

## SUMMER AT THE SUNCOAST

Title: "The Rest of Your Summer"

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As we continue in this moment of worship and prepare our hearts for God's Word, let's take a minute and make some space for God to work in our lives. One of the practices we often incorporate into our services is a chance to pause and give God all our cares and worries. For some of you this might be the first time you have really done this in a few days so let's pause now and give God EVERYONE and EVERYTHING. Close your eyes and just say that under your breath, "God I give you everyone and everything..." Now as the band plays softly just take a few moments and give God all the things and all the people on your heart. Lovingly detach yourself from the cares of this world.

### [PRAYER TIME]

Hey before you grab a seat take a :30 seconds and say "Hi" to some people around you. While everyone here in the house is saying "Hi" to each other I want to say "Hi" if you are joining us online or on our app, thank you for spending some time with us! We consider you a part of our church family so let us know how we can pray for you or serve you—we'd love to walk alongside you in any way that we can.

Well, welcome to Summer at the Suncoast 2026! Every summer for the past 8 or 9 years now we pause our normal teaching pattern and instead do a loose collection of stand-alone messages. Through a lot of trial and error I guess we learned that Summer is not really the time to launch into an 8-week collection of messages that builds week to week! You need something you can chew on today, not a payoff that's still 3 messages away during your family vacation week.

So, that's what today is, AND if you have a Bible with you or the Bible app on your phone we are going to use **Mark 6** as a launching pad for today's message. Mark is the second book of the New Testament. John Mark, who wrote this, was a companion of the Apostle Paul and he set out to chronicle the eyewitness accounts of the events he describes in his Gospel. And in Mark 6, beginning in verse 30 he records this:

<sup>30</sup> The apostles gathered around Jesus and reported to him all they had done and taught. <sup>31</sup> Then, because so many people were coming and going that they did not even have a chance to eat, he said to them, "Come with me by yourselves to a quiet place and get some rest." <sup>32</sup> So they went away by themselves in a boat to a solitary place.

There is so much I love about this, but did you notice that Mark records that "they did not even have a chance to eat." Did you pick up on that? How many of you have ever been there? That's not a first-century problem. That's a Tuesday, right?

AND here's where a lot of us are this weekend. School's out, the alarm clock gets a little quieter, the calendar gets a little kinder. And somewhere down deep, something in you exhales and goes, "OK, it's summer time, we made it, THIS is the summer that I will finally rest..."

But the problem is we say that every single year don't we? "This summer I'm going to slow down. I'm finally going to read that book that's been sitting by my bed for a year. I'm going to sit on the back porch in the evenings and watch the bugs hit the light and the lightning flash in the distance. I'm going to make lemonade and take the kids to the pool and not keep track of time. I'm going to be a human BEING instead of a human DOING for once."

And then... what happens? Travel ball happens. The home project you've been ignoring since last November happens. The vacation happens—and let's be honest, you come home from vacation needing a vacation, am I right? You drag the suitcase in, you stare at the mountain of laundry, you crack open the inbox, and you go, "It's not worth it, I'm more tired than when I left."

So, we just trade one flavor of frantic for another flavor of frantic, and we call it summer. "Well, you are just a ray of sunshine today aren't you..."

But I want to go deeper than your calendar for the next few minutes, because I don't think rest is mainly a scheduling problem. I think it's a soul problem. And here's how I know. Most of us don't really rest, and underneath that there are three quiet lies:

- Lie number one: we feel LAZY when we stop—like rest is something you've got to earn, and you haven't earned it yet, so sit back down and keep grinding.
- Lie number two: we feel GUILTY when we slow down—there's always more to do, somebody's always depending on me, so who am I to take a day? And...
- Lie number three is the sneaky one, most of us don't even know what actually rests us anymore. So, when we finally get a free hour, what do we reach for? Right, your phone! We scroll. We binge. We "veg out." Then we get up an hour later more tired than when we sat down.

Here's the line I scribbled in my journal a few weeks ago that started this whole thing going in my mind:

***We are restless... when we rest LESS.***

Read it again. We are restless when we rest less. That buzzing, can't-settle, can't-focus, can't-sit-still feeling in your head? You feel it because you have rested less and less and less. We've collapsed more, but we've rested less.

