

It's January. How are those New Year's Resolutions going?

As we said last week, many of us start each year wanting to put new disciplines into practice, to quit bad habits and to make 2017 the healthiest and happiest year yet. We want to check items off our bucket list.

But like many of you, a few days into the year and I was tired.

I had run really hard for many months and did not know how to slow down. So those were the words I texted a friend... I am tired.

So how do I do all I need to do when I feel drained?

How do you do it?

First, I think we need to realize that we get tired. Our soul gets tired- and we may not recognize it any more than a toddler sees when they are physically tired.

When our soul needs to rest- first we need to understand that rest is found in the presence of God.

I think rest for our soul involves

3 things

Being still

Breathing

And Believing the word of God

And out of our rest we work.

To understand what we think work looks like, we need to talk about this series. We called it Bucket List. And how we have holes in the bucket of our soul.

You may have heard the song there's a hole in the bucket..

Liza and Henry discuss the problem and how to fix it.

As a teaching team, we've been talking about all of these holes that DRAIN us of energy, and joy... And we want to give you something to help plug those holes... Next time you realize there a hole in your buckets, dear Liza a hole...We want you to (ready for it?) PUT A CORK IN IT.

This phrase, "put a cork in it," is typically used to bottle up our feelings and to IGNORE what is going on in our lives, but we want to redeem the phrase and use it in a productive, healthy way. So when we say, "Put a cork in it," from now on we're saying "plug that hole in your bucket. Stop the bleeding. Take ACTION to plug the holes that drain us."

How do you do that?

And as a mom, a wife, a daughter, a friend, a leader-how do I?

Today I will share how I have learned to breathe, be still...how I make time to be with God. It is the practice I am focusing on right now- being aware of the presence of God. And finally- how I have learned to believe the word of God.

This year at Harbor will be a year with a focus on the spiritual Disciplines... we will talk about many-I am focusing on rest, being still, practicing the presence of God, and reading the word of God so that I can be transformed.

That is what the word of God does. The 66 books of the Bible never change. But when I read them, and I believe them, I take the steps of faith God has asked me to take... I change. We need to not just hear the word of God ...but to do what it says- and when I do, God changes me.

My soul, my bucket, becomes Full, not empty.

The thought behind the series is found in a book written by Bill Hybels, called Simplify. He says only I can fill my bucket- But the good news is I am able to rest, and have fun and be still and work...and all these things will fill my soul.

So how do we help each other live life with a filled up bucket?

We rest, then we work
Be still, breathe and believe the word of God.

Then we work...and put a cork in it.

Today I'll share a few thoughts from chapter 1 of that book- and look at how God's desire for us to move from exhausted to energized.

Anyone here needing that today- you are feeling exhausted and overwhelmed?

Simplified living requires more than organizing closets, or cleaning a desk drawer
It requires uncluttering your soul

I love to declutter- I love to read books and blogs about organization.
Nothing makes me happier than a day spent putting things back in place. But when I am stressed or too busy- I am messy.

When I was in college. I had a pink plastic tool case that held only make up.
It was called a caboodle
It was pink and green, and had many little compartments.

I worked for telemarketing company and one of the benefits was I could earn free makeup. I had a lot in the caboodle.

I worked a couple of part-time jobs and went to college.
Once finals came, I was often very stressed.

When I was really stressed I would call out sick from work-And I would clean my caboodle.

And if that was cleaned and every piece of makeup was in its right place, I started to feel calm again and I could continue.

I should have uncluttered my soul, but I found a replacement- business...and that allowed me not to feel feelings- so I avoided the hard work- of being still and listening to God.

And as I got older and owned more things, this pattern continued in my life.

When I am stressed, if I can organize a drawer or my basement or my car, I begin to feel better. In fact- the first few days of my vacation were spent doing just that. Finally, Mike had to step in and tell me to stop working.

Do you realize you can be busy and your soul can be still?

I felt that this weekend when I had a lot to do.

We can also not move and not be still.

I think one thing that keeps us from resting is technology.

So I want to share one trick I learned to be still.

I love the reminder this series brings us.

Uncluttering our soul, will allow us to grow in our relationship with God.

This is our Goal as a church- to Grow and become all God has created us to be...

