

Week 3: Inside Out - Rhythms of Grace by P Theresa November 9-10

Welcome first timers and those visiting us online. We are excited continue in our Series Inside Out: Changed people Change people. But before we jump into our message today, would you please allow me a brief moment to focus our attention on some key scripture to set our hearts on the right course post election:

1) Pray for President Elect Donald Trump

“I urge you, first of all, to pray for all people. Ask God to help them; intercede on their behalf, and give thanks for them. Pray this way for kings and all who are in authority so that we can live peaceful and quiet lives marked by godliness and dignity. This is good and pleases God our Savior, who wants everyone to be saved and to understand the truth.” 1 Timothy 2:1-4 NLT

2) Submit to the governing authorities. (Unity - Commanded Blessing)

“Everyone must submit to governing authorities. For all authority comes from God, and those in positions of authority have been placed there by God. So anyone who rebels against authority is rebelling against what God has instituted, and they will be punished.” - Romans 13:1-2 NLT

“Never allow whoever is in the white house to determine the unity of God’s house.” - *Wayne quote from IG, November 5, 2024*

Pray for Donald Trump

Heavenly Father,

We come before You with humble hearts, lifting up Donald Trump in prayer today. Grant him wisdom, protection, and strength as he navigates the challenges he faces. Your word says, “In the Lord’s hand the king’s heart is a stream of water that he channels toward all who please him” (Proverbs 21:1, NIV). Therefore we humbly ask that you

would surround him with Your guidance and lead him toward Your purpose. May he seek Your will in all he does, finding peace and clarity in Your presence. And lastly, Lord, we want to also lift up the current administration and pray blessings over them. We ask that you would be with them and guide them so there would be a smooth transition of power. In Jesus' name, Amen

Okay, understood? We good?

In this series we been wrestling with the fact that every day, we see people who need help—like the person sitting alone on a bench or a coworker who seems sad. There are so many people who need support that it can feel like too much, making us wish we could just ignore it all.

But when we look at how Jesus acted in the Bible, we see that He approached people with kindness and care. He helped many people without getting tired or worn out. How did Jesus manage to do this? More on this later in the message.

We've learned this series how to see others the way Jesus did and love them like He would. Our compassion comes from God's love for us, and when we think about how kind God has been to us, we get the strength to be kind to others. We learned the definition of compassion last week - feeling something strong inside when we see someone suffering. Understanding this will help us learn the special way Jesus showed compassion and how we can do the same while staying happy and healthy.

Compassion in Action, as we will learn today needs a certain rhythm, an sort of work rest cycle which we will call Rhythms of Grace. Turn to your neighbor and say, "We need Rhythms of Grace." Without good rhythm the journey can be somewhat jarring.

Rhythms of Grace allows us to minister from rest not for rest. When I turned 50 three years ago, P Mike encouraged me to seek the Lord for deeper understanding of rest. It was amazing what the Lord showed me. I realized, It is essential that we learn this rhythm if we want to be effective in our service to our families, our church and our community. Compassion that comes from our own strength is doomed to fail. Which is why it is

essential to learn that compassion does not mean meeting every need, having no boundaries, or saying “Yes” to everything.

Believe me! At the beginning of my ministerial journey, I had no sense of boundaries and caused a lot of heart ache and pain to myself and to those around me. It wasn't until I began sitting at the feet of Jesus when I started to learn what this rhythm of grace looked like. And, I am still learning.

As we will see in the word today, Jesus modeled a rhythm of grace that allowed Him to live generously without ever running dry. Does anyone ever feel like they are completely depleted with nothing left to give? Would you like to live a life that isn't burned out and depleted? If your answer is yes to any of these questions, then open up your heart and mind to hear Holy Spirit teach us.

I found this quote that sums up where the world is today and why so many struggle to find this work rest cycle, or rhythm of grace.

“All humanity’s problems stem from man’s inability to sit quietly in a room alone.” - Blaise Pascal, French mathematician, physicist, and religious philosopher.

Life today is more hurried and anxious than its ever been before. There are so many things always pulling at our attention. It's relentless! We constantly find ourselves putting out one emergency situation after another and the barrage of voices, including our own, never seems to end. And yet, long before Pascal, Jesus modeled for us a rhythm for life that would be blessed and fruitful. He demonstrated a very important spiritual discipline that is often overlooked - solitude. Turn to your neighbor and say, “The world needs some solitude!”

Solitude is the practice of intentionally withdrawing from distractions to focus on God and engage in spiritual disciplines like silence, prayer, meditating on scripture, and worship. I've learned that solitude is necessary for our spiritual formation. Why? Because as we sit at the feet of Jesus, cultivating a daily devotional life in His manifest presence, it will help us focus on the God things of our life, expose our idols and our sinful ways. Solitude and Silence, for that matter, allows for the Master to personally teach us and direct our paths.