And about 1,600 years ago, a guy named Augustine put his finger right on the wound. In his Confessions he prayed this to God:

**“You have made us for yourself, O Lord, and our heart is restless until it rests in You.”**

Translation... your restlessness is not a defect. Turn to two people and tell them *your restlessness is not a defect*. Your restlessness is not a defect; it's a radio beacon. It is the part of you that was built for God refusing to settle for anything less than God. It's not a condition, it's a calling. It's the same invitation Jesus made to His disciples in Mark 6. “Come with me by yourselves to a quiet place and get some rest.”

SO, today I want to preach a message I'm calling:

## **“The Rest of Your Summer”**

We're going to climb through three things about rest you may have never seen and then I want to leave you with a payoff you can apply to your life this week. Everyone ready? Here's the first big thing we need to work our way through:

### **1. Rest is a RHYTHM, not a REWARD.**

Most of us treat rest like a reward. Like a gold star. Like dessert. You don't get dessert until you finish your vegetables, and you don't get rest until you finish your work, right?

So, what do we do? We drop our heads and we grind toward this rest that's always one more task away, one more season away. We say things like, “I'll rest when I get caught up on all this work... I'll rest when the kids are a little older... I'll rest when we get out of debt... I'll rest after I get the promotion... I'll rest when I retire... I'll rest if I can just get through this season...” Church can I just lovingly tell you—you will NEVER get through this season, because it's been 3 years, that's NOT a season! Amen? You will NEVER get caught up! There is no such thing as caught up. “Caught up” is a myth, like Big Foot or a clean garage.

AND I say that as someone who is a fellow struggler. More on that in a minute, BUT watch what God does at the very beginning of the human story. This is from Genesis chapter 2, most of you will recognize it:

<sup>2</sup> By the seventh day God had finished the work he had been doing; so on the seventh day he rested from all his work. <sup>3</sup> Then God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it he rested.

Again, most of you have read that or heard that. God works for six days, and on the seventh day He rests. Got it. We know that part. BUT here's the nugget. Here's the thing I want you to catch. Out of those six days of creation, when were human beings created? Give yourself some love if you said day six. BUT why does that matter?

Well, if you take Scripture at its word and this was a literal 24-hour period of time, then that means the first FULL day Adam and Eve were alive on this planet was what? A day of rest! Let that sink in. Their first full day wasn't a workday. It wasn't a day to get caught up. It was a REST day! They didn't grind in order to earn rest. They woke up INTO rest, and THEN they went to work. They started from rest. They worked FROM rest—not FOR it.

AND my point is we've got the whole thing flipped backwards in our culture! We think rest is the finish line you collapse across. God says rest is the starting line you launch from.

John Mark Comer, in his book *Garden City* has a whole section on this and he makes the point that the creation story starts with God working and it ends with God resting. The whole arc isn't building toward more productivity. It's building toward rest. Rest is the goal. Rest is the point. Rest is where the whole thing was headed all along.

And here's something kind of wild—your body already knows this even if your soul forgot it. You want to know when your muscles actually grow? Not during the workout. It's during rest. You break the muscle down at the gym, sure, but it repairs and rebuilds and comes back stronger while you sleep.

Same thing for your brain. You want to know when your brain does its deepest work, the stuff AI can't do like, sorting your memories, making sense of your life, dropping that brilliant idea on you in the shower? It is NOT when you're locked in and grinding. Neuroscientists have a name for it, they call it the "default mode network," and it switches ON when you stop. When you let your mind wander. When you rest. Your best thinking, your real growth, the quiet stitching-together of who you are becoming—it all happens in rest.

Touch your neighbor and tell them, **"You grow when you rest."**

So, stop apologizing for it. You are not being lazy when you rest! You are being like your Heavenly Father! The God who flung the stars into space and holds every atom together, He rested! Not because He was worn out, but because rest was the crown on top of the

whole creation! So, the next time the enemy leans in and whispers, “You don't deserve to stop yet,” you tell Satan, “I don't rest because I'm finished. I rest because I'm HIS! I rest because Jesus already said, ‘it is finished’ on the cross!” Come on, somebody give God a shout of praise if you are thankful for that today!

