

A Year of Renewal

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[0:00] Make some objectives for your life for the new year. This is about the time where you begin to do that. And that's why this is the time where we as a church begin to think, what does this year hold for us as a body?

And so we spend some time and has been the standard here, as I understand it, is this is the time for setting forth initiatives.

What will we do this year as a church to be following after the standard of the Lord? To be looking at his word, to conform our hearts to what he is asking us to do, and to model him, to mimic him in new ways.

Well, this morning, and as I've been thinking about this Sunday, as I've been thinking about initiatives, I want to approach it a little differently.

Because this morning, I think what stands in our way, more than anything else in terms of being productive and fruitful and effective for the Lord, is not so much what we are doing or are not doing, but what our identity is, who we are as the people of God.

[1:25] What is your identity this morning? Where do you find your place? How do you define yourself as an individual? And how does that begin to shape your perspective and your approach to life?

I think this really came front and center for me several years ago, when I had the opportunity to go and to teach some Christian leaders in Russia.

Yaroslavl is about 160 miles north of Moscow. And by way of introduction, we were supposed to give our name and we're supposed to describe ourself.

What is something that is true about you, so that we can kind of get to know one another a little bit better. And of course, the teachers went first, followed by the people, the students in the class, and I think there were as many as 20 students, Christian leaders in this church and surrounding churches who are part of this venue.

And of course, as you would expect and describe yourself, I'm Andrew Scheer, and I've been a pastor for X number of years. I live, at that time, I live in Aurora, Illinois.

[2:40] I'm a graduate of the Master's Seminary. I've been married for so many years. I have so many children. And this is what defines me as a person. Listen, maybe your description of yourself would be along the same lines.

That's how we tend to think. And I was struck, I was struck by how the venue began once it was turned over to the Christian leaders.

First said, My name is Mikael, and I am a sinner saved by grace. Sasha, I am a son of the king because of the grace of God in my life.

Nikolai, I am redeemed by the blood of the Lamb. And on and on and on and on they went, describing their identity in relationship to Christ.

Not their identity and what they did as an individual. Who they were is defined by their function, by their role. But their identity based upon the work of God in their life.

[3 : 58] That is what shaped them as an individual. That is what changed their perspective about every one of those other spheres in which they lived. As a father.
As a husband. As a pastor. As a worker. As a student. Whatever context in which you find yourself. It is shaped by the identity that you have because of Jesus.
So who are you this morning? How is that identity shaping and changing the way you live? How does an understanding of who Jesus is and what he has done for you?
Help to focus your agenda. Help to filter out the activities. Help to provide some perspective for the moments that you find yourself in from day to day.
Rather than your agenda. Rather than trying to force something else into this already packed schedule.

[5 : 06] We come to the beginning of the year and we think strategically about all of the things that we need to do in life. And we wonder how in the world can we come to this point and add anything else to an already saturated schedule.
Do you understand what I'm talking about this morning? And so as we stand here at the beginning of the year I want to take a radical step.
I want to take a radical step backwards. A step back. And I want us to remember our identity which will shape our activity.
And as we get this right in life it will begin to change everything for us this year. In the approach that we have to ministry and family and neighboring and working and everything else that comes into your sphere.
Who are you and why does it matter? What are the radical life changing implications? And what difference does it make for you tomorrow?

[6 : 16] We can't even begin to exhaust this subject. And this is going to be an introduction for us in a year of looking at and understanding our identity in Christ.
We're going to keep coming back to this because I think this is so significant for us. We're going to keep coming back and appreciating who God is and what he has done for us and what that means tomorrow.
I want to put a part of a verse on the screen. So if you could do that for me. This is the verse that we're going to look at this morning. I wonder if you can fill in the blanks.
It goes like this. Just think about that for a moment.
If you were to begin to put the words into those blanks. How would you begin to describe what must be true of your life in order to experience salvation and strength of God in your life?

