



No Wake Zone

Part 2 – When Others Rock The Boat

Pastor Ted Cunningham

Hey, we are taking the summer to throttle back. Life is not all about making waves and we are grateful that you are joining us in this series. Hopefully, you downloaded the song and it is part of your summer play list. This hashtag is what we want you to use: #nowakezonewhfc@whfc. Amy went on #nowakezone earlier this week and we're not using that hashtag.

Here's the question we asked last week: "Is the pace of your life draining your soul?" We talked about Sabbath and we talked about the fact when you take a rest day, which is what the Sabbath means, everyone has to participate. It's your son, your daughter, your servants, your livestock, even the sojourner within your... I love this phrase in Exodus 20. It's the longest of the Ten Commandments. "Within your gates." So, whoever is within your gates needs to participate or it affects the rest of everyone. As a family, you can all decide to rest, but have one person who is choosing not to rest and it throws everyone else off. So today, we are moving from the pace of your life individually to asking this question: "Are there relationships in your life that are draining your soul?"

If you are married or you have a family, you know there are times you are drained because of the people you're with. There are times you decide to take the rest, you decide to give your life a pause, so you are in the no wake zone, but one person decides to make waves. Does anybody know what I'm talking about? One person decides they are not going to rest. One person decides they don't want to take time off. One person decides we're learning today. One person decides we're running errands today. One person decides we're visiting my mother today. We have one person that chooses not to participate in the rest day. So let's look at these relationships today and then we are going to look at what Jesus teaches us about dealing with what we call *drainers* – people who are in our lives that want to effect the way we are living our lives when we decided to take the pause.

I look at relationships three ways. This is a great way to kind of process the people in your life and, again, it's not to label people for the purpose of avoiding people. It's labeling so you can choose how to love. We're not making the decision of if we are going to love; we're looking at how to love these people.

The first group in your life are the givers. These are the people that when you see them coming, you want to be around them. They are life giving, they fill you up. If you see them in the store, you move towards them. You want to have a brief conversation with them because you realize you can talk a little bit and they're not going to suck the life out of you. They are not going to place piles of expectation on

top of you. They're not going to ruin the moment of a great conversation by saying "Why aren't we doing this more often?" "We should get together more often." "We should have coffee in the morning." Have you ever been with that person? That's the last person; let's talk about them in a second. That's what the whole message is about. This is one of my favorite messages of the whole year.

The givers are life giving. How many of you have a life giving relationship that you're thinking of right now? The person that just pours into you. Then there are maintainers. You might also use the term *acquaintance*. These are people that don't really give life, but they don't really take life from you. You just had an interaction with them or maybe they're strangers, but nothing really happened to your soul. You weren't drained or filled up during that interaction.

Today, we want to talk about that group right there – the drainers, which is about 33% of this congregation. I'm just kidding; I made that up. Honestly, don't be offended. The only people going "ooh" right now are the non-drainers. When you start talking about drainers some of the drainers are like, "That ain't me. I know who that is. That's this person or that person that won't give me enough time." I'm hoping that the Holy Spirit begins calling some folks by name today.

Here's the term we're using with the drainer: *just too much*. They come on so strong. They're too much. They come in and everybody is in the no wake zone and everything is going well and they blow through the door and it's like, "WHAAA, I'm here." "Why, when I walk into a room, do people go into all the other rooms?" These are the people... We don't have a choice on these people. We don't choose whether or not we are going to love them. Today, follower of Jesus, we are going to look at how we love them. We don't avoid these people, we get into the lives of these people and we try to help them. There are a lot of other names we could put on drainers. Let's look at some drainers.

Different People

The extraverts in this service today are going, "I can't get to much of you," but you're sitting next to an introvert going, "Go away. We have talked already enough this morning; leave me alone."

