

THE BIG IDEA: We can't be the hands and feet of the Son if we don't have the heart of the Father.

The Take-Off

Matthew 11:28-30 from The Message translation of the Bible:

*"Are you tired? Worn out? Burned out on religion? Come to me. Get away with me and you'll recover your life. I'll show you how to take a real rest. Walk with me and work with me—watch how I do it. **Learn the unforced rhythms of grace.** I won't lay anything heavy or ill-fitting on you. Keep company with me and you'll learn to live freely and lightly."*

That phrase - "the unforced rhythms of grace" - is the key for our the series we're in called Rhythms.

Rhythms implies a beat - something (Someone) consistent to follow - a Savior - and that means we let Jesus lead. Of course, the most beautiful rhythms are made up of different sounds and instruments working together to make one sound.

In fact, playing together in rhythm under the lead of a director is the difference between the noise of a middle school band and the moving sounds of a symphony.

The 4 practices that we're studying this month are designed to integrate into one a life marked by "real rest."

Any one taken independently would be as annoying as one person hitting a snare drum apart from any other sound. But woven together, these 4 practices become something beautiful - contagious, even.

A life lived in the unforced rhythms of grace is the best evidence that church is more than "burned out religion."

Last week we looked at solitude and silence, and today we're going to add a second practice: serving.

A disclaimer before we start: if you do feel tired and worn out, the idea that serving can play a part in leading you to rest sounds crazy.

In fact, you're checking out right now because the last thing you want to do is even think about doing anything!

But I would argue that you've seen serving as a snare drum - that you've tried to hit it harder in hopes that it would sound like music, but what you've actually done is ignore the other instruments God's given us.

Serving is not independent from solitude and silence, or from Scripture, or Sabbath rest.

Let me give you the Big Idea and then let's spend a few more minutes talking through it: **We can't be the hands and feet of the Son if we don't have the heart of the Father.**

Rhythm happens in connection, so let's talk through what happens when we aren't connected and what happens when we are.

1. If our hands and feet aren't connected to his heart, it leads to bitterness, burnout, and brokenness.

- a. **Luke 10:38-42**
- b. This is a passage that's usually preached to get people to worship harder, but there is so much to learn from it about having our hands and feet connected to God's heart.
- c. Remember, we can't be the hands and feet of the Son if we don't have the heart of the Father.
- d. Here in Luke 10, we find a frustrated Martha, hassled and distracted by all that she's trying to do for Jesus.
- e. You can hear the desperation in her voice, "Lord, don't you care???"
- f. **If our hands and feet aren't connected to his heart, it leads to bitterness, burnout, and brokenness.**
- g. You've known people who were serving but were mean about it, right?
- h. They've got "disconnected heart" syndrome.
- i. If you try to be the hands and feet of Jesus without God's heart, you just end up hitting and kicking people!
- j. Hurt people, hurt people.
- k. What's the answer? Reconnect.

2. If our hands and feet are connected to his heart, it leads to humility, holiness, and happiness.

- a. We'll talk more specifically about how to reconnect in a minute, but now, let's talk about why?

- b. What happens when we're connected to the Father's heart? We find the answer in John 13.
- c. Here's the story of Jesus washing the disciples' feet - it's a beautiful picture of service
- d. More importantly, it's a picture of what happens when our service is connected to God's heart
- e. **If our hands and feet are connected to his heart, it leads to humility, holiness, and happiness**
 - **John 13:2-5** / Humility
 - **John 13:8-9** / Holiness (all in - whatever it takes - wash all of me!)
 - **John 13:17** / Happiness ("blessed" means happy) comes from serving as Jesus did
- f. God's formula for spiritual joy? Submit to the Father (that's solitude) / Keep your life clean (Scripture does that - more on this next week) / Serve others (serving)
- g. These are the rhythms God wants for you and for me

3. Takeaways

- a. Let's talk through some practical takeaways about serving and staying connected to the Father's heart
- b. ONE: **Serving isn't more important than your soul**
 - Serving must happen inside out
 - "Suck it up, buttercup!" isn't God's advice to tired servers
 - His advice is "Get away with me and you'll recover your life."
 - If you don't feel connected, reconnecting begins with remembering how much you need Jesus - "not just my feet but my hands and my head as well!"
 - **3 John 1:2** / "as your soul prospers"
 - **John 13:3** / we see this in Jesus / he knew his authority, his identity, and his destiny
 - He served from that place of "soul prosperity"
- c. TWO: **Serving isn't a favor for God; it's an honor for us**
 - Sometimes we act as if we've done God a favor by serving
 - Nothing could be farther from the truth
 - Serving is an honor, and the more you read the New Testament, the more you see it
 - **Romans 12:10** / in some translations, "outdo one another in showing honor"
 - **Colossians 3:23** / whatever you do, do it to the Lord
- d. THREE: **People who serve people remind people of Jesus**
 - **Matthew 20:28** / We're never more like Jesus than when we serve, because that's how he came
 - **Acts 10:38** / Jesus went around doing good - do we?

The Landing

Let's close this morning by taking a peek at 1 Peter 4:10

All of us have been given gifts - treasures - spiritual gifts, talents, abilities, resources - and I want you to think about those gifts as opportunities for investment

What will you do with what you have, and will you trust your Father for the return on that investment?

Don't be like Ronald Wayne, who sold 10% of Apple in 1976 for \$800 because he wasn't sure it would work out

[IMAGE / Ron Wayne]

Proverbs 11:25 is clear - "when we refresh, we'll be refreshed"

At the end of 2017, Ronald Wayne's 10% would have been worth \$90 BILLION

How much more will our investment in serving pay off for the kingdom!!!

Let's pray.