

**Get a Grip**  
***Restoring Your Soul***  
**October 4, 2020**

Good morning everyone and thank you for taking time to join us in this special broadcast, *Restoring Your Soul*.

I say that it's a "special broadcast" because ...

- First of all, this is an "online only" experience. The only other people in the building right now besides me and the band are a few tech volunteers who are making this broadcast happen.

And the reason for that, as I said last Sunday ... and in the letter ... and the email I sent out this week – if you didn't get either of those that means we don't have

your contact info or our communications are going to your spam folder ...

The reason this service is online only is that we felt it necessary to give the majority of our staff and volunteers a one-week break.

And *next* week – because many of you said “YES” to stepping in and volunteering for the next 12 weeks ... we’ll be back to our normal onsite programming which makes me very happy. So, thank you.

In addition, this broadcast is “special” because ...

- It’s only going to last for about 45 minutes instead of an hour.
- And I won’t doing be a typical message.

Instead, I’m going to lead us through an

experience of worship, scripture and prayer that will, hopefully, serve to restore our souls.

So, why do we think that's necessary?

Simple.

- *Pressure* ... pushing down on me, pushing down on you.
- *Pressure* ... financially, socially, medically, relationally, vocationally – pretty much every “ally” you can think of.
- *Pressure* ... for some of us, extreme. But, for almost all of us, *constant*.

We can never get away from it.

- For 7 months now, we've had the issue of “coronavirus” right up in our face.

*Literally* ... in our face ... behind a mask.

- Since May, we've been stressed by cultural clashes – sometimes *literally* – over racism and bad policing and systemic injustice, and the extent to which any of those truly exist in our country.
- In recent weeks, we've seen our national political leaders repeatedly insult one another like a bunch of middle-schoolers while flat-out lying to us.

And I know I'm being disrespectful to middle-schoolers. Sorry kids.

- And then, to top it all off, today's Chiefs' game is cancelled!

I mean, everywhere you turn right now, it feels like there's a constant and oppressive weight.

And it's taking a toll on us. It's taking a toll on *me*.

About a month ago ...

- Which was about the same time that I was going through my own personal battle with COVID-19 ...
- Which meant that I had a lot more "alone time" than usual ...

About a month ago, I started thinking about and analyzing what's going on inside of me right now.

And I came to two conclusions.

**#1. I don't like "me" very much right now.**

I don't like what I'm thinking and feeling. I don't like what I'm saying and doing.

Therefore ...

**#2. I need to get a grip because my emotions are controlling me.**

Far too often these days, I am being driven by fear, by anger, by judgmentalism, fatigue, apathy, and dissatisfaction.

And, as a Christian – as someone who believes in Jesus; someone who knows and tries to follow Jesus ...

*As a Christian, that is not the life God intends for me to experience.*

I'm made for *more* than that. I'm made for something *better* than that.

And, if you're a Christian, so are you.

God intends for us – regardless of

circumstances, regardless of whatever pressure we feel – to be characterized by what the Apostle Paul called “the fruit of the Spirit.”

### **The fruit of the Spirit, he wrote ...**

The effect of God being in control of your life

...

*... is love, joy, peace,  
patience, kindness, goodness,  
faithfulness, gentleness, and  
self-control. Galatians  
5:22 (NET)*

And *that's* what I want to experience. *That's* how I want to live. *That's* who I want to be.

And, even if you're *not* a Christian, so do you

...

... which is why this Sunday – this “special

broadcast” – is actually the first week of an eight-week series called ...

***Get a Grip ... taking control of your emotions so they don't take control of you.***

For the next two months – from now through Thanksgiving – we're going to talk about fear, anger, judgmentalism, fatigue, apathy, and dissatisfaction because, well, *you're struggling with those things, too. We all are.*

But before we can talk about *any of those things*, we first need to deal with the fact that ...

- This has been a very long haul.
- And it's probably not going to get much easier anytime soon.
- And our souls are weary and worn down and need to be restored.



We have to start there because that's where it all starts.

So, what we're going to do today is to remind ourselves that ...

*The Lord is our shepherd, and therefore, we shall not want.*

*He makes us to lie down in green pastures*

*He leads us beside the still waters*

*He restores our souls.*

*Psalm 23 (NKJV)*

When we turn to Him, and trust in Him, and rest in Him, the promise is ... we will find new strength. He will restore us.

So, that's the goal for the next half-hour.

And we're going to start by singing a song that reminds us of God's power and His faithfulness.

And I know it's harder to do that online, so I suggest that you either ...

- Turn up the volume so it's not so weird when you sing along
- OR, close your eyes and let the words of the song just wash over your soul.

Or maybe both.

So, here we go.

Father, we know that you are faithful and good.

We know that you are for us and not against us.

We know that you have made a way in the past and you will continue to make a way now and in the future.

And we know that because of the one who is THE WAY – your Son, Jesus of Nazareth and the way He made for us in dying in our place on the cross.

And yet, Lord ...

- Because of the pressure we feel from our circumstances ...
- Because of the emotions that so quickly rise up in us these days ...

... we fail to live out of that knowledge.

Instead of being driven by our confidence in You, we are driven by our emotions.

