

Discovering God's Character through our Struggles: Time – September 13, 2026

And I know this week we celebrated, not celebrated, we commemorated, um, 9-11 where, uh, Islamic terrorists hijacked planes and tried to dis, uh, basically destroy the nation. And they came against it. And we, uh, Celebrated that happening 25 years ago, not celebrated. We commemorated and remembered the anniversary of that this past week. And I know that we've all heard this said, and we've all asked the question, and we all know where we were. that day and we know what happened that day. And myself, I was in my sophomore speech class when we heard it and they dismissed classes that day and we went back and I sat on the couch for a full day just watching news. Alan Jackson wrote a song about it, about remembering where you were that day. And It was a very difficult time in our nation, a very difficult time in a lot of people's lives with the loss of life. And as I was driving here Friday morning, the radio announcers, I believe it was on 103, played some of the audio clips from that day with President Bush speaking and different things that happened that day. And they quoted a psalm that they had used that day. talking about the state of the world and what was happening. And I want to read the first part of that psalm. It's Psalm chapter 2. And on the radio, they played this 25 years ago, at least at the station here in Helena. In Psalm chapter 2, verses 1 through 5, it says, Why do the nations rage and the people plot vain things? The kings of the earth prepare for battle. The rulers plot together against the Lord and against his anointed one. Verse 3, they say, let us break their chains and free ourselves from the slavery to God. But the one who rules in heavens laughs. The Lord scoffs at them. Then in anger he rebukes them, terrifying them with his fierce fury. See, for those of us who are familiar with reading the Word and read our Scripture year after year, we see this passage play out in the history of humanity time and time again. And it wasn't the first time 25 years ago, and it hasn't been the last time since then, where evil men have tried to destroy people, tried to destroy Christian-fearing people. It's happening in Nigeria right now with the massacre and genocide of many Christians, but It's in the Bible as well. It started with Nimrod, who was a mighty hunter before men. It moved into the Tower of Babel, where they tried to build a tower so that they can become like God and free themselves from the, as the psalm says here, slavery to God. And there have been men throughout history who have sought to make God inconsequential in life. And it still happens today. And there are those who continue to rage and war, not just from nation to nation, but from rage against God. And because God is the same yesterday, today, and forever, Psalm 2 says he laughs. He laughs at the ridiculousness that people try to aspire to. See, God is moving and directing global events with His authority to bring the world to the time of Jesus' return. He's not missing a beat. He's not surprised. He is constantly working and bringing us to the place when the trumpet will sound, the clouds will split, and Jesus will return from glory. And I find it interesting that God is not struggling with time. He understands our culture. He understands where we are. And He knows how each day must unfold, bringing His creation one day closer to His goal. See, what I love about this is God has a goal and a purpose and a plan, and every day that comes moves Him closer to that goal. See, he isn't rushed. God's not up there tapping his fingers against the throne like, man, when is this going to happen? He knows. He is confidently molding and shaping things to his pleasure. We don't like that because we're like, what is going on, God? The world is crazy. But unlike God, you and I struggle with time. Where God knows the end from the beginning, we do not. And we can feel the need to rush and cram and work because we're so unsure if tomorrow will even come. We don't know. We don't know when we'll breathe our last. We don't know what tomorrow holds. But as the old hymn says, we know who holds tomorrow. This morning we're going to begin this sermon in chapter 4 of Hebrews, which we will work our way to by the time we're done. But we're going to continue preaching through the commandments, and we have come to the fourth commandment this morning in Exodus chapter 20, to remember the Sabbath and to keep it holy. It highlights our struggle with time. We struggle with time. But God helps us in this struggle by giving us Hebrews chapter 4 verses 9 through 12 says this, There remains therefore a rest for the people of God. For he who has entered his rest has himself also ceased

