

Time Out

October 17, 2021

Song- “Stop This Train”

Maybe it’s the fact that my daughter is in her senior year of high school or that I just turned 50 or that I just recently officiated 3 funerals in 30 days, but that song just gets to me.

The older I get, and the older those I love get, the faster the years seem to fly by and I become more aware of the fact that you can not stop this train, called life.

See I think we all inherently know that once we come into the world the train of our life starts towards it’s final destination. There is only one destination for all of us. There’s no getting around it, there’s no avoiding it. Death comes to call for all of us and for those we

love. Super upbeat thought right, aren't you glad you came to church today?

But seriously, one of the strange gifts I have received as a result of working here at North Heartland is the gift of working with people in their grief and the loss of a loved one.

I say it's a strange gift because when I first started here I could not even talk about death and I avoided the subject at all costs but through my time on staff here, I have adjusted, God has grown me and He has shown me a lot.

Some of you have been around a while and have heard me say this but I'll say it again, when you walk through a loss with people, when you help walk someone home to Jesus,

you gain a LOT of perspective. You can perspective about the brevity of life.

The writer of Psalm 103 says it like this:

*The life of mortals is like grass,
they flourish like a flower of the field; the
wind blows over it and it is gone,*

Psalm 103:15-16 (NIV)

Life is short, our time here is fleeting and the older we get the more we KNOW this to be true.

Walking someone home or walking with people through loss also provides perspective about how no matter when or how death happens, people will ALWAYS want one more day, one more memory, one more laugh, one more chance to spend time with those they love.

You also gain perspective about how what we believe happens when it's "all over" really matters when it's "all over." We often may put off thinking about what happens when it's "all over" or as Rick talked about it last week, our Judgement Day.

We may not like to think about what happens to us when it's "all over" but that doesn't change the fact that that time is coming.

If you were not here last week, I want to strongly encourage you to go back and watch or listen to that service. You can find it on our website or app. Rick's message was so helpful to understanding what happens when that day comes, our Judgement Day, when our life here on earth comes to an end. Honestly it was such a clear picture, I can not recommend enough going back to watch,

listen or read the manuscript online. Don't delay!

Having an up close experience with death can also have the benefit of inviting you to reevaluate and hopefully recalibrate your own life.

To consider questions like

Am I holding on to grudges I need to let go of?

Am I investing my best time, energy and resources into things that really matter (psst...social media is NOT one of those)?

Am I living my life in a way that is consistent with what I say matters most?

If your train, that is your life, were to come to

a complete stop tonight at it's final destination, would you have regrets? Things you wish you could undo, things you wish you would have said or done.

Are you sure about that final destination? What comes after you take your last breath? If you are unsure or have questions, again I want to strongly recommend last week's message.

After officiating the 3rd funeral in a month, I took several days away from KC to go on a silent retreat. Three days alone away from it all in a cabin that had no cell service, no wifi, no TV or cable or satellite. Three days alone to be still, to be quiet, to renew my mind and to recalibrate my life.

I can not stop this train I'm on... but I can call a time out. I can turn off the noise, quiet the world, and listen to the Holy Spirit's leading on what needs to be healed, to be addressed, to be confronted, to be transformed and changed. I can listen for ways my life is out of whack and make adjustments.

During that quiet time away, I was reminded that the more chaotic our lives are, the more demands on our emotions, our time, our minds, the more unwieldy our lives become. It's like our train is so loud that we find ourselves angry, irritable, impatient, unkind and just generally out of whack. Our lives become so loud and obnoxious, we just want to numb it all out in whatever way is consistent for us-TV, social media, drugs, alcohol, porn, food, insert here your go to

coping mechanism.

I know, trust me, I know that I am beyond blessed that I work in a place that values being still and quiet with God. A place that challenges us to be cautious that the pace we keep in doing for God does not steal from our time to be with God and destroy His work in us.

However just because I work in a place that values that does NOT mean I get it right, in fact I often do NOT. In order to take a time out, I have to let the to do list go unfinished, disappoint people who expect something I can not deliver, and be willing to stop DOING and just BE.