This is important-because we only been given One Life-

And we often sacrifice the things that ***do matter for things that do not matter.***

If we don't take the time to sit and think about what we choose to do with the day we've been given, we waste our time and talent and treasures doing things and buying things that have no legacy, no long term impact.

I know that rest is hard for me, I tend to overwork. Sometimes it happens when my boundaries are not in the right place. I do things that someone else should and could do.

But if we live a life where we live for other people and their joy, and forget to fill our bucket-we will exhaust our soul.

Have you ever thought about your soul? This something I thought about a lot is these last few months. When I became Executive pastor, our elder team provided a mentor for me. Her name is Jenni Catron and she is someone I have followed for a few years. I have read her books, gone to conferences when she spoke, I follow her on social media. Now once a month I get to speak to her on the phone...and she helps me in a role I felt unprepared for.

This Christmas she sent me a book called "Strengthening the soul of your leadership By Ruth Haley Barton.

Ruth writes "when I refer to the soul I'm not talking about some ill defined... soft around the edges...thing...

I am talking about the part of you that is most real. The you that exists beyond any role you play

Your soul is the real you-

More real than any job you perform

Any relationship that defines you

Any success you achieve

It's the part of you that longs for God

First we rest, then we work

First we believe He loves us, then we love others

Matthew 11:28-30

28 *Then Jesus said, "Come to me, all of you who are weary and carry heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. 29 Take my yoke upon you. Let me teach you, because I am humble and gentle at heart, and you will find rest for your souls. 30 For my yoke is easy to bear, and the burden I give you is light."*

He wants me to be still.

But I need to unclutter my soul

2. Breathe

How are your feeling right now? Are you tense or at rest?

Do you check in with yourself during the day?

I don't...except when I finish a class with my yoga instructor.

I struggle with being still.

Maybe today-You realize you don't know how to be still...It is so bad for our health when we constantly breathe short tight breaths...yet, maybe you can't remember the last time your breath was calm.

I found yoga over a year and a half ago. The first time I went I left that day realizing. I was not very good at resting my mind.

But over time, the most amazing thing happened.

I learned to slow my breath, and reduce my thoughts.

I now know what it feels like to be calm and be still.

She taught us a practice called 4-7-8 breathing

So Be still, breathe
And believe the word of God

I think another way to think about uncluttering our soul, is to take out what is useless and dwell on truth. To clean my caboodle, I had to throw things away.

How do we say no to some things- good things.. so we can say yes to the best things...
Some of the best things in my life are rest and prayer
I have loved books like too busy not to pray
I am writing in a journal, and even trying to write poems

And there are apps where we can journal or take a picture a day to remember that God is with us

But to Believe God, we need to know Him. That is why we must spend time in His word. Rest for our weary souls comes when we Believe the word of God-that God is good, and He is for us

Here is a verse that we can memorize and believe.
Galatians 4:19. *If anyone is in Christ the old is gone the new has come You are a new creation when you are in Christ.*

What does that mean?

The gospel, the good news is so simple.

God loves you- He made a perfect creation, but sin entered the world and broke everything that was perfect...it separated man from the God who made us and loves us.

But John 3:16 says He loves us so much He sent Jesus- who died on the cross and whose blood covers every thought, word and deed that separated us from God. John 3:17 reminds us that Jesus did not come to condemn the world but to Save.

And to all who believe- He gives us the right to be called children of God.

That's who He is a Good Father, and we are loved by Him, that's who we are.

When we believe this, when we rest and then work- we become a new creation

Galatians 4:19. *If anyone is in Christ the old is gone the new has come You are a new creation when you are in Christ.*

God is not looking for us to tweak behaviors; his desire is that we would be transformed AND that we would know who we are.

The loved children of God..our actions never cause Him to love us more- we don't feed the poor, care for the community in El mirador, or serve others because we want God to love us more...He loves us..and we know it – and when our bucket is full, we respond to His love by caring for others...

You may have seen the commercial where a woman has pictures taped to a wall...then she tells her friend she is unfriending her...and the second woman says- That's not how this works, that's not how any of this works. We don't have to wonder how any of this works..God was clear when he gave us the gift of Sabbath that Mike talked about last week..

When this is true- when we live from a place where our bucket is full, We move from behaviors that are motivated by fear, and selfishness...to a place where we believe God, not just believe in him.

It is a mystery... how God is able to take broken things and make all things new. But we are responsible to do the things we need to do.

