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Good morning. Everybody have all their digits? Okay, we're good. So you didn't probably have a great 4th of July unless you lost a little bit of finger or something. I don't know.

I think it was a couple years ago that we shared a word here and it was the word exhauster. Well, mulated.

Exhauster. Well, mulated. Okay, there it is. Okay. It's a word that emerges from the Internet.

Can you believe that? I think school teachers are the ones that really devise this word. And it's the idea of being exhausted, overwhelmed, overstimulated at the same time. And it literally comes from three words. Exhausted, overwhelmed and overstimulated.

Anybody know what I'm talking about? Yeah, I think so.

It's the idea that you're more than just tired. It's the idea of just being drained and depleted deep in your soul, all the while being bombarded with stuff. Noisy news, chaotic conflict, and just too much stuff. It just can be overwhelming. And to me it's a form of chaos.

Just a form of chaos. If you felt exhausted or emulated, what brought it about? Can you figure out why you felt that way? We all know about the noisy stimulation all around us in the culture. We live in a culture of constant ping, ping, ping, ding, ding, ding.

Unless you turn those off and we have all this endless scrolling that we do and then breaking news. Everything's breaking news now. It just doesn't stop. And we can control that. We can turn some of that stuff off.

But what are the other things that you can't control that make you feel just so overwhelmed and worn out? The things that. What are those things that exhaust you and drain you and just suck the life out of you? Maybe it's your children. We had four little ones.

They still have four, but they're big now. But do you remember those days? Maybe you're right in the middle of them. I know many of you are where there's just constant needs. And I'm sure your kids never fought, but our kids did.

There was conflict and constant questions. We got two four year old grandchildren now. Why, why, why, why? It's like I have to. Why?

Just the constant questions. Then you have questions. It's like, am I, am I doing something wrong? Are they going to turn out all right? So there's that constant pressure.

Maybe it's your job to pressure to perform the never ending deadlines, the feeling that no matter how hard you work, it's never quite enough. You're never going to quite get on top of things. Maybe it's family dynamics. You have conflict in the broader family tension. Maybe there's just disappointment and unmet expectations.

Or maybe your exhauster formulation is something a little deeper. Maybe it's something inside you. Maybe it's a sin that just clings so tightly. You try to stop, you promise yourself you'll stop. You promise God you'll stop.

And then you do it again. And here comes the guilt, here comes the insecurity. Here comes the feeling of being a failure because you failed again. Maybe it's not one thing. Maybe it's all those things, just a combination of things.

And the bottom line is many of us are tired. We are not sleepy tired. We are drained. We are depleted deep in our soul. I see it everywhere.

And I will confess that I felt exhauster, mulated in the last few months. I'm still in recovery. I'm much better now. But the contributing factors were grief. My dad died, and then Kedra's mom died, and she was in Alabama.

So we made all kinds of trips to Alabama, expected and unexpected. And then other people that were important to me in my life died. It was just like a season of loss. And I know many of you experienced this same thing. And.

And that grief was coupled with a lot of things, good things at Sherwood Oaks, Bloomington and Bedford. I live in both worlds, and there's just a lot going on, a lot of really good things. But it was a lot all at once. And so I just found myself exhausted, well, emulated. I hope I'm not sharing too much, but in my state of exhausted, well, emulation, I felt drained.

I felt. I felt depleted. I felt like I wasn't doing my job. I went to the people I report to and said, I don't feel like I'm doing a very good job. Talked to Sean.

Everybody was very understanding, very supportive and encouraging. And honestly, I didn't feel like doing my job.

But it's. When you. When I had to just call on duty and discipline, you just got to keep showing up one foot in front of the other, whether you feel like it or not, just to keep moving.

Most of that's behind me now, which I'm very thankful for. You know, you hear people say in chaotic situations and difficult times, people

will say. They'll look at you and say, just breathe. Just breathe. It's good advice.

I wonder about Jesus and the apostles, the 12.

Do you think they ever felt exhaust or emulated? There is no Greek word for it, so I don't think they called it that. But I know I'm pretty Confident they felt something like that. Mark chapter six is just a great chapter, and I think it kind of points to this idea. Mark chapter six is.