Are you struggling to find time to recalibrate your life? To refill, renew and restore?

I want to challenge you to ask yourself, these questions I asked myself on that retreat

Is there really no time you can spend in a regular and consistent time out?

How much time do you spend watching TV-binging the latest Netflix or Hulu show?

Scrolling through FB and Instagram?

Complaining to others about how much time you don't have?

Working?

Busying yourself with errands and emails?
Do any of those ring true for you? Or is it just me?

Now occasionally I meet someone who truly does need assistance to get a time out. Parents with special needs children, single

parents without shared custody, people caring for a sick or aging loved one, people who are serving as the sole caregiver for another but even then there are often options and things that can be stripped away to provide more breathing room in their life. It just might require asking for help and let's be honest, for most of us that is really difficult to do.

So today, I want to provide you with an opportunity to take a time out. To recalibrate. I want to provide a space for you to slow down and quiet your mind, to physically engage with your heart and soul, to look at your one life and ask, is this the life I want?

So in our time today, I have asked our music team to prepare several songs for us. Songs that I hope will speak to your heart and mind.

I know that not everyone here or watching online is a follower of Jesus so some of this may not be where you are at. I get that but I want to challenge you to still engage in this process. Slow your mind, examine your life as we ask questions and if you are willing would you consider opening your heart and mind to hear from the Lord?

I hope so, but even if you are not ready I trust that this space will help you to quiet your life and recalibrate as needed.

So here's what we are going to do, we are going to begin with a song that you will remain seated for and I'm going to ask that while the song is sung you close your eyes, quiet your mind and open your heart.

After that song, a one minute video of nature and quiet music will play-during that video if

you are a follower of Jesus, I want to invite you to just praise God in your heart and mind for who He is.

Use that time to remind yourself who is God and who is not, worship Him as King of Kings, as the creator of everything as the one who is worthy of all our worship. If you are not there yet, just use the time to be still and quiet.

After the video, Hannah will invite us to stand and sing together.

After we sing that song together, I'll have you sit and we will move to the next phase and we will do that a few more times. For those of us raised in a certain denomination, this may feel right at home.

Let's pray as we begin.

...

So again during this next song, close your eyes, quiet your mind and open your heart.

Song-“Here’s My Heart”

Song-“So Will I”

In this next phase, I want to invite you to reflect on the areas in your life where you are not living consistently with what you value... thoughts and deeds that have caused harm to you or others, places where you are failing and falling short.

For me, the faster pace I keep the harder it is for me to see my own part in the pain in my life and in the lives of those around me that I am causing.

The louder the noise is in my life, the harder it

is for me to see others as people instead of objects in my way of getting what I want.

The more chaotic my life is the easier it becomes for me to see all the ways other people aren't measuring up.

To do the soul work described in the Gospel of Matthew becomes increasingly difficult.

Why do you look at the speck of sawdust in your brother's eye and pay no attention to the plank in your own eye? How can you say to your brother, 'Let me take the speck out of your eye,' when all the time there is a plank in your own eye?

You hypocrite, first take the plank out of your

own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye.

Matthew 7:3-5 (NIV)

So in this next part, I'd like to challenge you to take some time to take a look in the mirror. To pay attention to the log in your own eye.

To help with that, I want to share the words found in the letter to the Christians living in Corinth that is recorded for us in the New Testament. These words are often recognized by many as the Love chapter featured in many weddings.

Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It does not dishonor others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of

wrongs.

Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. 1 Cor. 13: 4-7 (NIV)

So how are you doing in your love towards self and others? Are you kind to yourself or are you constantly berating yourself and saying hateful things...psst if you do that to yourself you are more likely to do that to others as well.

Are you patient with others? Or do you find yourself easily frustrated and angered? Are you quick to point out the faults of others?

During this next video, take a moment to think on those places in your life where you

might need to say you are sorry, make amends, change your ways. After the video, we will again stand and sing together.

Let's pray.

Song-“Holy Water”

As we move into this next part, I want to invite you to consider what in your life you can be grateful for, what blessings do you have in your life?