[7 : 34] What are the activities? What are the agenda items you must put in your calendar from day to day in order to experience the presence of God?
Really, the presence of God in your life in terms of salvation and strength. I think this verse is key for us. It's key for us because every one of us in this room wants to experience rescue.
Every one of us in this room has cried out for help. Every one of us in this room desires God to show up in your life.
Every one of us in this room wants to look back on a life of productivity and fruitfulness. A life that has been effective.
A life that has enduring significance. And this is the key. This is where it begins. This is how it starts in your life.

[8 : 39] It shatters our conception of salvation. It obliterates any ideas that we have in terms of thinking how strength shows up in your life.

Because it's counterintuitive. It's not what the culture would say in terms of how strength should come. But as we look at it this morning in Isaiah chapter 30, verse 15, I think we'll begin to understand why this verse is so significant.

So turn with me, if you would, to Isaiah chapter 30, verse 15. If you're a guest with us this morning, it's on page 591 in the Pew Bible ahead of you.

These are the words of God. The Lord God. The Holy One of Israel. This phrase found nowhere else in all of the Bible.

This exact phrase. The Almighty God. The Holy God shows up to give us a word this morning. We've looked at Him throughout the book of Isaiah.

[9 : 55] Showing up in various ways through the history of Israel. And seeking to intervene in their lives. And now He speaks. What does He say?

Here's what He says. For thus said the Lord God, the Holy One of Israel. In returning and rest, you shall be saved.

In quietness and in trust shall be your strength. How many of us would have filled in the blank with those words?

Quietness. Rest. Returning. Trust. The very things that probably are very foreign to us in this Western culture.

Driven by the idea that we need to be about hurry and about scheduling and about activity and about ministry in so many different areas. But the word of the Lord for us this morning is rest.

[11 : 04] Be quiet. Trust. Wait for me. Let my salvation and power and strength show up for you.

Stop taking the things that are in your life into your own hands. And start trusting me with these things. And maybe you'll begin to see. Maybe you'll begin to see.

Fruitfulness. Take shape. This morning I want to just lift up in this verse. In chapter 30 verse 15. I want to lift up to us the demand of God for dependence.

God demands your dependence. That is what this verse is speaking to this morning. And it happens in a couple of ways.

First we're going to look at the fact that it happens as we are running to God. You see in this verse there are two couplets. There are two phrases that go hand in hand.

[12 : 07] They're side by side. And they use words that help to describe one another. It begins with the word returning or repentance maybe in your translations.

And it ends with the word trusting in that second phrase. And so the first and last words go together. Returning in trust. That's what I want to look at this morning.

I want to describe it as running to God. Can you say that it's true of your life that you are one who runs to God in every moment of your life?

Essentially, we invite God to the party of our lives when we are running to him for help. His presence is clear.

And so the benefits of his presence show up for us. And it results in what we see there. The rescue or the salvation of God in that first part of the phrase.

[13 : 10] And the strength of God in the second phrase. That becomes clear when God is invited to the party of our lives. Imagine it.

Every conversation. Every activity. Every thought. Every moment. That is fruitful and effective because it is surrendered and yielded to the salvation and the strength of God in your life.

Can you imagine it? What kind of life would that be? If guided and governed by God. It will be empowered by the divine.

And you will experience salvation and strength. Notice what it says here. Notice how God puts this in this verse.

In returning and rest, you shall be saved. In quietness and trust shall be your strength. There are no exceptions.

[14:18] There are only expectations. The expectation of God coming into your life and intervening in miraculous ways.

When we surrender in this way as God has called us to surrender. Returning to him. So when God shows up in your life.

His power will prevail. And it will result in enduring fruit. So what are we talking about? Well first, in returning and trust, these two go hand in hand.

And when the Old Testament talks about returning or it talks about repentance and trust, it's referring to a turn of heart. And the only time in all of the Old Testament this word is used, returning, is used in a noun form.

