

Alright. Hey, everybody. Welcome to our online service today. We're so glad that you're joining us from wherever you're watching from. Could we take a moment and just welcome each other together today? It is so good to be together. It is good to be one church that right now meets online and in homes and carries the hope of Jesus to thousands of locations. And it's going to be so good to get to see many of you on October 4th. When we come back for a weekend experience, we're looking forward to that. And so we're in now a series called along the way last week, we started this off and we've just been talking about some of the lessons that we've learned in 2020, some of the lessons that we've learned as we've journeyed in this season. And so these are lessons that have profoundly impacted each one of us.

These are lessons that we don't just want to get through. We want to learn from, and we wanted to discover Jesus in. And so we've been taking these couple of weeks and we're just going to talk about those lessons. And we're really going to try to try to apply those to our life. We don't just want to be hearers of the word. We want to be doers of the word. See what it says here in Proverbs four, it says my child pay attention to what I say, listen carefully to my words, don't lose sight of them. Let them penetrate deep into your heart for they bring a life to those that find them and healing to their whole body. You see, Jesus has been teaching us. Jesus has been speaking to us and if we're willing to listen to his gentle whisper, there is a life for each one of us and there's healing for our mind and our soul and our body.

So what I want you to hear is that 2020 is not just a year to try to get through. It's not just a year that you're going to want to forget. It could be a season that has Jesus written all over it. If you'll grab, hold of what he's trying to teach us. If you'll take hold of the lessons, he's trying to speak to each one of us. I don't know about you, but in this year there's been a whole bunch of it that I've tried to just get through. There's been a whole bunch of it that I've kind of wanted to just forget. And it's been really difficult, man. It's been a really, really hard season. Everything from decision fatigue to COVID brain is real. So if you felt some of that, if you felt yourself, just trying to get through the season, then you are in good company.

I often find myself trying to just get through and fight my way through it and struggle and strive and just scrape and scrap. And maybe you felt that way a little bit. This year. I can remember. There was one specific day that was really busy and I got all the way through it. I had probably like five people I met with face to face team planning, meetings, prayer times, a lot of decisions to make. And then I went home and I got to see my wife and it was with my kids. And I got all the way to the end, the day. And I thought to myself, I did it all on my own. I did it. I made it through the day, but I did it all on my own and my own efforts with my own energy, using my own skills, relying on my own talents.

And that was an exhausting way to do that day. A lot of the season has been exhausting and maybe you've felt like that. Maybe you've tried to make it through the season, but you're realizing you're doing it all on your own. And here's the problem. Any part of my life that I can do on my own is actually not worth doing. And all of that self-reliance leads to exhaustion and

it's just not worth it. So along the way, along the way of this season, here's what I've learned. If Jesus isn't in it, I don't want it. If Jesus isn't in it, I don't want it. And I don't believe you do either. If Jesus is an end the day to day of my life in the decision making in the relationships at work, as I interact with people, I don't really want it. And I don't think that you do either.

And I think that parallels what Moses experienced in the old Testament. You might be familiar with the story of Moses and the Israelites as they came out of Egypt. You see, let me just refresh it for all of us here. After 400 years of slavery, the Israelites were freed to start their journey to the promised land. God came to Moses and he said, Hey, you're going to go ahead and tell Pharaoh, let my people go. And so through, through, through signs and wonders and through some miracles, the Israelites were freed and they started off their journey towards the promised land. There was only one problem to do that. They had to leave the known and the familiar and what they were comfortable with. And they started off going into a uncomfortable, dry, hot, desolate desert. They had to leave their routine and their normal, and now everything was going to be flipped, turned upside down.

And so maybe that parallels a little of what you've experienced this year. If so, you're in good company with the Israelites, check out Moses his conversation with the Lord as they started off on this journey. Moses says, you've been telling me to lead these people, but you've not. Let me know whom you will send with me. You said, I know you by name and you've found favor with me. If you're pleased with me, teach me your ways. So I may know you and continue to find favor with you. Remember that this nation is your people. The Lord replied, my presence will go with you and I will give you rest. Then Moses said to him, if your presence does not go with us, do not send us up from here. Moses says back to God, if your presence isn't there. If Jesus isn't in it, I don't even want to go in the first place.