from his works as God did from his. Let us therefore be diligent to enter that rest. Let's pray this morning. Father, we thank you for your word this morning, Lord. And as we continue looking at man's greatest struggle. Father, I pray that you would show yourself, show the characteristic that helps us with our struggles. This morning, Lord, as we look to you and that you show us rest is what helps us deal with our struggle with time. Lord, we pray that you would minister to our spirits, minister to our souls, minister to our bodies, Father. Lord, I pray that the words I say would be anointed by you. Father, they would be the words that you would have me speak. Lord, in the words that we hear, Father, you would take them and plant them in our heart and move us to becoming more like your son, Jesus. We thank you for your word. We thank you for what you're going to do. In Jesus' name, amen. Amen. I know you guys are used to this, but I felt I should open this morning up with a question as we get ready to go into our subject matter of dealing with time. And it can be rhetorical, you can raise your hand, that's fine, however you want to do it. But how many of us got through this week without feeling these feelings? Without feeling rushed? Without feeling short on time? Or wondering where the heck all the time went? Anybody? Anybody? How often have we uttered the words, there just aren't enough hours in the day to get everything I got to get done, done. Or I'm just so pressed for time. I can't, I just can't do it all. Or man, I'm just trying to save, I'm just trying to save a little time so I can get a few more things in. See, we all have the exact same 24 hour day. yet it seems impossible to accomplish what we need done within it. I don't know if you're like me, but sometimes I go through the week and I get to the end and I'm like, holy moly, where did it go? It seemed like weeks used to pass like months and now they pass like days. They come and they go so fast. Benjamin Franklin made this statement, and I think it's interesting. Benjamin Franklin said, you may delay, but time will not. And I have to admit, more times than not this week, I've found myself wasting time sitting at my desk humming to the song, time keeps on slipping, slipping, slipping, slipping, slipping, slipping. And then I would be like, oh man, I got to get going. That was part of the reason I was short on time this week. I had lots happening this week. I found myself preparing for faith journeys, which we did this morning, to prepare for this sermon. We had school starting here at the church this week, and there was 250 plus people every day on campus this week. There were visitations to do. They were looking at some side work. I was trying to sell this car that was just bugging me to death, which I did sell. Thank you, Jesus. Managing church business, and that was just here. I have more to life than just here. Oh, I know. Shocking, huh? My wife, she's not in here, so I'm going to say she has a very long honey-do list. I did get one thing off the honey-do list this week. I tried to do a second every fall. I don't know if you have this problem, but we do every fall because we live in the mountains. The mice feel an invitation to come in to the inside instead of the outside. And so we've been working to mouse proof the house. And then that was just home stuff. Then there's family things. Billy's playing soccer. It's his senior year. I feel that I should be at all of his games. I got to see him play twice this week. I think, no, they only needed one. I don't know. I know. And on top of all that, football season started this week. And so you're just like, how do you? I know. I know. It's like, you got to watch a game. I mean, I didn't get to watch it all, but I did watch Texas beat Ohio State last night. That's fine. See, I don't even like Texas, but I'm an SEC guy because of Louisiana State. And anybody that beats Ohio State, I'm rooting for. And so. And those are just the highlights of the week. That's really not everything that happened. But I still came to the end of the week wishing, man, I wished I had a little bit more time. One more quote to emphasize our struggle with time is from a gentleman named William Penn. He says, time is what we want most, but what we use worst. See, and that hurts because we only have a set amount of time. We only have 24 hours in a day. We only have a set amount of time in our life and we don't know when that time is done. Thus, it seems unfair or maybe even out of place that God would give us the command to remember the Sabbath, to, in essence, stop living. It seems like it should go the other way. I feel like the command should be, use your time more wisely. Stay on focus. Stay on task. Accomplish what you start. But that's not what God says. Exodus 20, verses 8-11 says, Remember the Sabbath to keep it holy. Six days you shall labor and do all your work. But the seventh

