# Shapeless January 27, 2019

Worship - Heartbeats / What a Savior / T&G

Behind the Scenes - Video

Feature - Chain Breaker

Good morning everyone.

I think that song is a great way to start off the final week of this series, *Breathing Room*, because if there's one thing that is clear in all of these messages (I hope), it's that God does not want you and me to be enslaved to anything or anyone that would keep us from enjoying the kind of life for which He created us.

You and I are meant to be free.

Unfortunately, as we've seen in this series, when it comes to two of the greatest resources we have – our time and our money – most of us have chosen to live our lives right up to the edge and even over the edge. We have no margin in our schedule and our bank account ... which means ...

In our quest to get the most out of life, ironically, we're losing control of our life. We're becoming slaves to our calendars and slaves to our creditors.

So, in this series we've talked about the concept of breathing room in general and, then, how to get it specifically in those two areas. And if you missed any

of the last three weeks, I encourage you to check out the message in the media section of our app and website or on our podcast.

"Breathing room" we said is the space between our current pace and our limits in any area of life.

It's the difference between what we're trying to do and our functional capacity.

- It's the space between what we're trying to trying to cram into our schedule and how much time we really have.
- It's what we're spending vs. what we bring in on the income side.

And when you have breathing room, especially in those two areas, your life

is better. And that's what we all want and what God wants for us.

So, that's where we've been and, today, we're going to look at one more resource that all of us have.

And this one, I think, is even greater ... even more significant ... even more important than the resources of time and money. This resource is *our body* – your physical body, my physical body.

And I say it's greater and more significant and more important than time and money because almost all of life is, in some way, experienced and comprehended through the physical body.

• Most obviously, there's the five

senses: we see, we touch, we hear, we taste, we smell.

- Beyond that, our thoughts and emotions almost always impact us physically.
  - When we get angry, our face turns red and our blood pressure rises.
  - When we feel love towards someone, we touch them or hug them (or something more intimate if that's appropriate).
  - When we're happy or excited, we clap our hands or yell or smile.
- Even spiritual experiences often have a physical component.

- When we worship, we sing, we kneel, we lift our hands.
- When we pray, we sometimes literally cry out to God.
- And then there's just the mundane tasks of life.
  - Cooking dinner
  - o Changing a diaper
  - Cleaning the house
  - Cutting the grass
- To say nothing of all the fun things you need your body for like playing with your kids and grandkids or skiing or riding a horse or going to a ballgame or playing golf or tennis.

Almost all of life is experienced and comprehended through our body which

means that ...

The quality of our life is, in many ways, dependent on the condition of our body.

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Now, we don't like to think that way because we tend to believe that we have no limits. We should just be able to overcome whatever condition our body is in and still have the highest quality of life.

But, if you've ever been in a situation where a person is "near the end" and the doctors are trying to determine the next steps in treatment, you know that this is often the deciding factor.

When my mom was in the final stages of

her battle with lung cancer, the doctor recommended stopping chemo because, in his words, "this is a quality of life issue" – meaning that the condition her body was in because of the treatment was making the time she had left worse than it had to be.

Like it or not, the quality of our life is, in so many ways, dependent on the condition of our body.

Having said *that*, we also need to say that there are many things about the condition of our body that are out of our control.

- We all inherit things from our family tree. For instance ...
  - o I come from a long-line of short

people. I can't change that. That's my condition.

- One side of my family tree has battled alcoholism. That's hereditary. That's my condition. I'd be a fool to drink even casually.
- Some of us have had an accident or contracted a disease or experienced some other misfortune that has impacted us physically.
- Some of us have to take medication that impacts our body in a way we wouldn't chose if we could.
- And then there's aging and the impact that has.

There are many things about the condition of our body that are out of our control.

### Making It Worse

And I think it's important to remember that in this discussion ... but I think it's just as important to admit that ...

In addition to those factors that are out of our control, most of us are *further limiting* our quality of life because of how we treat our body.

We all have physical challenges we can do nothing about, but we're making it worse than it has to be. And we're paying the price – oftentimes literally in terms of medical bills and other expenses.

So, how are we doing that? How are we making it worse?