I think that this is a little bit like what we've experienced and Moses, his story is a little bit of our story. So you may find yourself in this season, out in the desert in a different, uncomfortable place you haven't been before. And Moses was there also. But what he says is I only need your presence. I don't need a junction made hiking boots. I don't need some LEDs on the bottom of my Egyptian chariots. I don't need to go and have a, you know, a beach house on the red sea. I don't even care if Cairo football doesn't even come back to this season. Oh, Moses just says, I need your presence. And if Jesus isn't in it, I don't even want it. I mean, look at that. Look back at verse 12, he says, you've been telling me to lead these people, but you haven't let me know whom you will send with me.

I think this is how a lot of us feel you've been telling me I've been sensing. I should just try to make it through a season. If we could just get the semester started and get the kids back to school. If I can just get to the point where they might have some kind of, some kind of virus, you know, some kind of medicine to take care of the virus. If we can get to the end of this year, then I'll be okay. But what's interesting is that Moses doesn't really talk about the, what he talks about the, who did you catch it? He said, you haven't let me know whom you will send with

me. So what Moses is saying here is that who is actually more important than what, who is with me is more important than what's going on around me. Jesus is more important than answers and his presence is more important than that house, that promotion what's going on with my job, that diagnosis the who is more important than what.

And if Jesus isn't in it, I don't even want it. But why, why is it important that the, who is actually more important than the what? Well, see the why is Jesus? The why is Jesus is the way and the truth and the life. Jesus is a good shepherd. That's leading you on this journey, uh, by streams of still waters by green pastures. Jesus has a narrow gate. That's leading you to the widest life possible. That is why the who matters more than the, what Paul goes on in acts chapter 20. He says, man, I'm compelled by the spirit. I'm going to Jerusalem, not knowing what will happen to me there. Paul says, I agree with Moses. I don't even know exactly what's going to happen, but that doesn't matter because the, who is with me. Can I just tell you today, the who is with you?

Jesus is with you. And because Jesus is with you, the what of your life starts to matter less. Maybe you've experienced that maybe in this season, you've had a crazy difficult what that you've had to walk through the loss of that job, a prognosis you weren't expecting. Can I just tell you who is with you? And because he's with you, he's filling you with his peace. He's filling you with his joy. He's filling you up right now. Jesus just keeps, keeps reminding you that who's with you and who matters so much more than the what look at Moses goes on to say here. He says, if you're pleased with me, teach me your ways so that I may know you. If you're pleased with me, kind of just tell you in Jesus, God is very pleased with you. And here's why that's so important because he wants to teach you his ways so that you can know him even more.

He wants to teach you. He wants to reveal himself. Why are the essentials of faith so important? Why is it so critical that we're trying to learn? What we've the lessons that we've learned along the way? Why is it so important that this year is called set apart? That's our theme for the year for the good of others and the glory of God. It really comes down to one thing, knowing God, knowing God more fully, and God is so good to us. He wants to teach us about himself so that we can know him more so we can experience even more of his eternal life in our life. John 17 says this. Now this is eternal life that they may know you. The only true God and Jesus Christ, whom you've sent. So when God teaches us, when we get to know him more, we experience even more of that eternal life.

What you think of as eternal life like heaven someday is actually the fullness and the experience of Jesus today, interacting with your day to day, experiencing his fullness of his kingdom in your life. So here's my question for you. Do you know Jesus and notice that I don't just say, do you know about Jesus? Do you know Jesus, because I bet you that you could tell me a lot of what you know about your life. Do you know where Jesus is in your life? Like, do you know where Jesus is in that marital conflict or where Jesus is when you're trying to raise your teenager or where Jesus is, as you're trying to make the decision to move houses, do you know

Jesus because that's the critical piece to eternal life. And that's why it's so important to say if Jesus isn't in it, I don't want it.

Cause I want to know where he is. I want to know how he's interacting. And he's how he's part of those decisions that I'm making has 2020 been a season of knowing God, not just knowing about God, but of knowing him deeply intimately connected because I may not know the outcome from my life, but I can know the one that holds the outcome. I may not fully understand what's going on in this desert, in this dry season when it's not comfortable and it's different than my routine used to be, but I can know the one that is leading me through it. See, God has been teaching you along the way. And he's so good to teach you so that you may know him more and experience more of the eternal life he has to offer. That's awesome. And all of that is critical to the next part in the conversation. God goes on to my presence will go with you and I will give you rest.

