

The struggle to find rest

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[0 : 0 0] Well, it used to be the case when you asked someone, how are you? Well, actually, it used to be the case that they actually answered you.

Much of the time now, it's just a way of greeting. But when you genuinely asked someone, how are you doing? It used to be the case that the default answer would be, I'm fine, thank you.

How are you? But not today. Have you noticed today, the default answer to the question, how are you, is more often than not, I'm very busy.

How are you? But it's true, isn't it? Have you noticed that? People more and more, when you ask them how they are, they're saying, I'm busy. I'm busy. They're defining their lives as busy.

And it's true. We live in a world that's busier than it's ever been before. And a world that expects you to be busy. Have you noticed that? That the world that you live in expects you to live a certain busy pace of life?

[1 : 0 0] It's almost like if you're not busy chasing your tail, you're being lazy. And you look down upon. And by saying we're busy, I'm busy, thank you very much. It makes us feel quite important to be busy.

I like being busy. It kind of validates me as a useful member of society. Even if we don't quite know why we have to be so busy. Nobody actually stops and asks why.

You know, why can't we just slow down? Why can't we all just make a general agreement that we're going to slow down and not expect to be so busy? But everyone's just more and more getting caught up in this pace of busyness.

But hardly anybody stops and asks, well, why? Why are we so busy? Ellen Goodman, a prize-winning writer and journalist, once wrote about the busy pace of life.

She said this, Normal is getting dressed in clothes that you buy for work, driving through traffic in a car that you are still paying for, in order to get to the job you need, so that you can pay for the clothes, the car, and the house that you leave empty all day, in order to afford to live in it.

[2 : 0 1] It seems a little bit pointless, doesn't it? Being so busy. And yet we can't help ourselves. We're just constantly being caught up in this busyness.

But why? What are we hoping to achieve by being so busy? Well, I want to suggest an answer to that question this morning. I want to suggest that the reason we're being so busy is, ironically, to find rest.

I'll say it again, because it seems pretty weird. I think we're so busy because we're more than ever before trying to find rest. Now, when I say rest, I mean rest in a true sense, in a biblical sense, the way the Bible talks about rest, which is to be in a state where all is well in your world, where you don't have to worry about a thing, where you can just truly sit back and relax.

And I think that state of rest is what we're trying to work so hard to get. We're so busy to find rest.

We work so hard so that we can have the financial security we need to actually sit back and be at rest and not worry too much about our future. We work so hard so that we can afford to go on nice holidays where we can maybe unwind and get some quality rest.

[3 : 26] We work so hard that we can feel good about ourselves and our usefulness and rest in the knowledge that I'm useful, I'm validated. We're working more and more to find rest.

And yet our problem is we never quite get there, do we? Rest seems like the pot of gold at the end of the rainbow. Have you ever tried to walk to the end of a rainbow? Put up your hand if anybody's actually tried to walk to the end.

I have. I mean, be honest. When I was a kid, of course, I looked at the rainbow. I thought it would be so cool to stand in the rainbow. And then I walked. And the more closer you walk to the rainbow, the further away it gets.

Have you ever noticed that? Well, I think it's the same with being busy in life. The more busy we're striving for rest, the further away rest seems to be.

Because to get rest, we make ourselves more and more busy. It's a contradicting thing. I wonder if you can relate to that.

[4 : 28] Can you relate to that? Do you find yourself just running around so busy and that this idea of rest is further and further and further away from you each day?

Can you relate to that? Well, I hope it is. I hope it's something you can relate with. Because if it is, Psalm 62 is for you. Because Psalm 62 is all about rest.

All about finding true rest. And it teaches us how we can find true rest even in the midst of a chaotic world. And so that's why I want us to look at it today.

Especially as it relates to work. Because our working world is so frenetic, so busy, that Psalm 62, a psalm about rest, is a vital psalm for us to have.

Now let me tell you a little bit about Psalm 62. It's a psalm of David. And David, if you know David, he's a guy who seems to have every reason not to be at rest. You see, David had quite a few enemies.

[5 : 29] And most of them were powerful enemies. I mean, he started his career facing Goliath, which was probably the most intimidating enemy soldier Israel had ever seen.

But that's not all. Later, he made an enemy out of the king, King Saul. And he became a fugitive, hunted down by government agents for a long part of his life.