Can we just be honest today? I don't think we in the church talk to the introverts enough. Raise your hand if you consider yourself an introvert. It's all across the place. These are people who are the first ones in the parking lot after this service. These are the ones who are the reason why we tell our greeters they can't hug everybody; that's too much. We realize that all the guests that we have on a Sunday... Some of them love the hug and they will embrace it. Sometimes, you're hugs are a little too long; it gets awkward when they go too long. But, some of you like coming in here and you want that back row and you just want to get away from people.

We just need to understand all people are different. For some of you, the drainers in your life are just different personalities. It's someone who may be far more outgoing and they love great conversations. Amy and I have this conversation on a regular basis. She would consider herself introverted. I'm not totally extroverted, but I'm more extroverted. Can I just share this? It's in the notes. There are times... If we've had a lot of events or activities going on during the week or weekend, coming to church for an introvert can be very exhausting.

Raise your hand if you know what I'm talking about? When we pull in the parking lot, I have to tell Amy that she can't hide. "You can't go into my office with the lights off, curl up in the fetal position in the corner, and get away from people." Some of the conflict in our marriage has been over this one right here: just being different. Even as a pastor... Understand that I relate to people in a very different way than my wife does and that's okay. So, today, when we talk drainers, it may have a totally negative for you. You may think of mean people and nasty people and frustrating people, but it could just be the people who are different from you.

Difficult people

These may be the ones who not only are they too much, but they're so opinionated and they never want to listen to your opinion; it's only their opinion. You're telling a story and instead of asking a question for more detail about your story, they are thinking about a story to one up your story the whole time. This is may be the difficult person at work that you avoid because they drain you because no interaction with them is ever filling you up. It's never life giving. It's an overly critical person. It's a cynical person. It's a pessimist... not just different, but difficult.

Dangerous people

Now we're talking about the toxic person where you fear for yourself physically when you're around them. Maybe five times in 14 years of Woodland Hills have I had interactions on a Sunday morning with people I would consider dangerous and it's why we have the security team. I just talk into my thing there and go "Eagle one, eagle one is at the front of the church. Would you please get up here quickly."

When I say dangerous, I mean they are ready to hit somebody. I don't know if you remember this from years ago for those of you who were here. I was sharing something and it was really simple, but a guy about midway back stood up and called me out. Then I, being the tough guy that I am, invited him to the front. "Eagle one, quick, quick, quick, we're about ten seconds out." Because nothing would scream... They tell me if something were to happen here, I'm supposed to get down like this. That would leave a terrible image in your mind if the shepherd yells "Oh, save me!" No.

Do you know who came to my rescue? I don't know if you remember this. It was 68-year-old Gary Smalley. He jumped in between the guy and me. It all settled down, we moved the guy away, and I remember asking Gary "What were you going to do? You were just going to be the first guy he knocked out and then I would be the second guy that he knocked out."

Do we want to run these people out of the church? When I was reading the scripture this week, I kept coming back to Matthew 23 where Jesus is confronting the Pharisees. The language that he uses. "You brood of vipers," "you whitewashed tombs," "you hypocrites," and then this one: "you blind guides." Jesus had confrontational meetings with difficult and dangerous people. Let me tell you about one of the most draining individuals of all, the democrat. That's a joke. No one will suck the life out of you faster than a democrat.

But, hold on because I think the one I fear more than anything, that drains me more than anything is Donald Trump. You notice that laughter was about 50% so you know where we are. That was fun.

Here's what we know... and this is a term we've used around here for a long time. We want to be followers of Jesus when we look at the drainer, we don't say, "I'm going to hit the other aisle at the store; I'm not even going to talk to them." When we see the drainer, we're thinking *What can I do to make this a five-second interaction? What can I do to keep this person out of my life at all costs?* No, I want the first lens I see a drainer through to be EGR lenses – Extra Grace Required. Meaning I know this person is going to take a little more time.

Whomever our president ends up being in 2017... Whoever it is, it's going to be an EGR president. Lighten up people. Some of you are so serious right now. Well, they are wearing me out already and it's June. That's my decision, not the drainer's decision. We have to realize that the drainer is making waves. When they make waves, that's their issue. It's not your issue. But, what is your issue is how you respond to them. What is your issue is how you deal with them.