It wants us to understand the end of the position, not the initial phases of returning. It wants us to recognize that it is in the full yielding of heart that begins to experience the benefits of God coming into a life.

[15:26] It's often repentance or turning back. A turning away or a turning towards the Lord. And throughout our study in Isaiah, we've come face to face with the people who've been disloyal.

From chapter 1 all the way through chapter 66, this group of rebellious individuals. And even when they had some righteous kings, whether it be Uzziah or Jotham, there still seemed to be compromise among the people.

There was still idolatry. There was still a waywardness of heart. There was still a drifting in focus, in devotion, in worship. Maybe God was speaking in that situation.

Or perhaps God was speaking during the reign of Ahaz. When there was a wholesale rejection of the things of God. When the worship of God was corrupted.

When the temple was polluted and dismantled. When the worship was turned over to idolatry. Maybe that's where the prophet Isaiah is speaking to that situation.

[16:43] They need to return. They need to repent from what they're doing. And yet as we understand the context. As we look back to the first few verses of chapter 30. We begin to understand that actually the returning needed to come.

Even in the midst of restoration and revival. In the time of Hezekiah. When there was this resurgence of the people in terms of worship and devotion. There was still dysfunction.

As it related to holy embracing trust and confidence in God. Look with me. At verses 1 and 2 of chapter 30. Notice the description we find here.

It says, Ah, stubborn children, declares the Lord. Who carry out a plan but not mine. And who make an alliance but not by my spirit.

That they may add sin to sin. Who set out to go to Egypt. Without asking for my direction. To take refuge in the protection of Pharaoh.

[17:47] And to seek shelter in the shadow of Egypt. Although Hezekiah had helped to redirect the focus of the people.

And to reorient their heart. There was this resurgence among the people in terms of worship. Not only in Judah. But also in the nation in totality.

He invites them to come and participate in a Passover. And as we look in 2 Kings and 2 Chronicles. We see that in that day.

Like no other day. There was this resurgence among the people. In terms of worship. Speaking of Hezekiah. The writer of Kings says.

There was no one like him among all the kings of Judah. Either before him. Or after him. And yet.

[18 : 45] And yet here we are. A call to repentance. Because if you remember. Back at the end of last year.

When the nation of Assyria was coming against Israel. Coming against Judah. The initial posture of Hezekiah's heart.

And the heart of all of those in Jerusalem. Was how do we protect ourselves? What can we do? And so. They take matters into their own hands.

We find from 2 Chronicles. That they stop the water supply. And they channel it into the city. They build up the wall. They raise the towers. They build a second wall for additional protection.

They make weapons and shields. They set commanders over the people. They appeal to Egypt for help. As we see here. In the first part of chapter 30. There was.

[19 : 46] There was a dysfunction. There was a disconnect of heart. How faith and action show up in a life that is consistent. A deficiency that led to running to human ingenuity.

Running to human strength. Rather than surrendering and yielding to the power of God. So that Hezekiah and the people of Jerusalem need to recognize.

That trusting God leads to looking to God for help. Not looking to the world. It might seem obvious. But if they were going to experience salvation.

Salvation that only comes from God. Then they must look to the source of salvation. They must yield and surrender and hope in the God of salvation.

To bring salvation to them as a people. The same is true for us. What is the greatest hindrance to salvation and strength showing up in your life this morning?

[20 : 56] It is the same. It is the same. That instead of looking to the source of salvation. We look to human ingenuity.

We look for salvation within ourselves. We look for salvation within our world. We look for salvation within human philosophies. And we don't look for salvation in Him.

Until things get so desperate. And all of our options have been expended. That then we begin to look for help. Because we understand we can't find it any other way. We need to have hearts.

That look for answers. And solutions that are only found in God. Not apart from Him. And it is an unrepentant heart that says, I know what is best.

I have a better way. And that is deception. And that is pride. And God in His mercy is calling us to faith. He's calling us to trust.