Far too often these days, we are encouraged to see what we don't have, to consider our lack. Most of us by nature, have no problem making a list of what we don't have, what isn't going well, and so on.

So I want to challenge you in this next section to take some time to make a mental list of what you can be thankful for, and I'd like to

encourage to try and list at list 5 things.

I'll even give you one. You can drink the water from your shower. You could fill up a glass from your shower and drink it.

Yesterday, some friends ran the KC Marathon and Half Marathon for World Vision. They raised funds for clean water. Having done that race, I remember the countless stories of mothers and their children who will walk over 3 ½ miles roundtrip to get water for their family and the water they will get is not even clean or sanitary.

So there is something you can be grateful for, you were born into a country where you can drink clean water from your shower. What else can you be grateful for?

What physical, emotional, and spiritual needs are met that you take for granted? For those of us who follow Jesus, take some time to be reminded of His goodness, His grace and mercy and His sacrifice on your behalf.

As we go into this next space, let me share these words found in Psalm 103

Praise the LORD, my soul;
all my inmost being, praise his holy name.

Praise the LORD, my soul,
and forget not all his benefits—
who forgives all your sins
and heals all your diseases,

who redeems your life from the pit
and crowns you with love and compassion

Psalm 103: 1-4 (NIV)

Let's pray.

Song-“Evidence”

For this final part of the service, I want to invite you to take some time to consider, what is weighing heavy on you these days? Where do you need God to show up?

For many of us, we are in a season of turmoil. The change of life that came with Covid has taken it's toll on us.

I was thinking back to the beginning of it all, when the stay at home first went into place. People got creative-we saw bear hunts, balcony concerts, good news videos, game nights at home, long walks and bike rides, drive way hangouts, zoom gatherings, encouragement for first responders and front line workers.

But as the days went on, we started feeling the toll, some lost loved ones, some lost their livelihood, businesses closed, special events were cancelled, most of us lost our sense of normal, our fear got amped up, our frustration and irritations got turned up to 11.

Instead of seeing us all in this together, we started comparing and playing the martyr game to see who had lost more, who had paid a higher price.

Trust me friends, no one wins at that game. No one. Many of us are beat down, worn out, talked out, aggravated at being shut down, tired of the constant negativity, not to mention those who are facing loss of health, income, loved ones, and so on. The truth is many of us are just raw, we are out of steam.

So in this next part, I want to ask you to lay

your needs at the feet of Jesus. Ask him to do what only He can do.

Ask him to change your circumstances or to change your view of them.

Ask him to bringing healing and peace to your heart and mind.

Ask him to make a way where there seems to be no way.

Let these words found in Psalm 31 dwell in your heart and mind:

*Turn your ear to me,
come quickly to my rescue;*

*be my rock of refuge,
a strong fortress to save me.*

Since you are my rock and my fortress,

*for the sake of your name lead and guide
me... Psalm 31: 2-3 (NIV)*

*Be merciful to me, LORD, for I am in distress;
my eyes grow weak with sorrow,
my soul and body with grief.
My life is consumed by anguish
and my years by groaning;*

*my strength fails because of my affliction,
and my bones grow weak.*

Psalm 31: 9-10 (NIV)

*But I trust in you, LORD;
I say, "You are my God."
My times are in your hands;*

*deliver me from the hands of my enemies,
from those who pursue me.
Let your face shine on your servant;
save me in your unfailing love.*

Psalm 31: 14-16 (NIV)

Let's pray

Song-Trust in You

Song-Lord, I Need You

Prayer

My hope and prayer is that this time has been helpful to you. That you were able to get some space to consider what areas of your life might need a recalibration.

I want to challenge you as you go home today to make some time to consider what is one thing you could do to make your life more

consistent with the life you want when all is said and done.

And if you want to go a step further, set aside a date between now and the end of the year to put yourself in an intentional time out for an hour, a few hours or maybe even a whole day.

Benediction

*The LORD bless you
and keep you;
the LORD make his face shine on you
and be gracious to you;
the LORD turn his face toward you
and give you peace. Numbers 6:24-26 NIV*