There are so many things we could talk about that have that effect such as, for instance, *recreational drug use* – which, legal or not, is about the dumbest thing a person could ever choose to get involved with.

But that's a topic for another day.

Instead, I want narrow the list to just three ways that almost everyone in this room or watching online makes things worse for their body; three ways that we live right up to our limits or beyond.

And by the way, these three things are not something I just dreamed up on my own (though I am thoroughly

experienced with each of them – and not in a good way). Medical researchers have again and again affirmed "if you want the condition of your body to be a hindrance to the quality of your life, just do these three things."

They don't actually say it like *that* but they do say these three things will make your physical condition worse than it has to be.

And if you're a younger person – and by that I mean 40 and under, I need to tell you something first.

I wish someone would have said, "Rick, you'd better get a grip on these three things now because when you get to be 45 and 50 and 55 and 60, it's going to get harder and harder to break the

pattern of your life in these three areas."

Back when I was 20 and 30, there was some talk about these things but it was kind of hit and miss. And no one had really tied them all together. No one was saying, "the combination of these three things is going to make it far worse than it has to be for your body and, ultimately, your life."

So I'm telling you now. If you're a younger person, you have the opportunity to avoid a lot of what your parents and grandparents are going through right now.

Here's the deal. If you want the condition of your body to hinder the quality of your life ...

#### These things will do it:

- Too little sleep.
- Too many calories (or carbs or whatever you prefer to count).
- Not enough exercise.

Now, I am not telling you anything you don't already know or haven't already heard so I'm going to talk about these things very quickly. So here goes.

When you consistently stay up too late and shortchange your sleep – which most of us do because we want to cram more in – new research<sup>i</sup> suggests that ...

 You are increasing the risk of Alzheimer's. Just one night of sleep deprivation boosts levels of the proteins that form toxic clumps in the brains of Alzheimer's patients.

- You will be more susceptible to depression and anxiety.
- You'll battle more infections, especially colds.<sup>ii</sup>

One researcher wrote ""It used to be popular for people to say, 'I'll sleep when I'm dead. The ironic thing is, not sleeping enough may get you there sooner."

Furthermore, sleep deprivation messes up your hunger hormones, causing an increase in appetite and specific cravings for calorie-dense, high-carbohydrate foods.

- If you only get 6 hours on average, your risk of developing obesity rises by 23%.
- If you only get 5, it increases by 50%.
- And if you only get 4 consistently, it increases a whopping 73%! iv

... which brings us to the issue of too many calories.

Do you know what your recommended calorie or carb intake is to maintain your current weight or to get down to a lower weight?

Most people don't and so they blow right by it on a regular basis. They *literally* cram too much into their body. Or they do know and they tell themselves, "well, these are good calories or good carbs so they don't count as much as bad ones" which is bogus.

Now, it *is* better to eat better food. Your body *will* benefit from that.

But your body is a finely-tuned machine that is going to burn either <u>food</u> or <u>fat</u> for fuel.

- If you take in <u>more</u> food than your body <u>burns</u> (be it carrots or cheesecake), that excess gets stored in your fat cells.
- If you take in <u>less</u> food than you need to <u>burn</u>, it draws from those fat cells.

Now, there may be other factors at play in your weight and mine, but those two laws of nutrition are non-negotiable. Too many calories (or carbs or whatever you want to count) are a problem.

Then, there's too little exercise.

In our highly-automated, overly-entertained, comfort-driven society, we just don't move as much as our parents or their parents did. A lot of us are addicted to our phones and TVs. We're couch potatoes. Most of us simply don't do very much.

And when you stuff all three of these factors together into a person's life, the result is no breathing room – *literally*. *Literally*, we're out of breath. We're

tired all the time, we're cranky, we're listless and we're susceptible to so many other health issues.

And again, I'm not saying that there aren't other factors we can't control but it's foolish to ignore the reality.

- Too little sleep
- Too many calories
- Not enough exercise

... will cause physical problems. But don't take my word for it. Check this out.

Video Clip - Obesity Health Risks (2 mins)

### **Not So Easy**

Now, at this point, some of you are thinking, "so, if I want to gain more breathing room – *literally*, then the solution isn't too complex. Just get more sleep, eat fewer calories and devote more time to exercise. Sounds good. See you next week."