It starts out on a sad note. This is kind of hard to believe if you haven't read it lately. But Jesus. Jesus is disrespected and dishonored in his own hometown. And Mark says he couldn't do many miracles there because the people lacked faith.

They didn't believe that he was who he said he was. And the text says that Jesus was amazed at their lack of faith. I think Jesus was hurt. Wouldn't you be? Wouldn't you be hurt by that?

Then Mark 6 goes on to say, Jesus sends the disciples out to preach a message of repentance. In Matthew's account, Jesus says, oh, and by the way, they're going to hate you for this message. And so he's sending them out on a mission that's going to create tension and conflict that's not very pleasant. And then Mark chapter six says, John the Baptist, the forerunner of Jesus, the one who prepares the way, the friend of Jesus, the cousin of Jesus, is executed. He's beheaded by Herod, and there's no justice in any of that story.

And can you imagine how Jesus felt about that?

Just everything about it was horrible. And I'm guessing that Jesus was grieving deeply about that. So it seems to me that all these things, rejection, tension and conflict and grief, were all pressing in on Jesus and the disciples as they come back together after this time of separation. I'm sure there was a lot to talk about, stories to share, lots of challenges to discuss, lots of grief to process. Mark 6, verses 30 through 32 says this.

The apostles returned to Jesus from their ministry tour, told him all they had done and taught.

Then Jesus said, let's go off by ourselves to a quiet place and rest a while. He said this because there were so many people coming and going that Jesus and his apostles didn't even have time to eat. So they left by boat for a quiet place where they could be alone. Now they're by the Sea of Galilee. It's really a lake.

It's beautiful. Tim and I were there a couple years ago. It's just a stunning thing to see when you think about all the stuff that happened

there. So these 13 men get in a boat. They're on a mission to peacefully sail to a place of quiet rest.

Doesn't that sound so inviting and so wonderful? But here's the deal. It doesn't happen. It doesn't happen. The people anticipate where Jesus is going.

So they run along the shore and get there before he does. So when Jesus and the 12 step out of the boat, they look up, and instead of a place of peace and quiet, there is a huge crowd full of needs.

Mark says Jesus looks at him and says, get out of here. That's not what he says.

He says he has compassion. He's tired, hasn't eaten, he's tired. He looks at them, and instead of being annoyed, he has compassion. He begins teaching them. He ends up feeding them.

It's one of the miracles, feeding 5,000 men, plus women and children, probably 15,000 people. This is not a place of quiet rest.

So it raises the question, how does Jesus rest? When does he rest? How does he do it? How does he recharge? Well, the story says Jesus dismisses the 15,000, the thousands of people in the crowd.

He sends his disciples back to the boat. You guys go get in the boat and I'll catch you later. And then it says this, Mark 6:46.

After leaving them, Jesus went up on a mountainside to pray. Hold that. Take note of that. The story goes on to say that a storm, a violent storm comes. The disciples are in the boat.

As Tim talked about last week. These are experienced fishermen, but they are terrified. So this has been terrible storm, and Jesus knows this. And so he walks on the water to them and tells them not to be afraid. He gets in the boat and they continue on their journey to where they're going.

And once again, a crowd is there, people with all kinds of needs. Jesus looks at him and loves them again, and he deals with them. So again the question is, how does Jesus rest? When does he rest? How does he do this?

How does he have time to breathe? How does he manage to still have compassion on the people when he's so tired?

I believe the key is that he takes time to breathe, takes time to replenish his soul. The gospels record there's at least 10 times it's recorded at least 10 times that Jesus intentionally goes away by himself to pray, to replenish, to breathe. Often in solitude, early in

the morning, on mountains, in deserted places, sometimes all night long. Now, if you haven't heard anything else, hear this. The time Jesus spends alone with his Father in prayer is what allows him to deal with the chaos all around him.

And I don't think Jesus getting away on the mountain and in the desert is as much about escaping the people.

I think it's more about remembering to breathe, remembering where that breath comes from and what it's for. You're probably familiar with the idea of preparing the path versus preparing yourself for the path.