But if rest is a rhythm and not a reward... then why is it so hard to actually do it? Why does stopping feel almost terrifying for some of us? Let me show you what's really going on under the hood. Number 2, write this down:

## 2. Rest is TRUST, not LAZINESS.

Here's the real reason you can't stop. Way down deep, a lot of us believe a lie, and the lie sounds like this, “If I stop, it all falls apart. If I'm not holding it together, who will? It all depends on me.” Anyone know that voice in your head?

I've shared my story before, but I know that lie, we are on a first name basis. Back in 2018 I got blindsided, out of nowhere, by severe health anxiety. I'm talking 3 am, heart pounding panic, convinced I was dying, lying there Googling symptoms, the whole nightmare. AND this would go on for weeks at a time before I'd find a little relief. I share some of this and the lessons I've learned in my first book “Reset,”—*which if you don't have a copy you can get one for just \$5 today only at Next Steps*—BUT one of the hardest, most healing things I had to drag out into the light was this. I could not rest, because somewhere down in my soul I believed the lie that if I ever stopped producing, producing content, producing leaders, producing funding, producing growth, if I ever stopped then the church, my family—maybe even God—would quietly find someone else to replace me and who could probably do it better.

And as I sobbed my way through all this in a counselor's office I had the next revelation. This belief wasn't just false. It was arrogant. I was living like the kingdom of God was being personally held up by ME. Like God needed my frantic activity to keep the lights on in the universe.

AND I don't know how that lands for anyone in the house today, maybe you are thinking, “Wow, Pastor Brian needs help...” BUT if you find yourself suffering from the same lie, or one of its crimpling cousins, let me show you where that lie comes from because the Bible actually traces it for us.

If you fast forward from Genesis to the Book of Exodus we find the offspring of Abraham living in Egypt. God promised to make Abraham into a great nation, but the Egyptians were not thrilled with this foreign people populating their land, so they enslaved them. In Exodus 1 we find this:

<sup>12b</sup> So the Egyptians came to dread the Israelites <sup>13</sup> and worked them ruthlessly. <sup>14</sup> They made their lives bitter with harsh labor in brick and mortar and with all kinds of work in the fields; in all their harsh labor the Egyptians worked them ruthlessly.

This would go on for 400 years! That's 16 generations of slavery! AND what day do slaves get off again? That would be never! Pharaoh's entire empire ran on one rule: more bricks, no rest, never enough, keep moving. That is the voice of slavery!

So, when God finally breaks their chains and pulls them out through Moses, one of the very first gifts He hands them is a day of REST, the Sabbath. WHY? Because God's saying, "You're not slaves anymore. You don't have to earn the right to exist. Pharaoh ran on grinding it out, but I run on grace."

John Mark Comer commenting on this says:

"When we finally stop and rest, we remember our place in the universe—that there is a God, and I'm not Him."

That's too good not to stop and say that out loud. Let's read that again, "*When we...*" One more time, like you believe it! "*When we...*"

AND I AM NOT HIM! That is the most freeing sentence in the world if you'll actually let it sink in. Because here is what rest truly is. Rest is not laziness. Rest is TRUST with skin on it. Rest is your body preaching a sermon to your soul. Every single night, when you lie down and close your eyes and surrender consciousness for 7-8 hours, you are declaring—whether you mean to or not—"God, You've got this. The world will keep spinning without my supervision. I trust You enough to stop."

The Psalmist said it plainly in Psalm 127:

<sup>2</sup> It is useless for you to work so hard from early morning until late at night, anxiously working for food to eat; for God gives **REST** to his loved ones.

Rest is a GIFT, not a weakness!

SO church, hear me, taking a day off is not you slacking. It's you trusting. Putting the phone down is not you missing out. It's you believing God can run His world for one evening without your help. Resting is the loudest way your little life can shout that you are not the savior of your own story—JESUS is! He held it all together before you ever got here, and He'll hold it all together long after you're gone, and THAT, friend, is good news! Amen?