Even when he himself rose to power, David, and became a king himself, the Philistines and their agents were constantly seeking to kill him for most of his life. Many, even within Israel, within his own people, within his own family, tried to depose him and take his throne like his son Absalom.

So if anybody had a reason to stress, it was David. You know, we think David, the psalmist, is sitting somewhere on some green field surrounded by happy sheep writing these psalms.

That's not the case. David had a hectic life, more hectic than most of our lives. He was always a target. He always had some enemy plotting against him, especially when he was weak and compromised.

[6 : 34] I mean, listen to some of his testimony from verse 3 of Psalm 62. How long will you assault me? Would all of you throw me down this leaning wall, this tottering fence?

Surely they intend to topple me from my lofty place. They take delight in lies. With their mouths they bless, but in their hearts they curse. You see, this was David's life. This is his daily life. People were always out for him, out to get him, out to take him down.

And yet, despite this, amazingly, he can still write verse 1. Look what he says there.

Truly, my soul finds rest in God. My salvation comes from him. Truly, he is my rock and my salvation. He is my fortress.

I will never be shaken. If you understand who is writing this, in the context of his life, this is incredible. Despite all his enemies, despite the many times of uncertainty that he would have faced in his life, he was someone who could still rest in the middle of it all.

[7 : 42] And you see it in many of David's Psalms. As you work through his Psalms, David was somehow content in the middle of chaos. He was secure in himself. He was secure about his future.

Nothing could shake him. In other words, David had found the rest that we're all frenetically looking for in today's world. David had found it.

And as we read this Psalm, we get to unlock where he found it from and how he found it and how we can have it too. Because we see where he got that rest.

He got it in his relationship with God. That is where he found this rest. David had a real living relationship with God. Notice how many times he says, my.

He talks about my God, my rock, my fortress. You notice that? Not just a rock, a fortress. He doesn't say God is a rock, a fortress. He says, my rock. God is my fortress.

[8 : 39] David calls God his God because of this relationship that David and God have. Now, we often talk about having a relationship with God.

And many people claim to have a relationship with God. But they actually don't. You know, often people will say they have a relationship with God.

And by that they mean, well, they acknowledge that he exists. And maybe they'll say a prayer from time to time when they're at checkers and they need a parking space.

Or whatever. But that's not really a relationship. You know, that's not a relationship. Just because I acknowledge the existence of someone and maybe send them a WhatsApp when I need a favor.

It doesn't mean I necessarily have a relationship with them. And yet lots of people treat God that way and they say they have a relationship with him. That's not a relationship. See, a real relationship is two ways.

[9 : 40] A real relationship involves communication and affection from both parties. And that is exactly what David had with God. David was someone who had a real two-way relationship with God.

God had revealed himself to David in a very special way. And God had established this relationship with David. A very special relationship called a covenant relationship.

I don't know if you've come across that word. But a covenant is the word used to describe a special relationship that God has established with a human being or group of human beings.

Where God has actually chosen to set his love on a particular person or a particular group of people. And here he had chosen to set his love on David. And he proved that love to David time and time again.

And David had seen it. David had experienced God's love. David had experienced real relationship with God. And it was that. It was that covenant relationship he had that gave David his peace.

[10 : 45] Gave David his rest. I mean, how could it not? If you think about it. If you have a personal relationship with the all-powerful, all-knowing God of the universe.

What do you really have to worry about? Furthermore, if you know that this God is not just all-powerful, but he actually cares for you and wants the best for you.

If you're really convinced of that in your heart of hearts, what would you stress about? I mean, think about it. If I had a personal relationship with, say, the richest person in the world.

I think it's still Bill Gates, even today. The boss of Microsoft. I think he's officially still the richest person in the world. But imagine I knew him personally.

I could phone up. Hey, Bill, how's it going? And he was actually waiting for my call because he really enjoyed his relation. No, actually, let's say he was my dad.

[11 : 41] It's Father's Day. So let's take that theme. Let's say Bill Gates was my dad. And I was his favorite of all his children. And he really liked me. And what's more, he was always generous with me with whatever I needed.

He would always give me what I needed. And I knew that even after he died, he had told me he was going to leave me all his savings as an inheritance. Now, if that was the case, do you think I would ever have to worry about finances?