[22 : 01] He's calling us to repentance. Repentance to trust in Him. And surprisingly, this heart shows up in the most unexpected time.

In the most unexpected place. In the heart of Hezekiah, whose heart was given to the Lord. In the heart of a people who had been revived, in a sense, spiritually.

And yet, here, again, they needed to be called back to trust. What does trust look like when Assyria comes knocking at the gates? What does trust look like when difficulty and adversity comes knocking on the door of your life?

What situations in your life need rescue this morning? How does this clear message confront our current approach to where we find salvation and strength?

Is it time for returning in your life? Is it time for repentance? Perhaps the best indication of trust and faith in returning?

[23:15] Perhaps the best indication that is taking place in your life is in this second point that we find in Isaiah 30, 15. First, there is a running to God. And second, there is a resting in God.

A resting in God. Have you ever heard an initiative that said we need to rest? How about that for an initiative? We ought to have that one every single year, right?

But the resting that the Bible talks about is not the resting that we're so familiar with. It's not the resting of leisure. It's not the resting of inactivity.

It's not the resting of idleness. It's not the resting of just checking out. It is a resting that is active. It is a resting that is deliberate.

It is a resting that is opposed to striving. It is a yielding of self. A surrendering to God. That is the resting of the Old and New Testament.

[24:18] That is the resting of the Scripture. And that is the resting that God wishes for His people to enjoy. Are you enjoying rest this morning?

Would you say that the quality of your life is one of rest and peace and quietness? Look at this again with me.

This is what God is calling us to know and to enjoy in Isaiah 30, 15. In returning and rest, you shall be saved.

In quietness and in trust shall be your strength. Rest, which is the ease from trouble. It's peace or tranquility.

It is implying the faith in a greater individual. In here, namely God, who will deliver us and make us safe. Quietness is to be at rest or to be at peace.

[25:20] To be hushed. To be silent. God's word for us this morning is rest. Do not strive. Rest in Him.

Let the peace of God reign in your life as the Apostle Paul would say to us. Stop thinking that you need to give God a helping hand and start leaning, resting, waiting, and depending upon Him.

In this chapter and throughout the book of Isaiah, Israel is confronted with their striving. We find it in verse 1 where He is calling them and confronting them about making alliances, carrying out plans that don't belong to God.

setting out to go to Egypt before God had ever given them the word to move in that direction. They're full of activity, but none of which is sanctioned by God Himself.

And thus, all of this activity will end up in futility. They were busy. They were diligent. But they were disobedient.

[26:39] It's a hard word for those of us who love to serve. It's a hard word for us who want to be faithful. This is a hard word for us who want to be in control.

This is a hard word for us when we compare other scriptures, and particularly, walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, redeeming the time because the days are evil.

That's calling us to work, right? Not calling us to rest. And I would present to you, it's because we misunderstand what God is calling us to when He's calling us to dependence.

There is working, but there is first waiting. Waiting that rests in the direction and guidance of God so that He can move us in the direction of working that He wants us to go.

We must yield to God's agenda, not our own, so that He might get the glory. That's what is at stake here. What is at stake is the glory of God.

[27:53] Now imagine for a moment that the people of Israel didn't get the memo because we do understand that their heart changed. It became submissive to God.

It began to wait. And by the way, all of the working that they had done in Jerusalem, all of the building up of reinforcements, was that necessary?

Remember the story? Assyria comes, and what happens? God turns them away. God kills 185,000 soldiers, sends them back to Assyria.

Not a sword is raised. Not a person is killed. And God gets the glory because they yield themselves and wait for Him to show up.

But so often in life, because of our working, we get in the way of God getting the glory.

[28:57] We obscure the power of God and His ability to work in your specific situation because we decide that God is not faithful enough to intervene because He's not doing it now.

He needs some help. Help Him out a little bit. Imagine if the people of Jerusalem had tried to help God out a little bit.