That just sounds good. Doesn't it like, even as I read that out loud, receive that for yourself. He wants to give you his rest. Can I ask you parents and students, are you restful as you start this semester, are you restful business leaders as you go on to make decisions that are coming up, do you feel a sense of rest? Do you feel like God is with you right now? It just sounds so good to think about the rest of God in our life. You see restlessness in your soul is like an oil light and an engine. And I think a lot of us have experienced restlessness in this season. And so that's a warning, flasher warning, warning warning, because it's showing you how much of your life Jesus has actually in how much your life is powered by. Jesus will determine how much rest you actually have.

And just like you want an engine running with oil. You want your life powered by the presence of Jesus. You want Jesus in it. And so I think for a lot of us, we just keep thinking like, well, I just need a vacation or I just need more downtime. I need some more naps. I need some more time by myself. And you hear people say things like that a lot, but isn't it interesting that the more that you have those things, they don't actually give you the rest that you're seeking. And cause part of the problem is when you say I need Jesus, I just needed more of a vacation. It's actually that you need Jesus in the planning of that vacation. I just need to have more naps. Well it's actually that you needed to be the last thing on your mind. Well it's actually that you need to invite Jesus into that downtime.

You see the lack of his presence is creating a restlessness inside of our souls. And I've experienced that a lot along the way. And the season earlier, when we were still in full shutdown, my wife and I would go and we would just take country drives and we would just get out of our house and get in the car and just start driving. And it didn't even matter where we were going. Like we didn't care. We didn't care about the destination. We didn't care about how long it was going to take. We just got in the car and we started to drive and what was so good about that was just being together. It was just having time together, just being in the car

and sharing that experience with one another. So maybe you have experienced that lack of rest.

That lack of peace. You've struggled with it this year. Can I just invite you back? It's time to take a country drive. It's time to experience the presence of Jesus. It may be that you have a presence problem and not even presence like he's not with you. Cause if you have Jesus, God is always with you, but maybe you have an awareness of his presence problem. Maybe you're like Jacob in the book of Genesis when he exclaimed, surely God was in this place. And I was not aware of it. I think a lot of times, surely God is in this place, but are you aware of it? If not, that's okay. It's a chance to experience more of his presence to invite his presence, to give you his rest today. Because a lack of awareness of his presence is truly robbing our rest and stealing our joy.

And we were made to live restful. We were made to live with joy checkout. What Psalm 16 says. It says, you make a note to me, the path of life in your presence. There is fullness of joy. God wants to give you rest. That's beyond the circumstances, joy that's beyond situations and hope that's way beyond the news cycle, but it can only be found in him. It can only be found when you invite Jesus into it. And if Jesus isn't in it, I don't want it. I don't think you do either. So then Moses goes on and he finishes up with the whole point of what's important. Here he goes in verse 15, he says, then Moses said to him, if your presence does not go with us, do not send us up from here. Moses says, if Jesus isn't in it Mo don't want it.

I don't even want to go in the first place. If you don't go with me. Moses says the, who is more important than the what? Knowing God is more important than knowing the outcome. And the only way to experience true rest is in his presence. I think we need more Moses's thoughts in our thinking. I've been thinking about this a lot. I'll read passages like this and I'll understand it and understand the journey it is realized. And yet I still stumble into it struggling, striving, scraping through my day and trying to do it on my own. I try to get to the destination fast and get through the journey faster, to get to the end of that pain, to get to the end of that season. But that's not really what Jesus has for me. And I don't think it's what he has for you either.

I think a lot of times we try to build our lives around everything and everyone else, except for the presence of God. And then we wonder why our lives seem like they're crashing down. Like why are my emotions off? Why does my family feel so disconnected? Why does God feel so distant? Why do I feel so apathetic? And then the words of Psalm one 27 come ringing in our ears, someone 27, unless the Lord builds the house, the workers labor in vain, that one hurts that one is like the totality of the season. I was walking through me trying to do it in my own strength, not inviting Jesus into it unless the Lord builds the house. The workers labor in vain for too many of us, our life is manmade. It's not God made. And we're really bad at building our own life. Like we think we're really good at it, but we're really bad at it.

