else. It begins to affect every part of us. For me, one of the things that we really focused on this year for for my family was Sabbath and the importance of rest and the importance of getting a Sabbath in our life and being able to just. And for for many of us, Sabbath, it is kind of the wrong thought process. When we think of Sabbath. I'm not talking about Sabbath of just the Old Testament, of it being a law and our life that you have to keep. I'm talking about New Testament Sabbath of living out the rest that God has given as a gift to us.

[00:25:38] You know, this is what it talks about in Hebrews chapter four of being able to boldly approach the throne of God because of his rest that he gives to us. And to practice this rest, to be able to to practice a time to put everything aside and just to focus on God and to focus on your family. But this is not like Sabbath. It is not like don't don't get it wrong or get it mixed up. It's not just like spending one day just reading the Bible all day long, which a lot of us feel like Sabbath is supposed to be like we feel like, okay, for a Sabbath, I have to spend Sunday. I go to church and then I just read the Bible for the rest of the day. No, that's not what what? God. That's not the gift that God is giving to us. When He says, I want to give you Sabbath, there's a rest and a freedom that comes with your relationship with Jesus. And he's saying, I want you to take one moment of the day or of the week, excuse me, one day of the week to just remember that rest and to live in that rest and to not live in the normal routines of your life, the normal routines of work and the normal routines of everything else. I want you to put that to rest for a moment, for a day, so you can live in my rest. So you can live in the freedom that I've given you. And for us we've been practicing that. And it was amazing to then come to sabbatical and it was like Sabbath on steroids, right? It was like every day was Sabbath day for us for 60 days.

[00:27:01] And so we started to try to think, how can we put to death the needs of the body? What are some of those things that we can do to really be at rest for these couple of months? And there was something really simple that, God, I already said it, but God was stirring my heart to do before I got to the month of June. And it was something so small, but I can't tell you the the incredible freedom it was to be able to silence my phone for two months. The clarity that I was able to have with God to turn off my phone and to silence it for two months. I mean, clarity. I've never honestly, I don't really remember the last time I had before being able to silence all the notifications, all email, text messages, all of those things. And just to be in the moment, just to open my mind up for the Lord to search my mind and to search my heart and to have this time of prayer, to be with my family and to just be present in the moment and not have to worry about my phone. There was so much freedom that came from that small of a thing. Know how dangerous this little thing is? How like dangerous it is, where like, everybody gets that, like phantom bugs in their phone, in their pocket, where they're like, did it just take a did I just get a text or an email on me? Just taking it out right now. I'm sure some of you have like the urge to get out your phone right now just to check to see if I haven't checked in 10 minutes to see if I had a text message.

[00:28:30] Oh, my gosh, did I get that email? I emailed that person back. I'm just waiting for that email that the text now to the email. Now, you know, all of those kind of things like there's we are just so tied to it. We're so like in bondage to it. All of our finding everything that we have and that we hold like we find in our phone, even like our, our spiritual walk with God. Many of us, we look to our phone for our, for the Bible, which is amazing to have the Bible at our fingertips like that. But man, all of the disruption, the disruptions and distractions that come from it, just even as we're reading the Bible on our phone and like the the phone knows that you're reading it and it just starts like all of, like the notifications start coming, like a huge influx and you're like, what in the world, man? The space to be able to just turn off your phone for a moment. And I know not all of us have the freedom to be able to silence it or turn it off for two months. But even just for a moment, like even just practicing for a day to turn it off for the day or to turn it off for the hour. Like to turn it off for a moment of our week and just say, I'm not going to look at this. I'm not going to worry about this. I'm going to put it away. Just put it away. Start with 15 minutes. And that 15 minutes is going to go by and think it's actually not that bad to be without this thing. Go for a little bit longer just to take a moment to where you can now take a day of just resting from it and not running to it and not looking at it and letting it disrupt your life, the clarity that it will bring you.