Here's what would have happened. Look with me at verse 16. And you said, excuse me, the end of verse 15 says, but for all of this appeal, the people initially said they were not willing.

So here's what God's going to do to them. You said no. We will flee upon horses. Therefore, you shall flee away.

We will ride upon swift steeds. Therefore, your pursuers will be swift. A thousand will flee at the threat of one. At the threat of five, you will all flee till you are left like a flagstaff on the top of a mountain, like a signal on a hill.

[30:15] God in His grace shows up for you when you take matters into your own hands and He shows you the futility of your own ingenuity until you're left isolated.

He does that as a grace for you so that there will be a point in your life where you finally turn and you finally let Him receive the glory for all that He wishes to do in your life.

So if there's any anxiety, any sleeplessness, then rest. Learn to rest.

Learn to wait. Learn to trust in God. He is the God who speaks in the still, small voice. He is the God who says, Be still and know that I am God.

Can you imagine it? The God of the universe wants to show up for you to make His name glorious in whatever situation you find yourself.

[31:27] And when we don't hear His voice, it's not as though He were not speaking, but as though we were turning up the volume on everything else, every other voice, every other philosophy, every other plan, screams in our head to drown out the voice of God.

So we need to step back. We need to rest. We need to listen and be silent and be quiet as we're instructed to do so that we can hear the voice of God and then move.

And then, we will appreciate and understand and experience His saving and powerful presence in our life. wouldn't you agree that one of the greatest sources of sin in our life is hurriedness?

Like, for me, when I'm in a hurry, I'm edgy. I get in the car and I begin wherever I'm supposed to go and I'm running late, which I tend to run late a lot.

And so when there's people in front of me who are not driving the way that normal people should, there is a little frustration in my heart. Or how about at home?

[32:56] When there is the pressure of your workplace or the pressure of life, it's bearing down on you and there is not the quietness, there is not the resting, there is not the waiting and trusting on God.

How does that show up in your interactions in your home? Is there tenderness typically? Or does it tend to be a little bit brazen and harsh?

And you look back on the situation and say, oh, that did not demonstrate the compassion and gentleness of my Savior. Or the hurriedness of the schedule that takes us away from the things that we know are so important.

The rush of the day that moves us along so that there isn't time for personal devotion and meditation on the Lord and building that relationship and having that fellowship with Him.

And so we sin not because we are actively involved in sinning against God, but because we are blown away by our schedule and we're unable to dial into what really matters.

[34 : 10] Or how about in our neighboring? I was reminded of the significance. I'm typically in a hurry and yet by God's grace He helped me a couple of weeks ago not to be in a hurry.

I went to go to the parts store, the auto parts store and it was freezing cold that day. I think it was like five degrees outside and there was a guy with just a thin coat standing outside shaking like crazy and his front hood was up.

Now, I don't know the first thing about cars, okay? But I just wanted to demonstrate a little bit of concern. Hey, what's going on? Found out that he had a problem with his battery and that should be an easy one.

I should be able to help with that one. So for the next hour and a half we labored over his battery. That would never have happened. If I'd have been in a hurry. I would have typically missed that opportunity.

And yesterday you know more neighboring happens by coincidence than by plan. Yesterday we're out shoveling and I met four brand new neighbors down our street because of just a willingness to let God govern my own agenda instead of me taking ownership of it myself.

[35 : 30] The opportunity the opportunity to serve the opportunity to meet the opportunity to initiate a relationship. God wants us to be people of quietness.

He wants us to be people of rest so that he can show up and get the glory for the great things that he will accomplish in your life. I also want to bring some balance into our discussion this morning.

I'm a person who tends to be very disciplined. I've always tended to do that even as a small child. I love discipline to the extent that I still have a couple of notebooks that I did when I was in high school.

I went through the whole book of Daniel verse by verse and wrote down all that I learned. I went through the entire Old and New Testament and have copies of every chapter that I wrote about in the book of the Bible.