Do you think I would ever sit in front of the computer doing internet banking and stress that I don't have enough? No, of course not. If the richest person in the world was my dad.

In terms of financial security, I could be at rest because of a relationship that I have. But how much more then could David rest because of his special relationship with the God of the universe who owns and controls everything and cares intimately for David as a father does to a son?

That's the kind of relationship David knew he had with God. And that's the key to his rest. In the midst of a chaotic world. It was because of this relationship that David had that he knew at least two things that I want us to notice from the psalm that he mentions.

[12 : 59] The first thing he knew was that his future was secure. Okay, because of this covenant relationship with God, David didn't need to stress about what's going to happen to him tomorrow or the next day or next week or next month or next year.

David said, even though he knew full well that people were trying to take him out. People were trying to depose him and his throne was under threat and his life was under threat. David still called God.

Do you notice what he called God in Psalm 62? He called God his fortress. His fortress. Fortress. Now, if you know what a fortress is, we don't have many fortresses today.

Although, I mean, Weinberg police station looks kind of like a fortress still. But back in the day, you had these huge stone fortresses with high walls which you could find refuge in no matter how intimidating your enemy were.

No matter how strong they were. No matter how many of them were chasing you. If you found your way behind one of the walls of these fortresses, you could literally stand on the wall, look down at your thousands of enemies and make faces at them.

[14 : 15] Knowing that they can't touch you. So they had no airplanes and mortars and stuff. So you knew if you were in a fortress, absolute safety. They couldn't touch you.

They could just look at you and you could laugh. Well, for David, God was his fortress. The relationship that he enjoyed with God, this covenant relationship that God had chosen to set on David, allowed David to literally stand on the walls and look down at his enemies and laugh and pull faces at them.

Or all the people and the things that threatened his life and his future, he could laugh at. Because he knew God was in command. God was in command of his future.

God was his fortress so he could rest. But not only could he rest because his future was secure, he could rest because his identity was secure. This is very interesting.

Look down at verse 7 in your Bibles at what he says there. He says, My salvation and my honor depend on God. He is my mighty rock, my refuge. And so there's another thing David was secure about.

- [15 : 21] Not just his salvation in the future, but also notice his honor in the present. His honor was secure because of his relationship with God. The original word for honor, translated here as honor, is quite an interesting word.

It has a sense of significance, importance, but it literally means weighty. Something of much weight. So David's saying here that his weight, his significance in this world rests on his relationship with God.

And then as you read further, he describes mankind in general. And he says this from verse 9. He says, Surely the lowborn are but a breath. The highborn but a lie.

If weighed on a balance, they are nothing. Together they are only a breath. Now here's a picture of weighing something on a scale. Don't put up your hands.

But are you old enough to remember those scales that you used to go to the market and they had these weights that they would put in? And then whatever you're buying, whether it's, I don't know, what did you buy on scale?

- [16 : 31] Someone tell me what it used to buy on. Vegetables. So you would, exactly. You would put like your bunch of carrots and then they would weigh it. And then they would put the counterweights on until it equaled and then they'd know how much it weighs.

So David's using this idea of a scale and weighing things on a scale. And you see what he says here? It's pretty insulting. He says all people, the highborn and the lowborn, the poor and the rich, even those whom the world sees as very important, are in actual fact, they're nothing if weighed on a balance.

Literally he says they're lighter than a breath. The more literal translation, if you have a more literal English Bible, it says in the balances they go up. It's a very graphic way of saying it.

In these scales, instead of going down, the scale going down, they actually go up. They have got a negative significance, basically. People. So he's saying, apart from God, people are completely, utterly insignificant.

In the big picture, people, humans, don't last. And nothing they do is really important. That's what he's saying. Charming, isn't it? But think of it. This is what the Bible says.

- [17 : 42] Think of all the important people in the history of the world. All those important people that you have to learn about at school history class. Julius Caesar. George Washington in America.

Shaka Zulu. Winston Churchill. Nelson Mandela. All these, the people that the world says have been really important. In one million years' time, which is an instant in God's reckoning, nothing those people would have done would have counted for anything.

It will all be forgotten and insignificant. All that they spent their lives to achieve. All that the world gave those people credit for will be gone. All that will matter is whether they knew God or not.

