

Weekly Study of Sunday's Message.

Sunday Nov 1, 2020. "An Unshakable Kingdom: What's Shaking?"

I Intro.

Welcome to the weekly devotional that gives you some specific things to work through from the message this Sunday. Whether you were able to participate in this service or not, this devotional is free-standing and you can still use it to help you dig deeper into your own spiritual walk. Take as long as you need to dive into this material and feel free to share it.

We're still gathering in person. A small but growing group who follow all the safety guidelines joins us in person. We're so encouraged with your love and presence when you gather with us. If you're still joining us online, we love and so appreciate your presence also. We still are your church family, and if there is ANYTHING you need, prayer, ideas or suggestions you have, please pass them our way. We feel just as isolated as you, and we want to maintain that connection with each of you.

II Sunday.

A little behind the scenes before we deep dive into this topic. We had another series planned for the entire month of Nov, and because of the election and all of the turmoil surrounding it, we felt the need to speak into what it feels like as we approach election day, and in many cases actually is happening around the country. This will be a two Sunday series, with an important time of conversation and dialogue on the Wednesday in between the two Sundays, in our regular first of the month time called The Gathering. (Nov. 4th 6:30 pm). The original series will be condensed into the third and fourth week of November, and Advent begins the Sunday after Thanksgiving. Are you freaking out yet? So, since the title for this Sunday is; "*what's shaking?*" let's ask that.

What feels shakable, unsteady, unsure for you?

Why do you think that is?

And most likely it feels shaky, because...well it is, so then why do we tend to hold onto shaky things?

In the message there was a lot of conversation around several topics. We'll briefly hit each one. The first two were identity and belonging.

IDENTITY- To know who I really am, inside and out.

BELONGING- To know where I fit in. Who are my people? Where do I belong?

Probably the two most emotionally pressing needs in our inner psyche. Humans have wrestled with, and asked deep questions for years, trying to discover the answers to these two deep-seated needs.

Who am I? And where do I fit in?

If you watch "*This is Us*", you will see this is what is driving Randall's feeling of disconnection and his search.

The other two concepts we want to hit are tied into these two fundamental questions of our search for meaning, and those are **fear** and **insecurity**. We are afraid and feel unsafe when we don't know who we are, and that struggle for identity is so closely tied into where we think or believe we fit in.

Because we are tribal in nature, (we have our favorite team, political parties, hobbies, groups we identify with), our sense of self draws us to groups we have some things in common with. And then we usually adopt the entire identity, (language, dress, behavior, beliefs, rules, etc.), of that group because it lessens the feelings of...wait for it...fear and insecurity we feel from not knowing who we are or where we fit in. See how this is all tied together? So, some questions.

What 5 words do you think describe you? (We know this is not all of who you are, but it gives us a low-res image of you).

What organizations, clubs, online or informal groups do you consider yourself to be a part of? Why do you belong to those?

There was a lengthy, and hopefully coherent, conversation around these issues Sunday morning. And they included way more material than can be contained in here. It would be helpful to watch that message to get a better understanding of how to deal with the questions of; *“who am I?”* and *“where do I fit it?”*. And how fear and insecurity play into those especially during this momentous election. Let's introduce the passage, and then talk through it a bit. Read **Hebrews 12:14-29**, and we'll talk about some of the specifics.

What jumped out to you about this passage?

Without getting caught up in the specifics of change, how did it talk about how we handle change?

What do you think it laid out as some of the things that we can find ‘unshakable’ as we navigate change?

Some truths we want to touch on from this Sunday, knowing we'll unpack these more Wednesday at The Gathering, and even more next Sunday.

1. We must create a place of peace to receive grace.

This is the first understanding from this passage in Hebrews. This is the entire purpose of why we hold onto the unshakable. Everything we do must be centered around creating a community that builds on peace, shalom, wholeness, how ‘eternal life is described. If we are genuinely concerned and care for those who feel and are far from God, what kind of community are we growing that draws those people towards Jesus?

2. Change is hard, but we have to be open to new expressions and experiences of God.

Everyone says they want and like change until they have to do things differently...or change. Our God is a god who is constantly creating and doing new things. And this is a gift in order to keep our faith fresh and our passion red hot. And we get to be co-creators with God. What better place is there to be than working alongside a God who is reconciling the world to himself?

3. The ‘unshakable’ during change is not the ‘how’ but the ‘why’.

Not only do we get attached to the things of the world, but we also get comfortable with routines. We like what we like, and changing our habits and routines are hard. Routines and habits are important. But they are only a vehicle to get us to a greater place, not to get good at the routines. The writer seems to be saying that if our certainty, what we find ‘unshakable’, is in something more than earthly

things, how we understand our 'how', but keep in front of us our 'why', then we can navigate a world of change easier.

4. Then the 'unshakable' is received.

This is such an intriguing thought, and I know we haven't even scratched the surface of what it may mean. But we can probably say this about that. <smiling emoji>. To let go of shakable things, and to begin to hold onto unshakable things, is something we surrender into rather than grit ourselves through. We cannot just will ourselves to only receive the unshakable. Yes, it is something God is doing that we must surrender to, but we also have to 'take hold' of this unshakable kingdom. We'll dive into this phrase more next week, so hold onto this teaching and join us again next week as we dive deeper into understanding what this might mean.

III Challenge.

Ok, this was a super tough topic, with way more information than we were able to cover or even understand. But, considering the circumstances we find ourselves in, with the election, COVID, the division and turmoil in the world, and more, the desire for something 'unshakable' is more important than ever. And we hope this gave some introductory information, some understanding of basic human behavior, and thoughts to help you on that journey.

So, some final questions.

What are you holding onto that you're beginning to find is 'shakable'?

Why do we, you, hold onto 'shakable' things?

What are a couple of things you could do to begin to identify what is 'unshakable' for you, and what would it look like to design your life to begin to hold onto these 'unshakable' things?