Several times we see in scripture that Jesus withdrew from the crowds to be alone with his Father in Prayer. In Luke chapter 4 Jesus heals many people and then at verse 42 it says,

Early the next morning Jesus went out to an isolated place. The crowds searched everywhere for him, and when they finally found him, they begged him not to leave them (Matthew 4:42 NLT)

But watch this, when they begged him to stay, he says no. This entire series we've been talking about being moved by compassion and taking action. So why did he say no? Well lets read what it says in verse 43,

But he replied, 'I must preach the Good News of the Kingdom of God in other towns, too, because that is why I was sent.' So he continued to travel around, preaching in synagogues throughout Judea (Luke 4:43-44 NLT).

Church, we must catch this mindset! He said no to the things that would keep him from the things he was sent to do. Understanding how to create healthy boundaries and only doing what you are called to do is critical if we want to complete the calling on our lives, not get burned out and tap out. If we do everything we most likely won't be able to accomplish with excellence anything we were truly created to do.

Here are some staggering statistics on burnout in Christian clergy and volunteers:

- 45.5% of pastors have experienced burnout or depression and had to take a break from ministry
- A survey found that 1/3 of clergy considered leaving the ministry
- A 2021 survey found that 1 in 10 church leaders reported poor or very poor emotional wellbeing
- Another study found that volunteers who were highly motivated to volunteer reported higher rates of exhaustion and stress

Now, I'm not trying to be a downer. I'm simply wanting to exhort the body of Christ, that if we are experiencing such tragic burnout and moral failure amongst ministers we aren't building the kingdom correctly. Can I get an Amen?! Jesus' ministry on earth was demanding, and yet he never burned out or sinned. That doesn't mean he didn't get tired. Of course he did!

What he did when that happen is the point. He knew his Rhythm. And he knew exactly when it was time to withdraw from the people and sit in solitude with his Father in Heaven!

In Luke 5 we see his ministry beginning to grow. Don't get me wrong. Growth is good. But, how many of us know that the growth means more work, and more spending emotional, physical and spiritual energy. Let's look at how Jesus handled his growth of influence and impact:

But despite Jesus' instructions, the report of his power spread even faster, and vast crowds came to hear him preach and to be healed of their diseases. But Jesus often withdrew to the wilderness for prayer (Luke 5:15-16 NLT).

Then Jesus said, 'Let's go off by ourselves to a quiet place and rest awhile.' He said this because there were so many people coming and going that Jesus and his apostles didn't even have time to eat (Mark 6:31 NLT).

Note: in the ESV translation it says it like this, "Come away by yourselves to a desolate place and rest a while."

Now watch this, from that place of intimacy sitting at the Father's feet, Jesus consistently would return to the people and minister and heal the sick. Let's continue to read what happens in the story at Mark 6 starting at verse 32:

So they left by boat for a quiet place, where they could be alone. But many people recognized them and saw them leaving, and people from many towns ran ahead along the shore and got there ahead of them. Jesus saw the huge crowd as he stepped from the boat, and he had compassion on them because they were like sheep without a shepherd. So he began teaching them many things (Mark 6:32 -34 NLT).

Then the feeding of the five thousand

Immediately after this, Jesus insisted that his disciples get back into the boat and head across the lake to Bethsaida, while he sent the

people home. After telling everyone good-bye, he went up into the hills by himself to pray (Mark 6:45-46 NLT).

Then the disciples get freaked out because they were in the boat alone and there was a storm. Then Jesus comes out of his time of prayer and Solitude and miraculously, walks on water. He encourages his disciples to not be afraid. They cross back to the other side and more people and ministry time awaits the Lord!

After they had crossed the lake, they landed at Gennesaret. They brought the boat to shore and climbed out. The people recognized Jesus at once, and they ran throughout the whole area, carrying sick people on mats to wherever they heard he was. Wherever he went—in villages, cities, or the countryside—they brought the sick out to the marketplaces. They begged him to let the sick touch at least the fringe of his robe, and all who touched him were healed (Mark 6:53-56 NLT).

What are we learning from Jesus' example? If we want to operate with compassion from a place of power and fullness of the Spirit we must Retreat and Reenter! We retreat so that God (Father, Son and Holy Spirit) can do a healing and restoring inside our being that will empower us to move outside of our being. Thus, compassion in action happens from the inside out!