[00:30:02] I'm in seminary right now. I wrote a ten page paper in that time and a day and a half, like, that's how much clarity I have. I may have failed it, but. But I wrote it, you know, like, it was just amazing just to be able to be in my thoughts and to create with the Lord and to be like, bored again. Do you guys remember being bored? Like, I forgot what it was like being bored and like having Google at your finger. We were at like SeaWorld and a dolphin is jumping out of the water. And I'm like, how how high can a dolphin jump out of the water? I guess I'll never find out. I don't have Google to tell me. So I guess that question is unanswered. You know, like remember, like not knowing all of the answers and just, like, thinking and and just like, living life without having that to run to. I mean, there was times where I was in line to go pick up a pizza and I'm waiting in line. My family's not around me. It's like a 45 minute wait and like, everybody's on their phone, so I can't talk to anybody. The TV isn't playing, it's turned off, and I'm just sitting there waiting for a pizza, looking all weird, like. Like weird, right? Like, when was the last time you just waited in line for anything? You know, everybody is, you know, like this. But it was like, I got a moment to just go, okay, lord, like, I've got nothing else to think about right now. I got nothing else to do. I'm just waiting here. So what am I going to do? God, I'm just going to talk with you. I'm going to dream with you.

[00:31:36] I'm going to create with you and just let you search my heart and let you search my mind and just be in communion with you in this moment. To give God space, no matter how much space you're actually able to give to just look at your day, to look at your week and go, God, I just want to give you some space. I just want to give you a moment as just a moment of time. Whatever routine you're used to doing, whatever thing you're used to doing in your career or in your ministry or, you know, to even be able to put that aside. There was a time, uh, when we first got into California, we went to a worship and prayer night at a church, and it was called Seek for Sundays. And it was a time of just prayer, just worship. We were all in a big circle, kind of all facing in the center of the room. There was like three or four worship leaders that were leading worship. And there was at the beginning of the evening, there was a gentleman that walked in to to the service. And a lot of people, it was like they hadn't seen him in a long time. And so they're like, oh, my gosh, it's so good to see you and hugging him and just walking in and welcoming him back. And we began the night and about halfway through the night, we were just kind of pausing. The music was just playing and just was an attitude of worship, of just like being silent before the Lord for a little bit. And that gentleman, he was about a row and a couple of seats away from me. And he sat down and he just started spending time with the Lord and just had his hands open and just was sitting on the floor and just worshiping the Lord and the worship leader.

[00:33:06] There was a worship leader right in front of him. His back was was towards him. So he didn't he didn't see him or anything like that. But he had a moment where he was just on his guitar. He was praying and he kind of looked back. He put his guitar down, he turned around and he took his his in-ear monitors out. And he just sat down and he just started praying for this gentleman. And a couple minutes later, two or three other people came around and they laid their hands on him and started praying for them. And a couple of minutes later, a few more people started coming around and they laid hands on him and started praying for him and just encouraging him. About 15 minutes later, I mean, there was like a group of people 12, 13, 14, 15 people that were laying their hands on him, praying for him and loving him. I can't tell you. I don't think I've ever heard a grown man cry the way this guy cried that night. I mean, just the pain and the grief that he was feeling, but like the joy and the love he was receiving from the body of Christ and from the Lord, just like wrapping his arms around him. And it all started with the worship leader putting down his guitar and giving space for God to move. I'm a worship leader and I've been in a lot of those moments. It is very rare that I think, you know what, I should probably put my guitar down and stop leading worship right now. Like in my mind, it's even a good thing where it's like I'm leading worship. I'm trying to think, what? How am I going to lead these people? What am I going to say? God, what do you want? And to think, like to have the faith enough to go, I'm going to put this down and I'm going to give God this space to move through me, into this person, and to love, be an extension of God's love from me to this person.

[00:34:47] What is the instrument you need to put down in your life? The routine that you're doing. It may even be a good thing. It may even be something that God has called you to do. But He just wants you for a moment to just give him space and to put the guitar aside. Pastor Josh texted me this. He was here for the first service and he he texted me this that God gave him and he said, Put the instrument down and be the instrument I use. I love that story. Number three this morning, we are the children of God. Romans eight, verse 15. Says for you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear. But you have received the spirit of adoption as sons by whom we cry. Abba Father. The Spirit himself bears with our spirit that we are children of God. And if children then heirs, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, provided we suffer with Him in order that we may also be glorified with Him. Throughout this sabbatical, God started and laid the foundation of being my friend again, but then it pivoted at a moment in time for us. And it was more than I want you to be more than a friend. It's not just to be my friend, but I want to remind you that you are my child. That you are my adopted son, that you are my adopted daughter. I want you to remember that you are my child. It's hard. Sometimes it's easy. Honestly, it's easy to remember that we have a lot of songs like that, right? We have songs like I'm No Longer a Slave to Fear. I am a child of God. And it's it's easy to every church service to be reminded we are his children.