day is the Sabbath of the Lord your God. For in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, the sea and all that is in them, and rested on the seventh. Therefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and hallowed it. I know for myself The last couple of years, the Sabbath has become kind of a buzzword concept. Everybody's talking about taking your Sabbath and doing this. And we hear all the talking heads chatting up about how you should be doing this. And there's certain times or which day it is or how you should do it, how you shouldn't do it. And there's even some saying the whole reason your life sucks is because you don't do it. I don't know. I don't know if this is what they mean to do, but in a lot of ways, I feel like they're like the Pharisees of Jesus's day. They make the Sabbath a burden. They make it something that is difficult and laden with guilt and shame. If you don't do it how they say it should be done. Now, if you are a student of the Bible and you understand and have read the Old Testament, there was a very strict set of rules for the nation of Israel which governed the Sabbath. They were so strict that in Numbers 15, a guy was picking up sticks on the Sabbath and they killed him. Now, thankfully, you and I as Christians today, we're not bound by the Jewish strictness of the day of the Sabbath. But I just thought I would bring up what those restrictions were to help us understand how God intended the nation of Israel to follow the Sabbath and to keep it holy. So these are very broad statements. I gave some scripture here that you can write down if you want. You guys can put that up there. But these are the seven big things that they put for restrictions on the Sabbath. The first one was to do no ordinary work. To do no ordinary work. The second one is to not require your household, your servants, foreigners, or animals to work. I don't ever give my animals a day off. They have to work every day. Number three, they are to not to go out and gather food. They're not even to make a fire to cook food. They're not to conduct any ordinary commerce. Then they're not to carry ordinary burdens, and they were only allowed to travel what was called a Sabbath's distance, which wasn't very far. And they were to, this was the only one that they were supposed to do, they were to rest, to keep it holy, and to gather as God's people. How many of us have ever in any day, 24-hour day, followed all seven of those things? It's interesting, huh? But what I want to do this morning is to not define and imply strict boundaries for what the Sabbath means for you and I. I believe that is something that if God is calling you to, you can prayerfully seek God and find out how he wants you to honor the Sabbath and to keep it holy. But my goal this morning is to help us understand the reason God says to take a day and to not work. To take a day and not work. And as I stated earlier, it is because you and I struggle with time. In my daily reading, I've been reading through the book of Job, and I really, really love the book of Job. It was the first book I ever read through in the Bible of my own volition. I chose to sit down and read that book through purposely. And what I love about Job is it teaches us how to walk daily through life, which we struggle through and which is heavy. Let me say that again. It teaches how to daily walk through life while struggling with heavy things. That's what I meant to say. Because Job was dealing with some very heavy things, but he was still required to walk through life. And interestingly enough, Job has a lot to say about our struggle with time. Job 14, verses 1 and 2 says, "...this man is born of woman." And is few of days and full of trouble. I could have stopped there and been like, is it full of trouble because of the first part of that? But I chose not to. He comes forth like a flower and fades away. He flees like a shadow and does not continue. Continue. If we were to look at this passage, what we learn from this verse is that life is few of days and full of trouble. Two things that bother us. Life is few of days and full of trouble. And I believe that we understand the truth of this scripture more than we want to admit. I turn 48 next month. I know, I don't look that old. It's okay. It's fine. It is true, though. And so I did some statistical figuring this week in my sermon, and I did some mathing, and I thought to show us how few days we actually live in life. So I did this with the life expectancy of 75. I know there's no way to tell what it is, but being that I'm 48 and to say that I was to live to 75, this is what I came up with. That means I have 27 years left in this life. Of those 27 years, I'm going to sleep nine of them. So technically I have 18 years of waking life left. It doesn't get any better from here. 27 years, that's 324 months. And as fast as months have been passing in recent years, that's a scary thought. I have 1,409 weeks left. That means I will