It is critical that we grab hold of his example. Because apart from Jesus we are nothing and we can do nothing! If we are not filling up with His Power and Presence, then what do we really have to offer folks that will have a lasting effect on their lives? We hear this scripture often, but it serves well in this context again, so lets read John 15:5,

Yes, I am the Vine; you are the branches. Those who remain in me, and I in them, will produce much Fruit. For apart from me you can do nothing (John 15:5 NLT).

How many of us realize that you can be busy doing all kinds of good things but not see any lasting kingdom fruit? Have you ever done something and thought what was the point of that? We must, at those times, ask ourselves was this a God thing or just a good thing. All God things are good, because God is good, but not all good things are God.

Can I get an amen! We may just try and convince ourselves that what we are doing is a God thing because it makes us feel good.

Well, I hate to be the bearer of bad news. That isn't always true. God things aren't determined by our feelings. It's is determined by the kingdom fruit that comes forth! Whatever is the will of the father will bear fruit. Ask yourself, is what I am doing causing me to be more like Christ? Am I seeing the people around me come to Christ or drawer near to Him? Is it helping to make disciples of all nations? If the answer is yes, then chances are its a God thing. If its not, that doesn't mean its not a God thing, but it should cause you to stop and draw near to God in silence and solitude and ask Him for guidance and direction. He may be using that situation to cause you to grow. And that is a God thing!

Sitting with Jesus alone in a quiet and intimate setting not only fills you with His presence and power, but it also will allow for the Lord to direct your paths. Or in other words, give you instruction. We read John 15:5 earlier, lets read what the Lord says in John 5:19,

So Jesus explained, "I tell you the truth, the Son can do nothing by himself. He does only what he sees the Father doing. Whatever the Father does, the Son also does.

If we are making time to daily sit at the feet of Jesus and abide in his manifest presence, we can allow for him to order our days. We also allow him to examine our hearts and our motives. If there is something off in your heart, you would do well to fix it.

Guard your heart above all else, for it determines the course of your life (Proverbs 4:23)

Allowing the Lord to search us and know our ways, will ensure that we are submitting ourselves and our days unto the Him. He then begins to show us what He is wanting us to do for his Glory!

I actually taught a 6 week class on Cultivating this kind of Daily Devotional life of sitting at the feet of Jesus, abiding in his presence and constantly practicing the presence of God in throughout the day. So if you want to take a deep dive into this, take the class when I teach it again. (I know shameless plug)

If you have been convicted that you need to grow in compassion, then growth will be found at the feet of Jesus! When you sit with him you behold his heart. It's his compassion that activates inside of you that then moves outside of you!

On the other hand, if you are here today and are feeling a little crispy, then your renewing is found at the feet of Jesus! Isaiah 40:31 says,

But those who wait on the Lord shall renew their strength; They shall mount up with wings like eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint (Isaiah 40:31 NKJV).

I believe, the Lord knew the demands of ministry life. He walked it, he lived it, so he understands that there must be rhythms of grace in a persons life. I truly believe, that is why he consistently is telling us to come to him! Let's read Matthew 11:28-30,

Then Jesus said, "Come to me, all of you who are weary and carry heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. 29 Take my yoke upon you. Let me teach you, because I am humble and gentle at heart, and you will find rest for your souls. 30 For my yoke is easy to bear, and the burden I give you is light."

As we reflect on today's message, I pray we recognize that the call to serve others with compassion is not an invitation to deplete ourselves, but rather to draw from the infinite well of God's grace. The rhythm of grace, modeled by Jesus, encourages us to anchor our service in rest and solitude, equipping us to minister from a place of abundance rather than exhaustion.

Embracing this rhythm not only reshapes our approach to ministry but can ultimately transform our relationships with our families, with our communities, and with ourselves. In learning to prioritize moments of stillness and divine connection, we foster a compassionate presence that is sustainable and life-giving. Although at times this is not easy, may we all strive to adopt this transformative rhythm, allowing the grace of God to flow through us as we serve others without losing sight of our own need for rest and renewal.

Note: End with a time of prayer, soaking

Ohana Group Questions:

1. How would you describe your Rhythm of life? Full of grace and balance, chaotic and haphazard, exhausting and non-existent? What are the challenges you face in having Rhythms of grace in your life?
2. How can we practically implement the rhythm of grace in our daily lives to ensure that our acts of compassion are sustainable and rooted in God's strength rather than our own?
3. In what ways can solitude and focused prayer help us identify our personal boundaries when it comes to meeting the needs of others, and how can we communicate these boundaries effectively?
4. Reflecting on Jesus' example of withdrawing for prayer, what specific practices can we adopt to create intentional moments of solitude in our busy lives, and how might this impact our overall well-being and effectiveness in service?