We're like those people at the beginning, part of the American idol season, where they come in and singing and they think they're really awesome, but they're just not. That's how we are at

building our own life. And when we try to build it on our own, we labor in vain. We're not supposed to spend our life trying to build it up brick by brick. We're supposed to spend our life planted, solidly on the rock. This is something that Israelites knew more than anyone for the 400 years of slavery, that was actually their job. Their job was to build bricks. They spent their life building bricks for Pharaoh, the representative of the kingdom of darkness. They knew exactly what it was like to try to live this manmade life. And that's why Moses is so specific and saying, no, God, not anymore. I want your presence to guide us.

I want your presence to lead us. I want to firmly be planted on the rock. The Israel had spent way too much time in fruitless activity. And so God invites them to experience his presence where they can be fruitful and they can experience real life in him. And I think we do the same thing that they were doing brick by brick piece by piece manmade. Like when you make that decision, let's say you make a financial decision without seeking godly counsel and without generosity on the forefront, that's a brick. When you try to tough it out without being vulnerable or let anybody into your pain or not become part of circles or not be part of discipleship and connection with people. That's a brick. When you fill your calendar without placing the mission of God's squarely in the center of your calendar, that's a brick.

And when you try to find rest in your soul, on your own, by yourself, in your own strength, that's a brick and that is an exhausting way to live. But what if you flipped it? What if, instead of trying to make that financial decision on your own, you make it with godly wisdom and godly counsel with generosity at the forefront of the decision. Then that is life on the rock. When you're open and honest about the pain you're feeling, but you're not going to get stuck there and you refuse to stay there. That's life on the rock. When you complete your calendar with the mission of God in mind, and you ask Jesus to join you there as the life on the rock. And when you experience true rest being led by the presence of God, that's the life on the rock. And Jesus is that rock.

The Bible says that Jesus is the stone that the builders had rejected, but he has become the cornerstone, the rock on which we stand. The one that we can build our lives upon safe, secure, strong. So look what Moses goes on to say next in chapter 33, it says, then the Lord said, there's a place near me where you may stand on a rock. When my glory passes by, I'll put you in a cleft in that rock and I will cover you. This is profound. So the Israelites who trying to build their life brick by brick now understand what they really need to do. They need to stand on a rock and be protected by it, affirm foundation and a constant protection and were invited to do the very same thing to look at Jesus and build our life upon him and to say to ourselves, Jesus, if you're not in it, I don't want it.

The only part of my life I want is the one where you are right in the center of it. So along the way I've learned if Jesus isn't in it, I really don't want it. I think I do, but I don't. I struggle and strive, but I shouldn't. And so I'm invited in your invited to allow the presence of God to fill every part of your day to literally say, I only want to do where you, what you're in. Jesus. I only

want to go where you go. I only want to see what you see. I only want to hear what you're speaking. I only want to do what you're inviting me to do. Jesus, wherever you're leading is better than where I've been. So here's my question for you. What is today? You just invited Jesus into your journey. Cause it's been a strange season.

It's been weird, but the Lord is speaking to us and he's teaching us and he wants us to discover the life that he has for us in it. And wherever he's leading us is better than where we've been. And if he's not in that, we don't even want to go there. We don't want it. What if you chose today to just say, Jesus, are you in this, that decision that I have to make that relational conflict that I have things at my workplace right now in school. Jesus, are you in it? And then just choose to invite him in, just say, Jesus, I want you. I want you to be right in the center of it all. I want to build my life upon the rock, a firm foundation and a constant protection. I want to build my life on you.

In fact, even just pray with me right now. Maybe even take your hands and extend them like this just as a sign of openness and surrender. And just even say, Jesus, if you're not in it, I don't want it. I'm tired of trying to do life on my own terms, in my own strength, with my own thoughts. It's exhausting. So today I choose to say that you are more important than what's going on around me. And I know that you hold onto me in the midst of the season and I know that your presence is going to give me rest and joy. And so I invite you into every part of my life. Jesus, I want to do it on my own. I want to go where you go. I want to see with your eyes. I want to hear what the father speaking. I want to invite you into every part of my life. So thank you Jesus, for the lessons that you're teaching us along the way we choose to receive those, we choose to lean into those. We choose to be taught by them so that we can know you more fully. And thank you, Jesus, that you are in every detail of our life. We invite you into every other detail of our life. We invite you to each and every moment we love you Jesus, in your name amen.