The idea of preparing the path is for control freaks like me. Recovery. The idea of preparing the path is that you try to control the environment. And parents do this for their kids. It's a big mistake, I think.

So you try to prepare your environment, you remove the obstacles, you minimize the risk. You try to control all the things on the path so that it'll be easier, it'll be easier to walk. This is very difficult to do. It's often futile. The other way of doing things is prepare yourself for the path.

And that means instead of trying to focus on all the things you'll face, known and unknown, predictable and unpredictable, and trying to control all those things, you just prepare yourself to deal with whatever comes. You know, you can't control most of what happens on your path, but you can control how you respond to it. You really can. The key to preparing yourself for the path is to allow the spirit of God to make you more and more like Jesus. Jesus didn't spend time ministry to make his path easy.

He didn't prepare the path. Jesus prepared himself for the path, the unpredictable path. How did he do that? By spending time alone with his father, remembering how to breathe, remembering where the breath comes from and what it's for. Now, here's the.

Here's the really good news. Jesus invites us to prepare ourselves for the path, and he'll help us do it. Matthew 11:28-30. Jesus said, Come to me, all of you who are exhausted or well mulated, all of you who are weary and carry heavy burdens, and I will give you rest.

Take your yoke upon me. Let me teach you, because I am humble and gentle at heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy to bear and the burden I give you is light.

Boy, that's wonderful. Jesus offers to those of us who are soul tired. He offers us a gentle, restful way of life. He wants to help us. Probably a lot of us in the room are familiar with a yoke.

Do we have a picture of a yoke up there? It's where it's a device. And you see them. I think the Amish still use them. It links two animals together, connects them so that they can work together as a team.

I used to go to Honduras on a regular basis to help churches there. And a lot of the projects were building things. And sometimes we had a little village that we adopted and we'd help them and it was so rough you couldn't get a four wheel drive truck in there. So we would employ a man who had oxen who were yoked together, and they would carry our lumber and all that kind of thing. And so, from what I understand, they would train these animals.

They would take a younger one and they would yoke it with an older, more experienced ox who might be stronger, maybe not, but more experienced. And so the younger one would be connected to the older, wiser one to learn how to work. This is the picture Jesus paints. He said, hey, I want to give you my yoke. I want to yoke myself to you.

And when we take his yoke, we're connected to him. We aren't pulling life's weight alone. He's with us, connected. He's a stronger one. He's bearing the load.

We walk beside him to learn. His yoke is easy. It's not because life is easy. It's easy because he shares the burden and carries most of it. And he teaches us how to live and how to process the chaos that's in us and all around us.

His burden is light because it is shared with him and brings deep soul peace. Now, I mentioned breathing quite a bit this morning, and that's on purpose because I want to remember this lesson and I want you to remember it too. And I know we all breathe, okay? And this is a little free advice. If someone offers you a breath, mint, should take it.

I don't know where that came from. I want you to notice your breathing. I confirmed with Dr. Gergis this morning. Most adults breathe 12 to 20 times per minute respirations. The breath you breathe, I believe, is the breath of life from God.

Back in Genesis 2:7, then the Lord God formed a man from dust of the ground and breathed, breathed into his nostrils, the breath of life. And the man became a living being. I believe that same breath is what we have today. And it's fascinating. It's mysterious in lots of ways.

And we enter this world and we take our first breath. Breath. And we keep breathing in and out until it's time for God to take it back or for us to release it to Him. And our breath is a reminder. We remember where we came from and we remember what our breath is for.

It's interesting to me that in Genesis 1, the whole story is framed by God bringing order out of chaos. That's the picture. It was chaotic.

And God speaks to the chaos and he brings order to it. Now, the first thing that God does in this new environment is to provide the Breath of life to Adam so that he can continue to bring order out of the chaos.

Just breathe. Just breathe. It brings order to chaos. Are you familiar with breath prayer? It's an ancient and simple practice, a way of practicing the presence of God.

It's a way of praying without ceasing. Someone in our worship gathering this morning or pre meeting said that, and I've seen this before, your breath kind of mimics Yahweh, the name of God. And so the idea of breath prayer combines prayer with the rhythm of breathing. Breathing is a way of honoring God with the most fundamental aspect of our life. You really don't have a choice but to breathe, so you might as well make the most of it.