Whether they had a relationship with God or not. That's all that will matter at the end of the day. One of my favorite quotes is by a Scotsman called Robert Murray McSheen.

And he says, A man is what he is on his knees before God and nothing more. A man is what he is on his knees before God and nothing more.

- [18 : 55] You see, unless we have a real vital relationship with God, there is nothing significant or lasting about any of us. That's why David says, On God rests my salvation and my honor, my glory.

David found his significance in God. He found his identity not in his high position or his achievements. He found his identity in his relationship with God alone, which no one could take away from him.

And so he could rest. That was the key to his rest. He didn't have to live proving his significance or making himself important like other people do.

He didn't have to live a life proving himself to other people or to himself because he already had his identity secure in his relationship with God. But that was David.

What about us? As we go into another week in a busy, stressful world to try to hold down a job or whatever it might be that you're doing this week, is there any chance that you can have the same kind of rest that David talks about here?

[20 : 08] Or do you think it's just far beyond, you'll never be like David. Now, I'll never rest like that, especially with my busy week coming up. I'll never be able to truly rest. This is all, you know, highfalutin pie in the sky stuff.

Maybe you're thinking that. Well, I want to tell you this morning, absolutely, yes, there is every reason that you can have the same rest that David experienced here, but only if you have the same kind of relationship with God that David had.

A covenant relationship where God has revealed himself to you and you know for sure that he is for you and cares for you and is concerned for you.

Can you say that? With certainty? Has God revealed himself to you yet? Do you know that God is for you, that the creator of this universe is concerned for your welfare and is thinking about you?

Can you say that or is that just wishful thinking? Well, if you can't say that, if you don't know that for sure, I want to tell you as nicely as I can, you have not yet believed the gospel of Jesus Christ.

[21 : 19] You don't know that for sure. If you don't know that God has revealed himself and cares for you, if you're not certain of that, you have not believed Jesus, because that's what Jesus came to earth to convince you of.

That's what the gospel shows us. The gospel of Jesus Christ, the reason he came to earth, was to not only reveal God to us, but Jesus came because God wants to have a real relationship with you, with each of us.

And that's why he went on to die on the cross for sins, proving that God is for us who believe.

Our sins have been wiped away for those who believe, and God did that. He sent his only son because he cares for you. He loves you. He wants a relationship with you. He is for you, if you believe.

Those whose sins have been taken away by Jesus are not just saved from punishment, but they're brought into God's family. Think about that.

[22 : 26] You're brought into the very family of God. God is your father. And if you're a believer, God is your father. If you're a believer, today, Father's Day, takes a whole new meaning.

Because no matter who your earthly father is, no matter how good or bad a father he was, your true father, if you're a believer in Jesus, if you believe what we remembered at Holy Communion, if you truly believe that, you can know that the God of creation is your father, and he cares for you much, much more than even your earthly father did.

What a knowledge to have. You can know that. That you're in God's family, adopted as a child. And so David's experience of covenant relationship with God in the psalm was just a foreshadow of the type of relationship that any and every believer in Jesus can have today.

You can have that same kind of relationship, that intimate relationship that David had. And yet all too often we don't, do we? Even Christians fail to realize what kind of relationship with God we have through Jesus.

And so we fail to rest in it. We stress still, don't we? We worry. Because we're still trying to find rest in the things of the world.

[23 : 50] And we never find it, so we make ourselves more and more busy trying to find it, and we stress ourselves out. We're still trying to secure our future by working ourselves to the bone, getting enough money so that we can have some kind of rest, that my retirement will be okay, that I've got enough investment in the future.

We're trying to secure our future with the world's means. And we're still worried about our identity, aren't we? We stress because we're worried what people think of us. We're still striving for some kind of approval in the eyes of others every day, whether it be our boss, our friends, our work colleagues, our spouse.

And so we can never quite be at rest in our own identity. We're still trying so hard to find true rest in our lives, not realizing that we already have it all in Jesus Christ and in the relationship with God that he has secured for us on the cross.

And if you're a believer, I've said it and I'll say it again, you, like David, can rest. You can truly rest in your relationship with God in the knowledge, firstly, that your future is secure.

If you are in Christ, if you've put your trust in his death for your sins, don't you realize that you've entered a fortress where nothing can touch you? None of your enemies can take you down.