Let's define *drainer* a little bit more according to the scripture and then look very clearly at something Jesus taught, but also how he taught it. I love how he taught what he taught about dealing with different, difficult, dangerous, and democratic people. Drainers talk too much. I'm not talking about extravert versus introvert. I'm talking about the person who uses words recklessly. I'm not talking about a person who finds energy in a room full of people and just loves sharing stories. I'm not talking just about that person. I'm just talking about a person who talks too much.

According to the scripture, this is what that person looks like. Sin is not ended by multiplying words. A prudent or a wise individual restrains their words, holds their tongues. They know when they don't need to say anything. We use the term *sage*. We call someone with wisdom a sage. We call them the person that sits there and is able to look at you and just by looking at you, you know exactly what they are thinking. They've learned that they don't need to just ramble on and fill the room with words. They hold their tongue

I've used this guy as an illustration for many years, but Jack Herschend is one I always come back to when I think of this verse. I've been in many meetings with him and he sits in the corner of the room and says nothing. Every time I go to say something, I look over to see how he is processing it. Then at the end of the meeting, he'll say a couple of sentences. Those sentences tend to trump everything else that has happened in the room. That's because he's sage. He's wise, he's prudent, and he knows how to hold his tongue. Even when he disagrees with something being said, he's not sharing it. At the end of the meeting, he has positive, encouraging, wise, and prudent thoughts to share what he's thinking after a two-hour meeting. Then you sit there as he speaks and think through everything you just said. That's a wise individual and that's all Proverbs is about – wise versus foolish living. I want to live in wisdom.

Proverbs 17: 28 says ***Even fools are thought wise if they keep silent and discerning if they hold their tongues.*** If you're in a draining relationship right now... Just talking too much... We are going to talk about how to handle them, but it's not just talking too much, they talk about themselves too much. Everything is about one upping your story. Everything is about one upping what you were able to accomplish this week, the success of your show or the success of your business. "Yeah, but let me tell you what's going on in mine." A wise person, a prudent individual is able to listen to someone else and, instead of trying to figure out how to respond with themselves, they respond with that person. And,

when they hear your show had 300 people this week, they congratulate you instead of saying “Yeah, but mine had...” You begin to praise that person rather than yourself.

The scripture is very clear in Proverbs 27: 2. Let someone else praise you. It doesn't need to be you talking about yourself all the time. It should be an outsider and not from your own lips. I think a good rule of thumb for all of us is to never brag about yourself. Always allow someone else to do it. And, when they do, receive it. How do you receive compliment? Just say “Thank you.”

I learned this years ago. I don't know who was speaking at our church, but they said they went up to a singer after a concert at a church and said, “That was so wonderful, great job; I loved it.”

In awkwardness, the singer responded, “It wasn't me, it was the Lord.”

My friend leaned in and said, “Are you sure? I could have sworn I saw your lips moving up there.”

When someone praises you, just respond with a thank you. Rather than adding to them saying things about you.

It's not just too many words. Look at what Proverbs says about this. Drainers want too much of your time. Drainers want too much of you. This passage is going to reference hospitality - going into someone's home – in that day. Remember, they didn't have mobile devices. I think we can apply this to telephone conversations as well. Proverbs 25: 17 says, ***Seldom set foot in your neighbors' house - too much of you, and they will hate you.***

Let's apply this to mobile phone devices for just a second. Too many texts and they will hate you. Too many calls and they will hate you. I'm a texter because it keeps me from phone calls. Is anybody else in my category? It works, but my mom is not a big fan of it. She thinks you should still call your mother.

I have found myself being a drainer with texts to my friends. Here is the clue that I need. They send me two or three sentences and I respond with six or seven sentences, and it doesn't end there. I left it open. I want it an open text so we can kind of keep the conversation going. Does anybody know what I'm talking about?