- We're fearful – driven by so many “what ifs.”
- We're angry – just fed up with everything that's happening (or not happening) around us.
- We're judgmental – so critical of all the idiots (or worse) who “just don't get it” ... like we do.
- We're weak and fatigued – sometimes we just want to give up.
- We're apathetic – sometimes we just don't care anymore.
- We're dissatisfied – nothing is ever good

enough for us; nothing brings us joy.

And the list could go on of all the ways we have fallen short in this time.

... which why we are so thankful that You are not only a faithful God and a good God.

You are also a gracious God and a forgiving God who takes away our guilt and our shame.

Amen.

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Now, as Ashlyn sings this next song, I invite you to think about the ways in which you have fallen short in recent days. And if it would be helpful to write down some of those things, I encourage you to do that, too.

And as the words of her song wash over you, what I want you to do is to imagine standing before the Lord with the list of your failures and you just releasing all of them to Him.

And then, when her song is over, I invite you to join in singing *the next song* and celebrate the grace and forgiveness we have in Jesus.

<PRAYER> So, Lord, we come to you in this moment just as we are. This is us.

- This is who we are and are not
- This is what've done and have not done.

What a great song!

I love the part where it says, "I don't want to abuse Your grace. It's the only thing that makes me want to change" because,

according to the Apostle Paul, that is exactly how God's grace works.

**In a letter to one of his friends he wrote ...**

*The grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all people.*

*Titus 2:11 (NET)*

Meaning that ...

- Whoever you are, whoever you aren't ...
- Whatever you've done, whatever you've not done ...

God's forgiveness, God's mercy, God's acceptance is yours just by believing in Jesus and trusting in what He did on the cross.

But that's not all that grace does.

## **Paul also writes that ...**

*It trains us to reject godless ways ...*

... or "living as if God wasn't present with us ... as if it was all up to us."

Grace, Paul says, trains us to reject the way of living without God ...

*... and [being driven by] worldly desires ...*

... which means, in part, being controlled by our emotions instead of controlling them.

Grace teaches us to reject *that* kind of life ...

*... and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly [God-centered, God-aware] lives.  
Titus 2:12 (NET)*



In other words, *grace* – when you truly experience it – changes you from someone ...

- Who walks alone ...
- Trying to find their own way ...
- In their own strength ...

... to someone who walks with God, in His ways, and in His strength.

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And, in the next few minutes, I want us to focus on that.

As Richard and Hannah sing this next song, I want you to imagine Jesus literally being with you ...

- In whatever pressure you've

experienced in recent weeks and months ...

- In whatever hard things you've had to do or go through ...
- In whatever situations have caused your emotions to peak into the red zone ...

As they sing, close your eyes and try to see in your mind ...

- Jesus standing next to you ...
- Jesus walking with you ...
- Jesus offering you encouragement and strength ...

... in the middle of all of those things.

And I know that might sound really strange

but it's not.

**Because ...**

*Even though we walk*

*Through the valley of the  
shadow of death*

*We will fear no evil*

*For You, God, are with us.*

**Slide**

*Your rod and Your staff, they  
comfort us.*

*You prepare a table before us  
in the presence of our  
enemies.*

*You anoint our heads with oil.*

*Our cup runs over.*

In the worst and most stressful situation we can imagine, if we belong to Jesus, He is with us and He is for us.

And we are confident that no matter what it looks like and feels like right now ...

*Surely goodness and mercy  
will follow us*

*All the days of our lives.*

*And we will dwell in the house  
of the Lord forever.*

*Psalm 23 (NKJV)*

So, Jesus, in this moment, help us to see ...

- That you *have been* with us *in the past*.
- That you *are* with us in the *present*
- And you *will be* with us in the *future*.

Amen.

I love the part of that song that says "I will rest in the Father's hands" but I think the next line should have been, "leave *the mess* in the Father's hands" because that's what He invites us to do with our messes.

**As one of Jesus' friends once put it ...**

*Cast all your cares – all your worries and anxieties and stresses and messes – upon Him because He cares for you.      1 Peter 5:7 (NIV)*

He cares for you.

You.

And, frankly, that's the whole point of this

broadcast; to be reminded that, regardless of what it might look like or feel like right now, God cares. God cares.

In fact, the Old Testament says that God told Moses that, every so often, the priests of Israel were to call the people together ...

- Not to preach a sermon.
- Not to read the Bible or pray.
- And not to take an offering or make a sacrifice.

They were simply to speak an expression of God's love and care over the people ... words that would restore their souls.

**“Moses, tell the priests to say to the people ...”**

*The Lord bless you and keep*

*you*

*The Lord make His face shine  
upon you and be gracious to  
you*

*The Lord turn His face toward  
you and give you peace.*

*Numbers 6:23-27 (NIV)*

And as we draw this time to a close, we're going to do the same thing.

The band is going to sing that exact blessing over everyone who is watching.

And, as they do, I'm going to ask you to do something that might feel a little weird but, if you do it, you'll be glad you did.

And if there are other people watching this broadcast with you, you can close your eyes if that would help.

But what I want you to do as the band sings this final song and we end our time together, is to hold out your hands with your palms upward like you're receiving a gift – because you are.

You're receiving the blessing of God.

So here we go.