Discipline is good don't get me wrong but I want you to understand this morning that we're not talking about discipline when we're talking about dependence on God. When I speak about dependence on God I'm not talking about discipline and I think there are some dangers to discipline that I want to talk about next.

[36 : 55] What are some of the dangers of discipline? Maybe you have thought these things yourself and it comes with a leading statement.

The leading statement that says I have done all that I am supposed to do and the first one is why do I feel so empty?

Why do I feel so empty? Have you ever felt that way? You have all the discipline you're supposed to have.

You read your devotions. You read the scripture. You pray to the Lord faithfully day by day. you serve in a ministry. You're faithful as a parent.

You do or at least try to do all that God has called you to do and yet you walk away feeling so empty. What is this about?

[38 : 02] What does this mean? What is it supposed to do for me? All it is is me going through the motions and so you come to this point in life where you because of the emptiness that you feel and you feel like you're going through the motions you're faced with this question and the question is God do I keep on going through the motions or do I stop playing the hypocrite?

You ever felt that way? Do you ever wonder in your life why God seems so distant from you when you have put so much energy in being so faithful?

I think the parable of the soils may speak very clearly to us. Remember as Jesus was talking about the parable of the soils he identifies four soils this is the response to the word four responses to the word and the first response to the word is that it lays on the surface of the soil hard and packed it's unable to penetrate and so what happens?

The enemy comes and snatches it away. I wonder I wonder if maybe because of the hurriedness of life the seeds of the word never have time to be cultivated and to penetrate the heart and actually make a difference.

Perhaps the word of God is just glancing off the surface and that is why you feel empty. That is why I feel empty because I've not allowed the word to have its way through meditation through time through spending fellowship with God through the word.

[40 : 06] It's never been given opportunity to penetrate the soil of your heart. So you feel empty frustrated for all the discipline there is no fruit in your life.

Don't be deceived. Discipline is not a substitute for dependence. danger number two. I have done all that I am supposed to do how can I do any more?

I addressed this briefly at the beginning of our introduction. I don't know how long I can keep up this pace. I don't know how I can add anything more to my agenda.

It's already so full. How can you possibly expect me to do something else in terms of ministry? ministry. I'm already tapped out.

I've already got enough on my plate. Don't ask me to do any more. Maybe you're a good employee, a good student, a good spouse, a good parent.

[41 : 15] You're involved in ministry, spending time in fellowship with the Lord. How could you add anything else to that already busy agenda? I can't keep up.

And so when new ministry opportunities are presented to you, you're like, it's already, I'm already at capacity. It's too bad. There's nothing more I can do.

But surprisingly, a look at Jesus' life demonstrates that he was not only never in a hurry, but he was also extremely productive and fruitful.

spiritual. How did that happen in his life? Well, it happened because of a heart that was given to dependence on God. Jesus models for us that more can be done when our lives are empowered by God and directed by him than they could ever be accomplished through discipline itself.

danger number three. Danger number three is I have done all that I'm supposed to do, so obviously that's why things are going well in my life.

[42 : 29] This is perhaps the most dangerous of them all. This heart of a Pharisee that would say, God is indebted to me.

His grace is not grace. it is merit. It is something I deserve. And so when I have good health and when my cars don't break down and when I get that promotion and when my relationship is going well and when my kids are well behaved, it's because I have followed the magic formula as prescribed in the Bible and so my life looks this way.

And so just follow my example and everything will go well. with you too. It is the heart of a Pharisee. The heart of a Pharisee that says essentially that God owes me that's why things go well for me.

Of course, I've done my part so God will do his part as well and subtly we take credit for God's grace. grace. And in doing this we demonstrate that our true affection and our true heart is not to make God glorious, it is to make me comfortable.

Rather than knowing God more and loving God more and glorifying God more whatever the cost, even through difficulty, what really matters in my life is being happy.