So Be still, Breathe, and Believe the word of God.

And from your rest , work- put a cork in it.

Carry this cork in your pocket or your purse. You might even take a marker at our welcome desk and write a word on it.

“Put a cork in it!” It's empowering to know we can do things that change the direction of our lives-

Maybe this all sounds too simple-

You think of your crazy life and think how overwhelmed you are now- how could you add Sabbath or Silence and Solitude or a time for Prayer to a day that goes by too quickly.

Is it possible to make time to hear God's word? How about breathing? We have to have time to do that?

If you feel these are things that just won't fit into your busy life- you are not alone. But feelings are not truth. You have the time to put God first.

I don't think there's anyone who walked the face of the earth and could have felt more overwhelmed than Jesus.

Everywhere he went people wanted him to teach, they wanted him to lead, they wanted him to heal sick people.

His days were full of giving out and loving and caring for those around him.

But even he did not do it in his own strength

Scripture says early in the morning he was with his father. Mark 1:35

I am not an early morning person.

But I get up with my girls while it is still dark and the practice I am trying to make a habit is to be with Jesus...to sense that he is here- Immanuel.

One of my favorite things in my home is our pellet stove.

It's in our fireplace. It makes the living room so pretty...It brings warmth that is unlike anything else.

So this winter, I am trying something new.

I get up while it is dark and wrap a blanket around myself and sit in my favorite chair looking at the pellet stove. I find myself watching those little hard pellets of wood turn into heat and warmth and light.

My practice that God was calling me to- my cork, was stillness- believing God wants to move me from overwhelmed and Exhausted to Energized. Filled with His joy.

That's what it looks like when we are living fully and loving deeply- we bring light to dark world.

And the way to do that is to sit at the feet of God, and hear his still small voice... Breathe, be still, believe him. How he loves us so!!!

In Luke chapter 10

We meet two friends of Jesus- Mary and Martha

You may be familiar with the story.

Jesus is showing up in their home-

And Martha is doing the things that need to be done.

It looks like no one else is helping... especially not her sister.

Mary is sitting at the feet of Jesus.

When Martha goes to Jesus she has a question that many of us have brought to God before.

Perhaps we have not said it out loud-but it screams from the center of all of who we are..

Lord, Don't you care?

Martha, Martha," the Lord answered, "you are worried and upset about many things,
(NIV)

Jesus responds Martha, Martha

10 times we see God call someone by there name two times.

He wanted her to really hear him.

As I read simplify this summer- I changed the words in the margin of my book I wrote

Kelly,
No really Kelly...
You are worried and upset..
choosing the wrong things.

We could paraphrase what Jesus said -

You are making my visit more complicated than I want it to be....
I just fed 5000 people a couple weeks ago..
I made an incredible Chardonnay at a wedding reception

I can arrange for food and drink whenever I need but I came for visit
And Mary is choosing the right thing and I won't take it from her.

What word did 2017 start with for you?
For me- it was Depleted.

But that is not what I wrote on my cork.
To put a cork in it, I need to be still...and I need to move.

So I loved the reminder that Bill wrote about...
Before he put a cork in it, His role as a Pastor left him overwhelmed... exhausted and angry

It happened doing good things...He performed weddings, preached, supported causes... said
too many yes-es and not enough no-es.

One day- He drew a picture of a bucket and thought what does life feel like when your energy
bucket is filled to the brim...When you're filled with God's love and connected to Jesus?

I think when that happens, we feel the presence of God.

But when we are depleted, when the bucket of our soul has holes that are leaking all over we
find ourselves

- angry, tired, depleted
- making poor choices about food and rest and money
- and unable to hear the quiet whisper of God speak love over us.

He described the times when he is depleted

He said-the sound of someone whistling drives him crazy.

I remember when I was a young mom, when I was depleted the noise of my children running
around house giggling irritated me.

Maybe today there's something that you can think of...a burst of anger in traffic, or being
sharp or short in a conversation with someone you love.

Do you realize today that there's a hole in your bucket...

And it can't be fixed by cleaning out a caboodle or a junk drawer, or with a vacation, or a new car, for promotion.

Be still, breathe, Believe-
Stop, rest, remember- you are loved.
Write a new word for 2017

Maybe your word is Sabbath, joy, peace.