Unfortunately, if it was truly that simple and that easy, everyone would do it. But we *don't* do it, for several reasons.

1. We minimize our personal responsibility because of our cultural aversion to "fat shaming."

That aversion is why some of you felt really uncomfortable when I was talking about the three factors that lead to our generally poor physical condition.

And it's why *I* felt uncomfortable when I decided to include that in this message – and then again when I actually went ahead and said all of it!

It's hard to talk about this issue because we live in a culture where the ultimate sin is to judge someone or to hurt their feelings. It's not acceptable to say (or even think), "well, if you were just more responsible in these areas, your physical condition would improve."

And really, unless you're asked you shouldn't say that because it's none of your business.

However – and this is the problem – because we shouldn't *say* that kind of

thing to anyone else, we also don't want to *hear* it from anyone else. I know that *I* don't want to hear it. And I shouldn't *have* to hear it.

But my defensiveness and sensitivity allows me to minimize my responsibility even though *I know* that the quality of my life is dependent on the condition of my body and the condition of my body is *at some level* dependent on my choices in these three areas.

Another reason why we don't do what we know we should do is that ...

2. Our physical behaviors – like eating, exercising and sleeping – are often driven by our emotional issues.

This is huge for me (no pun intended).

- If I am sad, I eat.
- If I am upset, I eat.
- If I am extremely happy, I eat.
- If I feel hopeless, I eat ... and I stay up too late watching stupid TV shows, playing Spider Solitaire and depriving myself of the sleep I need.

What makes it even worse is that *I know* when this is happening to me, but I do it anyway. It's terrible.

And for me to get back on track – to the point of being able to sleep right, eat right and exercise right, I need to

address what's going on in my heart and my head or wait for it to pass.

Unfortunately, in the meantime, the damage is done.

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Can any of you relate to these first two struggles?

I hope so. I hope it's not just me. ©

Now, I'm certain that not everyone will be able to relate to the final reason we struggle because this is one that affects only Christians. And not everyone here or watching online is a Christian, which is OK because we want you here. We want you to understand what we believe and who Jesus is and what it means to follow Him.

But if you're a Christian and you have trouble "just doing it" when it comes to sleeping, eating and exercising so that you can literally breathe better, chances are ...

3. You have some really bad "body theology" that has caused you to discount the significance of your body to God.

Maybe you heard some preacher talk about how it's so important to pay attention to the spiritual dimension of your life and not just the physical or you'll wind up living a meaningless life. (You might have heard that here from me).

And maybe you read the Apostle Paul's advice to Timothy:

Physical training is good,

but training for godliness is much better, promising benefits in this life and in the life to come.

1
Timothy 4:8 (NIV)

And then at some point you read or heard a preacher talk about ...

What Paul wrote to the Corinthian Christians, that ...

Our physical bodies cannot inherit the Kingdom of God. These dying bodies cannot inherit what will last forever ... our mortal bodies must be transformed into immortal bodies. 1 Corinthians 15:50,53 (NLT)

And you thought (or you were taught) that Paul was talking about when we die and go to Heaven to be with Jesus

(which he wasn't).

And then you heard or read what God said through the Hebrew prophet Samuel:

"The Lord does not look at the things people look at. People look at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart." 1 Samuel 16:7 (NIV)

And then you heard or read that Jesus himself once said ...

"The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak." Matthew 26:41 (NLT)

And you added all of that up in your mind and you thought ...

 Because the body can be a big problem for Christians ...

- o It's morally weak
- It can deceive us ("pretty" or "handsome" doesn't mean "good")
- It's mortal and always in the process of dying ...
- And because we Christians need to develop the spiritual side of our lives ...
- And because one day you're going to die and leave this "earth suit" (so to speak) and all of its problems and weaknesses and go to what you believe will be your true and final home – a spiritual destination of oneness with God's Spirit (which, by the way, is not true) ...

You concluded that what you do with your body doesn't matter as much to God as what you do with your heart and your spirit and your attitude.

You concluded that God is more concerned with what you do *internally* – spiritually – than what you do about such physical and external concerns like sleeping, calories and exercise.