So, rest is a rhythm, not a reward. And rest is trust, not laziness. But let's get super practical, because here's the trap so many of us fall into. We finally give ourselves permission to rest... and then we rest WRONG. We grab for the stuff that promises rest and delivers the exact opposite. Here are some thoughts on how to fix that that God is still teaching me:

### 3. Rest is PERSONAL, learn what actually FILLS your tank.

Everyone say, "Rest is personal..." Just like a dietician can prescribe the right diet for your body and your personal needs, so we need a personalized plan for rest that actually fills our souls. Go back to our text in Mark for a second and look at how specific Jesus is. Mark 6:31:

He said to them, "Come with me by yourselves to a quiet place and get some rest."

He doesn't just say, "You guys seem a little tired." He says, "Come with me, by yourselves, to a quiet place, and get some rest." That's a prescription. Come away. Get alone. Find the quiet place. Real rest is intentional.

Here's the problem we miss so often though. Not everything that LOOKS like rest actually rests you. We've got a whole category I'd call counterfeit rest. It feels like resting, but it leaves you emptier than it found you. AND I'm not anti-technology, but our phones are a huge reason for this. You flop on the couch, you pull your phone out and 45 minutes later you are MORE drained, MORE anxious, MORE restless than before you sat down. That's because scrolling is not rest! It is a sugar high for your soul. It spikes you, and then it crashes you. Our phones are a huge reason why we feel restless when we rest LESS—because we keep swapping real rest for the counterfeit.

SO, let me hand you two things to help you find the real stuff.

First realize that rest is PERSONAL. What fills MY tank might drain YOURS. A writer named Gary Thomas wrote a book called Sacred Pathways (which we also have a next steps) BUT his big idea is that different people connect with God in really different ways. Some of you meet God out on a trail with dirt under your boots. Some of you meet Him in a silent room with an open book. Some of you meet Him loud, with the music cranked and your hands in the air worshipping. The point is, stop trying to rest the way your spouse rests, or the way your favorite podcaster rests. Figure out how God wired YOU and then go do that on purpose, without an ounce of guilt.

There's an old line from the movie Chariots of Fire—the runner Eric Liddell says:

"When I run, I feel His pleasure."

I love that. NOT running. I don't love running. But I love that some people can feel God's pleasure while they run. The point is that there is something each of you do where you can feel God's pleasure, where you walk away more alive, more like yourself, more aware of Him. Maybe it's the garden. Maybe it's the water. Maybe it's a kitchen, a canvas, a fishing rod, a long walk with no earbuds in. Find the thing where you feel His pleasure. That is not a guilty pleasure. That is holy! That is God refilling His kid's soul!

The second thing I'd suggest is that rest isn't just ONE thing. There's a Christian physician, Dr. Sandra Dalton-Smith, who studied this for years, and she found we actually need SEVEN different kinds of rest:

- Physical rest.
- Mental rest.
- Emotional rest.
- Sensory rest.
- Social rest.
- Creative rest.
- Spiritual rest.

This is why you can sleep for nine hours on a Saturday night and still wake up a mess. You got physical rest, but you're carrying a deficit in 3 of the other six. You're sensory-fried from screens all day. You're socially drained by people who only ever take. You're creatively bone-dry from always producing. More sleep won't touch that; you need a DIFFERENT kind of rest. Does that make sense?

So, this summer, do a little rest-audit. Ask yourself, "Where am I actually running on empty?" If your eyes and ears are shot—get sensory rest; kill the noise, sit in some silence, only use a screen if you have to for work. If you're all peopled-out—find some solitude, or get with the two or three friends you can just be yourself around. If you're creatively dead—go make something that isn't for the public, or go stand in front of something beautiful.

One disclaimer, I don't know all of what she believes because "Christian" can mean a lot of things, right, and this is obviously an effort to get you to buy her book and be on her mailing list, but Dr. Sandra has a free quiz online at:

**RestQuiz.com**

If you take the little 5-10 minute quiz—and leave your e-mail address—what you get is a score for each of the 7 areas of rest. When I took it I was very low in sensory, creative,

and emotional rest, which as I contemplated and journaled, it was very accurate of where I've depleted myself so far this year. So, this summer, no matter how you do it, do a rest-audit.