[00:36:40] That's our identity. We're his children. Anybody else in here feel like it's hard to feel like you're a child of God? Anybody else deal with that where you feel like, I don't know if I feel like that today. I don't know if I feel like his child today. And you wrestle with the the dichotomy of being his child and feeling like his child. But what inheritance like this is what what? What the Bible says if children then heirs were heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ. So what does this mean for us? What does this mean for us? What inheritance do we partake in? Well, we get to partake in intimacy with God, this deep intimacy with God. Ultimately, we get to be with God for eternity. Yes, we're no longer slaves to fear, but we don't have to even fear. Death itself like death isn't even a fear for us anymore. We get the inheritance of the power of the Holy Spirit that we don't even have to worry about words that we're going to say or being able to do something that God will equip us with the power of the Holy Spirit, the same power and the same Spirit that Christ received. He now breathes into you and gives to each and every one of His children. And now we get this community like, I'm not the only child in the community of Jesus. Amen. Like, I'm not like the only son, the first and only son in the community of Jesus. I'm looking out right now at a bunch of sons and daughters of Jesus Christ. I'm looking out at a community and Jesus, a bunch of sons and daughters of the Father in heaven. And he's given us this spirit of adoption of sons.

[00:38:21] I love that he encourages us, like for many of us, as we think to be bored and to, like give God space to search our hearts. Man, I don't know if I can give up that space, too. If some of us might even be thinking like, Man, that's a scary place to be in. The scary place to be and to be in my thoughts. Because pain and trauma of my life might stir up again things that I push down, things that I, you know, wanted to. I just wanted it to go away. And I just suppressed it. I don't I don't think I'm ready for those things to come up. And I'll be honest and vulnerable with you guys today when even in those moments there was vulnerability in those moments, even from myself, I mean, there was times for me. My mom passed away when I was 11 years old and God began to even stir up some of those feelings that I thought, man, I thought I dealt with that. And God began to heal my heart once again and remind He reminded me that He cares about those things. He cares about all of those things, the things that we suppress, the things that we don't want to think about anymore. He's like, No, I want I love you enough to really heal you from that and to really heal you of your pain and to really seek out those things and to say, I've got a better plan for you, I've got a better purpose for you in your life. And to heal, you have to of those of those things, we don't have to, like, live in fear. And to go back to fear, like where we're slipping into the spirit of slavery again and falling back into fear, as verse 15 says.

[00:39:51] But you have received the spirit of adoption as sons by whom we cry out Abba Father. We have this ability to live in a new identity. When we struggle with feeling like a child of God, it's because we're living in an old identity. We met a friend out there in California. Her name is Bree, and she was talking to my wife and I about this. When when we live in another identity, we won't feel like the identity of being his child when we live in that way. And all of those spiritual rhythms are out of balance and they're unhealthy. And we're living in a way that is like the spirit of the world or our son or daughter of the world. We begin to forget about our true identity. We begin to forget and not feel anymore like our true identity. Only when we live by the spirit and put to death the world identity, to flesh identity and live in our new identity. Will we feel like we are his children? That's the only time we'll feel like it. So if you're having trouble feeling like a child of God, since let the Lord search your heart, let your father search your heart, and to see those things confess your weaknesses before him, the things that you've suppressed, bring it out and laid at the feet of Jesus and say, I'm so weak, Lord, I don't even know how to deal with this. I don't know how to deal with this pain. I don't know how to deal with this sin. But I want to bring it before you. I need you have mercy on me. Are there things in your life, spiritual rhythms that are that are out of balance? Are you out of community? Do you need to be in community to help remind us of our true identity? Because when we live out in our true identity, number four this morning, we have the ability to cry out to our Abba father.