[44 : 10] And in order to be happy, I am disciplined and I walk through the checklist and then everything will be okay. It's not to bring God glory but to bring me happiness.

Very dangerous. The opposite truth is also just as dangerous. I have done all that I'm supposed to do.

why is my life such a mess? You ever felt that way? I have followed the formula. After all, we find, especially in 1 Peter chapter 3, if you would love life and see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil, his lips from speaking deceit, let him turn from evil and do good, let him seek peace and pursue it, because the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous, his ears are open to their prayers, but the face of the Lord is against those who do evil.

So, if I follow the magic formula, then certainly my life will go well, and if things are not, then maybe it's because I've missed something along the way. Or worse yet, God is not faithful.

God doesn't actually do what he says he's going to do. Discipline can be dangerous. But I want you to understand that the converse is also dangerous.

[45 : 45] Not only the danger of discipline, but the danger of doing nothing. The danger of doing nothing. We live in a world that is caught up with leisure.

have you felt its tug on your heart? Whether it be social media, whether it be gaming, whether it be movies, whether it be entertainment, whether it be hobbies and activities, or even family time, fill in the blank with everything but God.

Everything seems to be more important than cultivating a fellowship with God. there is a danger in doing nothing.

There are several, but just two that I want to briefly focus on in the next couple of moments. First, it is not what you were made for. It is not what you were made for.

When God talks about waiting, he is not talking about idleness. waiting, he is thinking about active dependence.

[47 : 01] We see this show up in Acts chapter 1. When he calls the disciples to go back to Jerusalem and to do what? Do you realize he calls them to go back and to wait?

wait for the Holy Spirit to show up and then power will come? The presence of God will mark their life and they will change the world upside down?

It begins with waiting, not with working. And so they go back and they pray and they fellowship and they pray some more and they sing and they develop community together and then the spirit comes and the rest is history.

God shows up and that's when they begin to experience true true meaning and purpose in life. When they are operating in the pattern that God has put in their life.

It begins with waiting. God has made you to be a vessel of divine power. You will not feel satisfied until you are doing what God made you to do.

[48 : 14] Rather than looking back on a life full of regret, you can look back on a life full of productivity and fruitfulness. Not only for yourself as God has worked in your life but as it spills out and blesses the people around you.

Next is it will never satisfy. It will never satisfy. To do nothing will never satisfy. You keep filling yourself up with all of these other things and as Jeremiah describes it, he describes it, my people have committed two evils.

They have forsaken me, the fountain of living waters, and hewn out for themselves cisterns, broken cisterns that can hold no water. We fill up our lives with all of the earthly satisfactions and we never come to a place of true rest.

rest. God wants rest for you but only come through him. And finally, finally we see in Isaiah 30 18 now, drop down a few verses, we see the description of God's desire for you.

The description of God's desire for you. Therefore the Lord waits. Isn't that interesting? God waits. The Lord waits to be gracious to you and therefore he exalts himself to show mercy to you.

[49 : 44] For the Lord is a God of justice. Blessed are all those who wait for him. He is a God of patience.

He is a God of waiting. He is a God who is long suffering. He is also a God who is full of mercy, full of grace.

He wants to draw you in to himself. He wants to be real with you, to fellowship with you. Can you conceive of it?

The God of the universe wants to know you and to be known by you. He waits for you this morning. He wants to make you fruitful.

He wants to clear away the clutter of your life so that you can really experience salvation and strength today. Are you willing?

[50 : 49] Are you willing? At the end of verse 15 it says, but you were not willing. May that not be said of us.

May we be willing and running and resting so that we can really be fruitful as God's people this year.

it comes as we understand and appreciate our identity in him. Let's pray. God we thank you this morning for identity that can be found in you and you alone.

That you desire to show up in our lives and you desire Lord to be a God of rescue and a God of strength for us. May we look to you, wait for you, trust in you this morning and throughout this year.

We pray in Jesus name. Amen.