experience only 108 season changes from now until I die. Only 27 more chances to kill an elk. That was the most disturbing number I think I came up with. When I turn 48, I will, in essence, have completed 65% of my life that God promises on earth with a whopping 35% left. Now, if you're like me, some of you have a few less years in front of you than I do. But who knows in reality? But if we're taking this timetable, if I heard that as I did hear that and figure that, the one thing that came to my heart was, man, I need to get busy and stop wasting time. I mean, I need to get out into the woods. There's only 27 more chances, counting this year, to get that elk. There's this stirring to get busy. But then as I began to think about it, you know the most irritating thought that came to my mind? As I remember Job chapter 14, I have 27 years left and those days will be few and they're going to be The golden years, right? Everything's easy. I mean, it's going to be wonderful. My kids are almost raised. It's just like the best time of life is getting ready to happen. It's going to be easy street. I just get to do all the things I've always wanted to do. Not even close, huh? Those days will be few and fast, and they will still be full of trouble. That's the promise that Job gives us. Job spoke about this earlier in his book in chapter 7. He says, Is there not a time of hard service for a man on earth? Are not his days also like the days of a hired man, like a servant who earnestly desires the shade, like a hired man who eagerly looks for his wages, so I have been allotted months of futility, and wearisome nights have been appointed to me. Job is not very encouraging sometimes. He goes on. I don't have it up here. He goes on. It says, when I lie down, I will say, when shall I rise? And when will the night end? There's things I need to do. For I have had my fill of tossing till the dawn. See, what this passage is truly saying is that time is very oppressive because life demands so much of us and time never stops marching forward. For the remainder of my life, what this passage says is I will be looking at the clock, waiting to get off of this task so that I can get to the next task. It says, like a servant that longs to sit in the shade. I just want to sit and rest for a minute, but I got things I got to get done before I can sit down and take a break. Like one Pressed for time, tossing and turning and awaiting morning because they can't find rest. Because the schedules are busy. The deadlines are tight. There's stuff that has to be done. I don't have time to even sleep. And this is true for all of us. Whether we're young and our parents are waking us up for school, whether we're teenagers trying to learn how to live life, whether we're parents with kids, whether we're retired, and whether we're grandparents. In some way, we're always looking at the clock thinking, I need to get this done because I got to get on to that next thing. We're always desiring to sit in the shade and find some comfort in life, knowing that this is not going to last very long and there's stuff I got to do. And that's how we live life. See, we struggle with time because life has a way of making time something we must endure. We're trying to get through it because we have something else we want to do. Most of you want me to shut up because there's hamburgers next door. Guess what? It's my time. You have to endure this. See, most of us Life has a way of making time something we have to endure rather than the gift that it's meant to be. And unfortunately, by the time we typically realize it in life, we're 48 years old and we realize, dang, I've got 20 something years left. I probably need to pay attention to what's going on. So knowing that, what do we do? Understanding that we struggle with time and we're pressed for time and there's always a full schedule and there's always something to do next. And even though we want to rest and we want to sleep and we want to be in the shade, it's really futile because the next thing is going to be here before I have a chance to relax. When we look to God for answers, he says to rest. To remember the Sabbath. To stop. God, I don't have time to stop. I don't have time to stop. But God says, remember the Sabbath. And what he's telling me by that is that I have to remember that I have limits. There's only so much that I can do. See, I am the creation with limited days, with limited energy to accomplish my task. With limited time on this earth to know God and to be known by God. A short 75 years, a speck of dust in the history of time. But if you're like me, there's a lot of burdens in life. There's a lot of work to be done. And they never stop. They are consistently at your door. They are consistently waiting for you to be finished so that they can get in your face and say, hey, it's my turn. Next thing. Jesus helps us to understand the spirit behind the commandment of remembering the

Sabbath in the book of Matthew. So as we've talked through several of these commandments, we have talked about how there's more than just what the commandment tells us in the moment. Matthew 11, verses 28 through 30 says, "'Come to me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.'" Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. If you're in faith journeys, remember that word. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light. Just a few minutes ago, I gave us several broad views of the Jewish rules for Sabbath. If you could remember them, they either deal with some kind of labor or they deal with some kind of burden. Remember that? Don't carry ordinary burdens. Don't do any ordinary work. Don't gather food. Don't do any of those things. So Jesus is saying, Come to me, all you who labor. who gather, who provide, those who are burdened, carrying extra weight on your shoulders, dealing with heavy issues in life, and trade all of those things for his yoke. And what I found interesting about this, even this morning as I was reading, the thought came to me, I've always seen that verse when I've read labor and heavy burdens, and I think rightfully so, as a negative impact. It's like, I'm thinking of the labor of trying to be righteous. I'm thinking of the heavy burden of sin. And while I believe the Scripture can encapsulate that, In the spirit of the commandment of taking the Sabbath as a rest, I also believe it's just life sometimes. There's some times when life is difficult and it is a labor to get through the day. Life will sometimes give us heavy burdens that... We don't want, we're not even expecting, but the phone rings and an email is received and all of a sudden we're like, I didn't need this today. The schedule's full. There's no room for this. So when life gets difficult, Jesus says, come to me. Come to me, and I will give you rest. If you were in faith journeys this morning, I spoke from Psalms 103. And it begins by saying, Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me. Bless His holy name. Bless the Lord, O my soul. And the word that is used for soul in Psalm 103, which is the word nephesh, is related to the Greek word used here in Matthew 11 called psyche, and it talks about the soul of man. So if you were in faith journeys, I have a different interpretation of the soul. To me, the soul encapsulates all that makes us human, body, mind, and spirit. And so when we find rest for our souls, when Jesus offers us rest for our souls, he offers rest for our minds, to be able to lay down the burdens that are on our hearts, that we're thinking about, that are making the day difficult. He gives us rest for our spirit that is burdened with sins and burdened with guilt and burdened with shame. He gives us rest for our bodies. which are struggling with sicknesses, which are struggling with just the difficulty of getting old in some of us, just the difficulty of making it through the day and keeping appointments and doing the things we have to do. He gives us rest for mind, spirit, and body. So Jesus says that if we come to him and lay down our labor and our burdens and take a Sabbath, take a rest, if you're like, well, what does that mean? Best thing I can give you, stop. Just stop. Stop. Stop whatever it is that's driving you crazy at the moment. Pause. Take a break. Lay it on the altar. Spend some time reading your Bible. Spend some time in prayer saying, Jesus, this is too heavy for me. This is causing me to work. I need to take a rest from this. See, rest is the gift that God gives us in the midst of a life that is few of days, and full of trouble. God says the remedy to help you with this life that is few of days and full of trouble is to stop. That's counterintuitive to what we want to do. We don't want to stop. But here's the reason God gives that to us. He knows your limitations. He realizes you're going to come to an end at some point of energy and of time. You're going to come to a place where you have to stop. Our bodies require sleep. Sleep is, in essence, a daily reminder to us that we have to take a Sabbath. Your physical body's need it. Do you realize if you go so many days without sleeping, you don't just get sick, you actually die. That's how important rest is for us. Even on a daily basis, God understands our limitations. And He provides for us in those limitations. A couple of scriptures out of Psalms, He establishes Himself as our refuge in trouble, out of Psalm 46. He delivers us when we cry for help, Psalms 34. And we can trade our burdens, which are heavy and overbearing, for a yoke that is easy and light, if we are willing to come to Jesus. And that's just in this life. As the old TV ad used to say, but wait, there's more. There's more than just rest in this life. God, through Jesus, has provided a rest eternally for those who place their faith in the completed work of our Savior, Jesus Christ. The scripture we

started out with this morning, Hebrews chapter four, says, therefore, since a promise remains of entering his rest, Let us fear lest any of you seem to have come short of it. For indeed the gospel was preached to us as well as to them. But the word which they heard did not profit them being mixed with faith in those who heard it. For we who have believed enter that rest. See, there is a rest that comes to our spirit when we put our faith in Jesus Christ, that we no longer have to strive with our sin, that we no longer have to bear our guilt and our shame. Jesus has come to take that away from us. And if you don't hear anything else this morning, hear this. God has given us the promise of rest both in this life and in the next but it requires something of you there's always a contract right first Jesus said come to me all you who are weary so we have to come to Jesus if we want to find rest for our souls we must respond to the calling and the leading of the Holy Spirit to draw near to God through Jesus Christ and his work on the cross which gives us forgiveness for our sins. This morning, I