Last week, I was reminded that God is helping me GROW...I was calm in an anxious moment... (story)

As I said earlier, yoga has become part of my Saturday morning. My instructor says each week as we lay on the floor, bring your knees in and give yourself a hug.. and thank your body for all it's done this week for you.

When was the last time you did that? I imagine many of you are like me and for years have been telling your body all the parts about it you don't like... maybe today you thank God for how he fearfully and wonderfully made you.

Our bodies are temples God is given us.. We should eat healthy food exercise, drink water rest. But we're not just a body

Or perhaps today, you will ask God to help you rest,

Proverbs 3:5, says
Trust in the lord with all your heart; don't lean on your own understanding

Our understanding of life is based on our senses. What we see, smell, hear... but our soul-
The part created to be with God forever is a mystery.

If I try to make sense of the promise that God will give me rest, that Sabbath is something that is good for me, it doesn't make any sense.

It seems impossible that in six days I will be able to do what God is asked me to do.

First I must rest and then work out of my rest.
When I do I am transformed, I am a new creation.

Spiritual transformation occurs when Christ is formed in us

1. For the glory of God
2. For the abundance Of our own lives
3. And for the sake of others

Love, joy, peace, are formed in us for His glory and our good.

This is why we want to learn to put a cork in our bucket
So we can be filled with His power, and love and joy-

1. For the glory of God
2. For the abundance Of our own lives
3. And for the sake of others

We need to Fill our Buckets

There are things we can do, practices- like worship and solitude, silence that fill our bucket so that we're able to do the things we need to do, through His power. But sometimes we don't do that, Instead we try to achieve things on our own power, to prove our own talent, worth, our value.

But there is nothing to prove. There are no bonus points or gold stars.
That is not how any of this works.

If you only hear one thing to day- hear this-
There is Nothing we need to do other than receive the gift God is offering us. His Forgiveness and love.

Today I encourage you to ask God what a next step for you could be.

There are many spiritual disciplines. Things we can do that create conditions for us to meet God. For our soul feel the presence of God.

We can rest

We can give

You can read the word of God

We can be still...and know that the Holy Spirit the Pneuma-The breath of Heaven...can be sensed when we learn to be quiet.

And deep in the authentic part of who we are-we know this is true

It Is God who feeds our souls.

Jesus Christ came with a promise
I've come to bring you abundant life John 10:10

It takes practice to begin to understand the language of the soul

If your first step is to rest- pick one and thing and do it.
And as you rest, put a cork in something that is draining you.

We work and God does the restorative work in our souls...
There are things we do, and things that he does.

We put a cork in it, and He recreates us...

What about those New Year's resolutions...how do we deal with them? These little corks are going to remind us, throughout the weeks ahead to TAKE ACTION; and take intentional steps toward health.

If you're struggling to accept how you look? Put a cork in it. Start with a small first step. Get off the couch and go for a walk. It is hard to believe, but exercise will give us more energy. We can ask God for His help to make good choices.

Maybe today your word for your cork...is strong

If you are in an unhealthy relationship? Put a cork in it. Have difficult conversations and make hard choices to protect yourself from the wrong people. Boundaries are good...Maybe your word is LOVED

If your children are exhausting you and your spouse? Put a cork in it. Schedule a date night, spend the money on a babysitter and get some time alone together. As a mom who has young adults, my word to young parents- is rest. I tell my children how much I want them to love themselves enough to rest and be recreated....take a nap, read a book, whatever you need to do. You are worth caring for. You matter too. Maybe your word is valuable

If you have an addiction, to food or alcohol or anything...PUT A CORK IN IT! Take action. Tell someone. Attend a meeting. We have a wonderful AA group that meets here on Monday nights and a Wednesday night recovery group for anyone with habits, hurts and hang ups...isn't that all of us?

Finally- our Compassionate Care team is here if you need someone to talk to or pray with you. We love you harbor, and God wants you to believe that you are loved. We were not meant to do life alone.

Grab a cork as you leave today, ask God for His power to believe that this is true. Rest for the weary is found in the presence of God.

Breathe, Be still, Believe these words.
Close your eyes and listen to the truth!

Come to me, all of you who are weary and carry heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. 29 Take my yoke upon you. Let me teach you, because I am humble and gentle at heart, and you will find rest for your souls. 30 For my yoke is easy to bear, and the burden I give you is light."

May 2017 be the year that we believe this. Will you pray with me