[00:41:40] Cry out to your Abba, father. There's a deep intimacy with God that we receive. When we live in our true identity. Abba, meaning like Abba was a word that was like a child coming to their daddy, or it's a a term of endearment from a child to their poppa to their daddy. It was this deep, intimate relationship. And it's interesting that in the Old Testament, Jews wouldn't refer to God in that kind of intimate way. They wouldn't refer to God as Abba father. But in the New Testament, through the access that Jesus has given us, through the inheritance that Jesus has given to us, and Mark, chapter 14, verse 36, Jesus was in the garden, and he cried out To who? His Abba father. He said, Abba Father, if there's any other way, let this cup past be for me, but nevertheless not my will. But yours be done and has given you the same ability to cry out of Abba father. I need you have mercy on me I need you in my life Have mercy on me. He's given us the same access to deep intimacy with God, the father through himself. There's a beautiful peace and freedom the Christian will experience when they remember simply that they are a child of God. There's an intentional intimacy God desires from his children. When we press into our identity, we aren't just Christians. We are adopted sons and daughters. That is the truest and most fulfilling identity we can claim with the fullest confidence. When I was reading over this, the theme word rose to the surface of Romans Chapter eight. And for me, that theme word was redemption. It was being redeemed. And as I was praying over this in a time of prayer with my wife and I believe that God gave me this vision of this word redemption, this vision that I believe that God gave me.

[00:43:41] And as I was praying it over and I was seeking the face of God. I began to see this picture of ocean waves, these ocean waves that were crashing over and over and over again, just constant and crashing over and over. And I believe God gave me a word that I wanted to share with you that I wrote down in my journal. This is a journal entry of mine during my sabbatical. I wrote, his redemption never runs out. His redemption is constant. It's powerful. It's unstoppable. It's overwhelming. And it's beautiful. I need his redemption to come over me continually. Like the waves new and fresh. I need his living water to wipe the dirt of sin away. It is hard to feel like. Like we are his children. That's where his constant redemption comes in. Giving God space to search our hearts, to remind us that we are his children and his redemption comes over us constantly. It's unstoppable. It comes over us. It wipes us from the sin and the dirt of life. And it just is this constant, constant coming over and over and over us. We need his redemption and the reminder of it every day. And so this morning, I wanted to close our time as the worship team comes back up. I just wanted to there's not a special call this morning if you guys want to stand with me this morning. It's not a special call that I want to give this morning. I just wanted to give an opportunity for God to move. I want to give him space this morning. Even just a moment of time, whatever time that you have to give, if you have to leave, don't worry about it. It's okay if you need to leave.

[00:45:26] Whatever time that you have to give, whatever space you have to give to God. This morning I wanted to just give a moment and worship to cry out to our Abba father. We're going to have the pastors, elders and follow up team upfront. Maybe you need some time this morning to come forward and to receive prayer. Maybe you're going through something in your life. You're battling through a trial, a tribulation that you need prayer for. Maybe you need to confess something. Maybe there's just a sin that's burdening your heart and you just need to confess it before the Lord and to receive His forgiveness. Maybe you've never walked with the Lord. Maybe you've never began a relationship with the Lord. I want to encourage you to come forward so we can pray for you and so that you can receive his forgiveness and that you can press in to the promises of God that God has given to you and to surrender your life to Him. I just want to take a moment for us to just worship, to give God space this morning, and to let His redemption just pour out over us. To allow him to speak and to move in your heart, to cry out this morning to our Abba, to our father. He hears us. He's listening. And give a moment for him to speak to your heart. Father. I just. I just want to pray over. My brothers and my sisters in this family. God, thank you for that. We are your family, that we're children. Speak to us right now, Lord. Search our hearts right now. God. I feel like there's a couple of people in here board that are even with me saying that and praying that there's fear that is stirring in their heart.

[00:47:15] I don't know if I can bring that up. I don't know if I can confess that. I don't know if I can deal with that right now. I pray, Lord, your mercy would wash over them right now. Pray that your presence, Lord. That they would feel you. Wrapping their arms around around them. I pray, Lord, that you would even pull those things out and with your the care and love that I know you have that you would. Heal the pain. Repair what's broken. That you would pour out your love and your grace and mercy this morning. We want to give you freedom to move today aboard the space to move today. Have your way with us for Jesus.