AND I want you to pay close attention to the most important one. Underneath all seven of those is SPIRITUAL rest, and that one has only one source. Amen? Jesus, in Mark 6, didn't just say, "Go get some rest, fellas." No, He said, "Come WITH ME to a quiet place." With... Me... The invitation was never to a vacation FROM Jesus. It was a vacation WITH Jesus.

Because you can take the trip, you can take the nap, you can take the whole summer off—and still come back empty if Jesus wasn't in it. But when you pull away WITH Him—when the quiet place actually has HIM in it—THAT is where your soul gets put back together. The rest you've been chasing isn't a place. It isn't a date on a calendar. It's a Person. And His name is Jesus and His invitation is come away WITH ME and rest!

Which brings us to the top of the mountain. This is where we've been climbing towards. This is the one thing I want you to carry out of this room today and never forget:

### **Rest precedes blessing.**

Everyone say that with me... One more time... Go all the way back to Genesis 2 with me one more time, and watch the order here:

<sup>2</sup> By the seventh day God had finished the work he had been doing; so on the seventh day he rested from all his work. <sup>3</sup> Then God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it he rested.

So, God rests on the seventh day, and THEN it says He "blessed" it. He "made it holy." So, rest came FIRST then the blessing came OUT of the rest. That's the pattern God stitched right into the fabric of the universe, not blessing, then rest. REST... then blessing.

I pray this sets you free today. The blessing waiting on the other side of your rest is not a tidier inbox. It's not a more productive you. It's not even a calmer calendar. The blessing is God Himself! The whole point of the Sabbath, the whole point of stopping, the whole point of pulling away to the quiet place—it was never just so you'd function a little better on Monday. It was so you could be WITH Him!

Remember Augustine? "Our heart is restless until it rests in You." That restlessness you've been dragging around all year, the thing no vacation could fix, no weekend could cure, no amount of scrolling ever satisfied... that was never a scheduling glitch. That was your soul homesick for God! And the cure was never "do more." The cure was always come home, and rest in Him.

The prophet Isaiah said it 700 years before Jesus showed up in Isaiah 30:15:

<sup>15</sup> This is what the Sovereign Lord, the Holy One of Israel, says: “Only in returning to me and resting in me will you be saved.” [But then God adds this heartbreaking little line] But you would have none of it.

Don't be the people who would have none of it. Don't let one more summer slip by where God is holding out rest with both hands and you are just too busy to take it.

So, here's the sentence. Put it on a sticky note on your bathroom mirror. Put it on your phones wallpaper. Say it with me:

***We are restless when we rest less. Rest precedes blessing.***

One more time, like you mean it... One more time... Now, turn to somebody next to you and say it...

You're not restless because something is broken in you. You're restless because you've rested less. And the rest your soul has been screaming for is not waiting at the end of your to-do list—it's waiting in the arms of a Savior who has been saying to you this entire time: “Come with Me, by yourself, to a quiet place... and get some rest.”

Let me pray for you.

[PRAYER TIME]

As we pause and ask God what He would want us to do, if you're tired, worn thin, running on fumes, here's what I don't think God is saying today. I don't think He's saying try to overhaul your entire life this week. So, maybe listen to the Holy Spirit. Is there one rhythm of rest He's impressing upon you? Start that this summer! Maybe it's a true day of rest each week. Maybe it's the thing where you feel His pleasure most—go DO it, on purpose, WITH Him. Maybe it's just ten quiet minutes tomorrow morning, before you touch your phone, where you whisper, “Good morning, Lord. I'm Yours today.” Pick one. Don't try to optimize it or perform it or be good at it. Just receive the rest He wants to offer you.

If you're here and you're honestly not sure where you stand with God, you have been chasing rest your whole life. In a relationship. In a bottle. In a feed. In the next achievement, the next finish line, the next thing that was finally going to make you feel okay. But it keeps moving... What if the rest you've been chasing all this time has a name? His name is Jesus—and today He is not asking you to clean yourself up or get it all together first. He's just saying, “Come to Me and rest.” That's one prayer of surrender away.