And your conclusions are totally and completely wrong. You are discounting the significance of your body to God because you have bad "body theology."

## **Getting Spiritual**

But don't feel too bad about that because you aren't the first to have that problem. In fact, it was prevalent in Paul's day 2000 years ago and he had to go to great lengths to correct it ... although the specific issue Paul had to address concerning Christians' attitudes about their bodies was very different from what we're talking about today.

In Paul's day, many of those who became followers of Jesus as the Gospel spread throughout the Roman Empire were converts from the pagan religions of Rome. And one of the more perverted features (for lack of a better term) of those religions were the "sacred prostitutes" ... which meant that one of the ways you "worshiped" the deity was by ... well, you get the idea.

Now, as people came out of those religions and became Christians, they began to understand the implications of the fact that all of their sin – past, present and future – was forgiven.

One of those implications was (and *is*) that "I can do whatever I want and there is no penalty for sin awaiting me. In fact, I could actually go find one of those prostitutes that I used to know."

And, apparently, some believers in the city of Corinth were doing just that.

When word of their activities and how they were justifying those activities eventually got back to Paul, he wrote them a letter. And in that letter ...

He addresses the issue beginning in the sixth chapter verse 12.

You say, "I am allowed to do anything"

Paul is quoting their own argument and he's not disagreeing with it. Grace truly does mean no condemnation.

But, he says, not everything is good for you.

And here's why:

Even though "I am allowed to do anything," I must not become a slave to anything.

1 Corinthians 6:12 (NLT)

Again, back to the idea that God wants us to be free. And what these guys were doing with these "sacred prostitutes" was keeping them in bondage. They were enslaved to their old way of life.

Paul continues ...

You say, "Food was made for the stomach, and the stomach for food" (and that's true). But you can't say that our bodies were made for sexual immorality.

1 Corinthians 6:13 (NLT)

Which is exactly what they were saying.

"The stomach was made for food and eating merely fulfills that purpose. Six inches below that was made for, well, you know, and what I do with these ladies is merely fulfilling that purpose. Same thing. No big deal."

But Paul said, "no, those are not the same thing because our bodies weren't created for the purpose of sexual immortality" (or, in fact, any other kind of immorality).

No, he writes ...

They were made for the Lord.

Every human being on the planet was given a body so they could use it to serve God and God's purposes in this world.

And the Lord cares about our bodies ...

... and what we do with them.

"In fact," Paul continues his line of thought, "you want to know how much He cares?"

"We all know our that bodies are going

to reach that point where they wear out and die. Or something tragic is going to happen and life is going to end for us. And our bodies are going to return to the dust."

"But an amazing thing is going to happen when Jesus returns."

#### Paul writes:

God will raise us [meaning "our bodies"] from the dead by his power, just as he raised our Lord [meaning Jesus' body] from the dead.

1 Corinthians 6:14 (NLT)

You want to know how important your body is to God?

It's so important in the way God set things up that *you aren't even you* without it. That's why one day he is going to reunite your spirit with it!

Listen – if you're a Christian, after you die, your spirit gets to go be with Jesus. Amen. Glory hallelujah.

But *that* is not your ultimate destination. *That* is not your true and final home.

Jesus didn't come and die and rise again so that you could finally escape the prison of your body and the prison of this world and be set free as a spirit.

Jesus did what He did so that everything about this world – including your body – could be renewed and restored and

regenerated ... just like what happened to *His body* in the resurrection. (In fact, elsewhere Paul says that what happened to Jesus was just the first of what's going to happen when God finally intervenes in our world and sets everything to rights).

Friends, if you're a Christian, the day is coming when your body will be raised from the dead and remade complete, whole and perfect and never again to taste the bitter pill of death ... just as God intended from the beginning of the world.

And that – not a disembodied existence as a spirit – is the hope of the Gospel. That's the ultimate plan of God. That's where it's all going.

And in the meantime – between now and when that day comes – while we are alive in this body ...

#### Here's the plan, Paul says.

Don't you realize that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit, who lives in you and was given to you by God? 1 Corinthians 6:19 (NLT)

Now when we read that we don't get the full impact of what Paul is saying because we don't have his Jewish background so let me explain it to you.