[25 : 08] You don't have to stress about what's over the horizon because you know what your ultimate future holds if you've been saved by Christ. And you know that if God is for you, who can be against you?

He will be with you every day for the rest of your life, no matter what you go through. And he will carry you safely to eternity, not by anything you do, but by what Jesus has done for you. Is there any greater confidence in all the world?

I don't think so. I know not. There's no greater confidence that anyone can have. A believer in Christ can be the most confident person in the world. Secondly, though, not only can you know that your future is secure through Jesus, but you can know that your identity is secure.

You can be secure in yourself. You can know that you're significant. You won't have to prove yourself because once you enter into a relationship with God, your life is no longer insignificant.

Jesus brings you into God's family. If you're a Christian, you're like a beggar on the street who's suddenly been told that he's the son of a long-lost king, or the long-lost son of a king.

[26 : 14] Imagine that, a beggar on the street. Imagine in London, England, some beggar who is always begging down one of the alleys, off Oxford Street. He's been there for years and years and years.

And then suddenly, some fancy guy from Buckingham Palace in a fancy suit comes and tells him, you're the son of the queen. We've just done a DNA test, and we've discovered that you actually are the prince of England.

And you can get up, take your smelly clothes off, and you can come live in the palace. Imagine that. And all royal privileges can now fall on this beggar.

Well, that's what Christians can know about themselves. Much more so than just being part of some earthly royal family. Through Christ, you've come into the heavenly royal family, the family of God.

You know, all these British royals that you see in the You magazine, all these people that so many people think are important, and so many people follow, are but a breath. Weight in the balance, they are nothing.

- [27 : 16] The only identity that matters is whether you're a child of God. That is true royalty. And if you know you are, you'll no longer find yourself stressing about what people think of you, or trying to prove yourself, because you are already accepted and loved by the only person who really matters, which is God Himself.

So in closing now, I want to ask you, what are you resting in? In this coming week, what are you going to find your rest in? We all need rest.

We're all looking for rest in this restless world. Where are you finding your rest? Because you know what?

The things that you find you are focused on in the week more than anything else, the things that take up most of your attention in the week, whether it's job or family or sport, those are the things that you obviously think are going to give you rest.

That's why you're focusing so much on them. Whether you know it or not, you are chasing after the things that are going to give you rest. Because you're looking to those things for your security or your identity.

- [28 : 25] That's why you're so focused on them. But they can't give you that. Whatever it is, whatever it is last week that you focused on the most, or this coming week that you're going to focus on the most, they can't give you what you're looking for in them.

They can't give you true rest. Only God can do that through Jesus. Only there in that real relationship with God will you find the rest that your soul needs. So make sure that you're striving for that more than anything else, that your attention is taken by that relationship more than anything else.

But then finally, it's important before I finish, to notice something else in this song. And then I promise I will finish. I want you to notice how David, this example of someone who rests in God.

You see, David is presented to us as this great example of a person who finds true rest in God. Even he needs to remind himself to do that.

Did you notice that? Verse 5. He tells his soul that he needs to find rest in God. Yes, my soul find rest in God.

- [29 : 34] See, in verse 1, he starts by saying, my soul finds rest. But even four verses later, he has to remind himself to do that. Isn't that encouraging? I mean, if David has to remind himself to find rest in God, how much more do we?

Even a child of God, it's easy for us to forget to rest in God. And so we need to discipline ourselves to rest in God, especially in a busy, chaotic world.

Resting in God doesn't come naturally. And so we've got to learn how to rest in God. We've got to make a habit of coming back every day to find our rest in God.

We've got to remind ourselves to rest in God. And you know one of the best ways to do that? One of the best ways to establish a discipline of resting in God is to memorize Scripture like this, Psalm 62, which the original readers would have done.

Jewish children, by the time they were the age they could put a coherent sentence together, they already had most of the Psalms memorized, because these were actually songs.

- [30 : 43] And it's much easier to memorize a song than it is to memorize a ream of text. And so if you struggle to memorize Scripture, sing it. Or memorize songs, good songs of Scripture.

That's what I challenge you to do. Memorize these words which will discipline us and take us back to find our rest in God. Learn these truths as a song.

Learn Psalm 62 as a song which you can hold in your heart and remind you every day to find your rest in God. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen.

Amen.