would encourage you not to ignore the conviction of your heart, the still small nudges that the Spirit uses to lead us to ask questions, to seek answers that only Jesus has for us. See, this is the first step in being able to lay down our burdens, to lay down our labors, and to find rest in Jesus Christ. We have to come to him. Second, we have to believe in the salvation that Jesus offers through the forgiveness of our sins. Hebrews 4, verse 11 says, therefore, let us be diligent to enter that rest. We have to be diligent. We have to be diligent. We can't just be like, yeah, you know, *que sera, sera*. What will be, will be. I mean, if Jesus loves me, he'll make a way. No. No. Be diligent to enter the rest. Because here's the warning. If we're not diligent to enter the rest, we can fall according to the example of disobedience. We have to be diligent, to be obedient to the commands of Jesus so that we can enter the rest. Because if we choose not to be diligent and we just come see, come saw, you're going to fall in disobedience. And you will miss the rest that God has for us. That eternal rest is important. And it's one that we seek knowing that our time here on earth is few of days and full of trouble. I was talking to Brandon this morning over there. We were just talking about a few things, and his grandfather just passed away, and we were just talking about some of the things in life, and he was just sharing how it was hard, but it was blessed because they were saved, and he's in heaven, and it's hard when you lose a member. And I was like, you know, it reminds me of an old saying that we had down south. My dad used to tell it to me all the time. He says, everyone wants to go to heaven. Nobody's in a hurry to get there. Because to get there, there has to be a death. So we understand that our time is short. We understand that there will come a day when we will breathe our last. There will be no more. And God has provided an eternal rest whenever we come to that day where we can hear, well done, good and faithful servant. Enter into the rest that I have prepared for you. There's an eternal rest that God has prepared for us, but we have to be diligent to enter it. But God is such a good God. Not only does He provide an eternal rest for us when this life that's few of days and full of trouble is over, guess what? He offers us rest now. We have the ability to find rest from all that troubles us in this life. If you were like me, you scratch your head and be like, hogwash. It never feels that way. That's normally because we don't practice the Sabbath. We don't practice taking rest. A day to break from the normal routine, to spend time with family, to actually pick up the gun and go out into the woods and hunt. You never shoot an elk sitting in your living room. You have to take time away from your normal routine, that which takes up all of your time, and you have to go and spend it with family. You have to foster fun and excitement in your own life. It's not going to come knocking. We're not teenagers anymore, and your friends don't show up at the door and be like, hey, you want to go out? We're like, no, leave me alone. I want to be home. We have to take time to smell the roses and to find the beauty in life because life keeps on slipping into the future and it will always be seeking to take your attention and put it on something that will ultimately steal your time. Life has a lot of beauty in it, but it's up to us to be willing to stop and to see it and to participate in it. See, our fight as people is to cease the striving and to take the offer of rest that God has given. The offer is there. The choice is yours. We must choose to rest. And God has provided a way for us to do that. Stand with me this morning. If I live for 27 more years, I have approximately 9860 days left. Tomorrow morning, I will have one day less. I

don't know how many days you have, but tomorrow morning you'll have one day less. Psalm chapter 90 teaches us to number our days that we may gain wisdom. David in Psalm chapter 39 implores us to understand the number of our days so that we know how fleeting they are. This isn't meant to scare us. It's meant to help us understand we have limitations. Unlike God, we don't have forever. We have a limited time. Life will always have a calendar chock full of schedules, appointments, deadlines, And unfortunately, there's no way around it. Scripture teaches many times over that that is just life. It's full of trouble. It's full of stuff. Life will never stop knocking at your door, seeking your attention. Yet God gives us a gift to reclaim the important things in life. That time seeks to steal. He gives us a day of rest. A day of rest for this life. That if done and used correctly, can and will blossom into an eternity of rest with him. But we must come to Jesus. We must lay down our labor. We must lay down our burdens. We must take his yoke and believe in him. You can't stop time from slipping, slipping, slipping. But we can rest and enjoy the blessing and goodness life has to offer us while we're here. But again, the choice is ours. The choice is ours.