In Hebrew thought, the Temple in Jerusalem is where Heaven and Earth intersected. In that one location, our world and God's world are intertwined and co-exist.

But all of that changed because of Jesus. If you're a Christian, what used to be true of the building in Jerusalem is now true of you. Paul is saying that what's going on in your body right now is the intersection of heaven and earth.

You ... and me ... and every other believer in and follower of Jesus ... are now the Temple or Temples, plural. All these little temples running all over the world spreading the good news. Much more effective than just the one in Jerusalem!

But just like *that* Temple mattered to God (remember when Jesus showed up and threw out the moneychangers because they had turned it into a den of thieves?) ... just like *that* Temple

mattered to God, the temple that is *your* body and the temple that is my body matters to God.

#### In fact, Paul says ...

You do not belong to yourself [your body is not your own], for God bought you with a high price.

That price was the agony of death that Jesus went through to pay for all of your sins – past, present and future; the agony He went through so that there would never be any condemnation for you, even for visiting those temple prostitutes.

But you're better than that. You're meant for more than that.

So you must honor God with your body. 1
Corinthians 6:20 (NLT)

You must use your body in whatever way possible to bring glory to Him.

And you can't do that very well, Paul is saying, when you *misuse* it by engaging in the immoral things you used to do.

And you also can't do it very well when you have no breathing room; when you misuse and abuse your body with ...

- Too little sleep.
- Too many calories.
- Not enough exercise.

# **Objections**

Now, I know what some of you are thinking because I'm no different from you. I've had the same thoughts.

You're thinking "this all makes logical sense and (if you're a Christian) spiritual sense but, in reality ..."

"It's too late for me to change. The damage has already been done."

And the truth is that sometimes we can't undo the damage we've done to our body. There was a "Plan A" for our body but now we're on "Plan B" or "C" or "T."

But it's also true that, until you're dead, God can be glorified in whatever plan you're on, because nowhere else is the principle of sowing and reaping as effective as it is in the human body.

What I mean by that is that you and I didn't get into the conditions we're in overnight. We did it slowly, step by step, over many years ... which means that if we go in the *other* direction, slowly, step by step, over many years, we will see positive changes.

We won't get back to "Plan A" but we will make the best of whatever plan we're now on. And it's not too late for that.

Ok, some of you are thinking ...

## "But it's too hard to change."

"It's literally exhausting to get moving.

I get tired so easily that I can't even

imagine exercising. And then to figure out how to eat differently or sleep differently? It wears me out just thinking about it!"

And I get that. I've been there.

But the reason it's so hard is because you have not played into shape and gained the strength that comes from doing just a little more.

The gym where I work out three times a week – *Anytime Fitness* over by Prairie View Road and Barry Road – has a sign on the wall that says "You can do more than you think you can."

And it's true.

My trainer Jonathan says "do 15 of

those" and sometimes when I get to about 12, I want to quit. But he's counting. "Three more, two more, one more." And so I keep trying and I discover that, lo and behold, I really can do 15 or maybe only 14. But it's more than I thought.

More importantly, a week later when we do those lifts again, 15 is easy. And so he increases the weight. And the cycle begins again.

It *is* hard to change but it gets easier – you get stronger – if you keep doing just a little more than you think you can.

Ok, one more objection ...

"It's not who I am – I'm just not disciplined enough."

And there's some truth to that. Some people *are* more disciplined by nature than others.

But here's the deal. You are where you are physically (all other non-controllable factors aside) ... your physical condition is what it is because you have been disciplined enough to follow some pattern of life that created it.

For example, these extra 7 pounds around my middle since last summer didn't just magically appear. They're there because I have been disciplined enough to follow a pattern of eating between 8:30 pm and 10:30.

Now, it's a very bad pattern filled with way too much Cool Whip. On

everything. Except for popcorn.

And I've chosen that pattern all by myself. Jetta isn't holding a gun to my head.

Point being, if I am disciplined enough to follow *that* pattern, why do I believe I'm *not* disciplined enough to follow a better one?

It's just not true. It's not true for me and it's not true for you, either.