And so each breath is a gift from God. Receive it as such and then exhale a praise to God. Thank you, thank you for this breath. A helpful way of using breath prayer to deal with the chaos around us involves silently repeating a short phrase, often a line from scripture. Breathing in part of it, exhaling part of it.

For example, you might inhale, prince of Peace, calm my storm.

You might inhale even in chaos. You are my peace.

Peace, be still.

So when you get in those situations, just breathe. Just breathe. Jesus prepared himself for the path. Rather than preparing the path for Himself, he learned how to breathe, remembering where he came from, remembering where his breath came from and why it was given.

Jesus had the breath of life in him for the purpose of bringing order to chaos, to bring peace, rest and calm to chaos, creating new life again. That's what he brought to exhauster, well emulated situations. Now here's the thing. Since we are yoked with him, since we are connected with him by his invitation, we can learn to breathe. And when we are in situations where we're overwhelmed, exhausted, just breathe.

Remember to breathe. Just breathe. And when you remember to breathe, you remember what it is you're breathing in. The gift of God, the presence of God. You're breathing in the breath of life and God gave it to you for a purpose.

Gave it to me for a purpose. And that is not to add to the anxiety of this world, but to bring order, to represent him, say, hey, we can have peace here. We can bring order out of this chaos, not only in my

life, but in those around me. Jesus is inviting us to come away to a quiet place to learn how to breathe. He's preparing us for an unpredictable path in front of us.

He teaches us to enter the chaos over which we have little or no control and deal with it in a peaceful way. Just breathe. Just breathe. So the next time you feel exhausted or emulated, hopefully you will spend a little time with Jesus. You're all yoked up and you're ready to face whatever because you have the breath of life in you and you remind yourself of that 12 to 20 times a minute.

Is Tim in the room?

I was going to say, come take my breath away, but that. That's not very good.

Tim is going to lead us in a time of communion together, and I'm looking forward to it.

This morning I was preparing to leave for church and I got a text from Trisha Hillenburg. You don't know Trish. Many of you don't. She's very quiet, but her dad is Jerome Owen and her husband plays guitar here as well. And she says, dad is probably going to be worshiping in heaven this morning.

I'm like, oh, my word. I knew he was not doing well, but I wasn't prepared for that. And it sort of took my breath away. It's like, what do we do in situations like that? They catch us by surprise.

They. They sort of knock us for a loop and we're left wondering, okay, now what? In those moments, the. The alternatives are pretty. The options are pretty limited, aren't they?

There's not a lot I could do. I said, I. I can come up and be there. She goes, that would be great. So a few phone calls and we got it sorted out.

This message this morning on just those moments where it's like we don't know what to do next. We're overwhelmed, we're overcome, and really all we want to do is just get away to quiet places. But the world keeps spinning, doesn't it? It keeps going. People keep pressing.

And in those moments we just go, okay, we can do it with Jesus. All things are possible today as we share in a time of communion. I want to just capture a little bit of that. You may be in the place that Alan was speaking of this morning where Jesus was just a little overwhelmed with life stuff going on. And communion is really a brief moment, a breathing moment, where we pause the service, where we sort of stop the extra stuff and we say, okay, I'm going to take just a

moment in quietness and in meditation.

It's not long, but it's what we've got. And we take a moment and we breathe in and we breathe out and we take in the body and blood of Jesus. And that gives us strength to live out his life around us. Heavenly Father, this morning, as we share in this brief moment, we want to breathe in peace, be still. We want to breathe in your name and release, release the breath of life to those around us.

Like Jesus, we want to be present and yet we know that we need strength for that. So as we take the bread, as we take the cup this morning we give thanks to you that you considered it joy to give your life for us.

Whatever comes this week, may this moment be preparing us, preparing us for the path that you will place us on. In Jesus name. Amen. Thank you for listening to this message from Sherwood Oaks Christian Church. Did you know you can watch all of our video content, both current and past, on our YouTube channel.

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