## **Pastoral Advice**

Ok, I'm almost out of time so I want to very quickly give you three pieces of advice based on what I've experienced in myself and observed in others over the years.

# 1. Start small – do one right thing each day for a week.

Change just one thing about your eating or exercise or sleeping and do it every day for one week. If you fail, start again the next day.

Just one step in the right direction today builds confidence and momentum. Repeat that again tomorrow and the next day and the next and you will be stunned at the change in your attitude. Then add something else.

Keep doing it and you will be stunned at the change in your physical condition.

### 2. Track your actions and your progress.

The greatest improvements in my

physical condition have happened when I've religiously tracked my daily weight and *everything* – I mean everything – that I put into my mouth using a little app called *My Fitness Pal*.

The greatest *declines* in my physical condition have occurred when I have not tracked.

Guess how often I've used My Fitness Pal since summer?  $\otimes$  Not very.

And that needs to change if my physical condition is going to change.

Final piece of advice ...

#### 3. Don't go it alone. Get help.

It's way too easy to quit on yourself and

God when you have no accountability.

It's much harder to quit when someone else knows your goals and is expecting you to do something about them.

That's why I joined a gym and hired a trainer. I need that kind of support and accountability or I just won't do it. I'll gain back the 35 pounds I lost 7 or 8 years ago and I'll lose the breathing room I've gained and I'll reduce my ability to bring glory to God in my body.

Now, in preparing for this message, I talked to the owner of *Anytime Fitness* (who is good Christian guy who is part of Platte Woods Church) and he said if you stop in and tell him you're from North Heartland ...

• It'll only cost you \$1 to join

- You'll get the first month free
- And you'll get two free sessions with one of their trainers.

If you're interested in that, come up front when the service is over, and I'll give you one of his cards so he knows you're from this church.

Of course, that's going to cost you to do that long term. But we have another option which will not.

This week, we're starting a brand new small group for the purpose of encouraging one another and holding one another accountable for goals related to our health – the kinds of things we've been talking about today.

So, if you're interested in knowing more

about that, you should also come up at the end of the service and visit with Andrew and Andrea Panjada, who will be leading the group.

### Communion

But before that, I'm going to invite everyone to come up front – or to a table in the mid-section – to receive communion.

Earlier we read that, if we're Christians, our body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who lives in us. In another of his letters, Paul expressed a similar thought ...

## But he put it like this:

I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I now live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.

Galatians 2:20 (NIV)

As you come to the table and take a piece of bread and dip it in the juice and then eat it, I want you to visualize what Paul is saying here. I want you to visualize the bread and the juice as Christ in you.

And I want you to remember that you've done nothing to earn that or deserve that other than to believe and trust in Him.

And then, as you walk away from the table, I want you to remind yourself:

- Jesus lives in me.
- Heaven and earth are joined in my

body.

- ... which is the mobile Temple of the Holy Spirit.
- May what happens in and through this Temple bring honor and glory to God.

And then have a seat because I need to talk to you about the plans for next Sunday.

Ok, here we go.

### **Communion / Feature - The Victory**

#### **CLOSING COMMENTS**

- 1. Offering @the door
- 2. Panjada group / Anytime Fitness card

3. Next week – Black Sunday: If it's only a game, then why did that hurt so bad?

#### **Endnotes**

https://xxxxxxxxxxxxxhing

i https://www.washingtonpost.com/national/health-science/go-to-bed-brain-researchers-warn-that-lack-of-sleep-is-a-public-health-crisis/2019/01/24/bbc61562-0a1b-11e9-85b6-41c0feoc5b8f\_story.html?utm\_term=.d678dfeb5031

ii https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/the-power-rest/201009/how-much-sleep-do-i-need

iii https://www.washingtonpost.com/national/health-science/go-to-bed-brain-researchers-warn-that-lack-of-sleep-is-a-public-health-crisis/2019/01/24/bbc61562-0a1b-11e9-85b6-41c0fe0c5b8f\_story.html?utm\_term=.d678dfeb5031

iv https://nutritiouslife.com/sleep-deep/how-many-hours-of-sleepdo-you-really-need/

v From Lee Memorial Health System, Obesity Health Risks @ https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wOGV6QA3\_hQ