They respond with one sentence. I go back with six or seven sentences. They respond with... This is the ultimate statement of “Ted, you are a drainer.” It's these two words: “Sounds good.” If you've gotten “Sounds good” on a text or “Let's roll...” If it's a two-word sentence, the text string is over. I haven't gotten that clue all the time. I go back and then we move from “Sounds good” to just a thumbs up emoji. The other night I got down to the thumbs up emoji from a friend and the next text from them said, “Have a good night, Ted.” Oh man; I'm a drainer. I was sucking the life out of him in the text.

So, too much of you, Ted, and he will hate you and not respond the next time you text him. I was like “Come on, Dad, I just trying to have a simple conversation with you.” Does this make sense though? We all, I don't care who you are, extravert or introvert personality, we all need to learn to give less. We need to realize it was a quick exchange; let it be what it is, rather than trying to put expectations on it for it to be something more. It could be a text message; it could be a phone call.

My parents taught me telephone etiquette and the telephone etiquette I grew up with... I don't know if they got this from a book or whatever, but the telephone etiquette I grew up with was if someone calls you, they are the one that ends the conversation. Has anybody ever heard that? Okay, good. That's all the senior adults in here. We would pick up the phone, call the person, and we would do all that work to get to them and when we finally got to them, we would be the ones to end the call.

How do you do it when the caller is a drainer? I'm trying to be better with this. I have some friends that don't want to be on the phone for more than a minute and a half. I've kept mental notes of my friends and how they like to interact. When they start saying things to me on the phone like "Sounds good," "We should do that," or "Great talking to you..." Have you ever eaves dropped on another conversation and you just start cracking up because you realize that person is trying so hard to get off the phone. I don't even know this person and I don't know who they are talking to, but I do know the other person doesn't have a clue. There are signs that a call is over. They've had too much of you, so step back out of their house and don't visit again tomorrow.

You cannot share this verse without talking to mother in laws and father in laws. I want to say this on behalf of your son in law. Mom, we love you, we do, but seldom set foot in your daughter's house because too much of you and your son in law... Again, I'm paraphrasing this. Your son in law will hate you. Suzette, seldom set foot in the Jones' house. Too much of you and David will hate you. There we go; I was able to get it all out. Let's be super honest about this. We love you. I think that's the issue we really need to wrestle with here. It's not that you're a bad person, Mom, and don't get offended, Dad. I talked to a couple this week that it was Dad stopping by the home every day after he got off work. Guess what? That's too much.

My dad... All these people have passed on so I can share this story. My dad's mom, Milly Cunningham, was worn out with my grandpa's mom stopping by every day. She was just down the street and she would stop by every day. Milly Cunningham, my grandma, got tired of it so they moved out of town. They moved five miles out of town. If you've moved because someone was too much, would you raise your hand? That's okay. A lot of people come to Branson to get away from their moms; I get it. But, they moved five miles out of town.

I would love to have seen this with my own eyes. They weren't there a week and a police car pulls up in the driveway. We know when a police car pulls up, something has happened. Out of the back of the police car comes my great grandma. She had gone down to the police station. In that day, it was a little looser time; she was now going to bum a ride every day from one of the squad cars five miles out of town. My great grandma's name was Jemima Heffelfinger. Jemima Heffelfinger was setting foot in Milly Cunningham's house too much. This is a whole message. I think I need to stick here for the rest of the time, but we've got to get to what Jesus said about dealing with these people.

Romans 12: 18. ***If it is possible...*** so let's start there. It's not always possible. ***If it is possible, as far as it depends on you...*** so a statement of personal responsibility. You and I are taking responsibility for the way we respond to the drainer, to those who are rocking the boat while we're trying to be in the no wake zone. If it possible, as far as it depends on me, I'm just going to take responsibility for the way I respond, not for the way they are making waves. That's not my responsibility. How they are behaving,

what they are saying, what they are doing, that is not me, but what I do to them, what I say to them, how I respond to them, 100% depends on me. **...live at peace with everyone.**

So, whether they are different, difficult, dangerous, democrat, or Donald Trump, I want to live at peace with all. That's my goal. I go back to the first part. I'm saddened by the fact that even when I make every effort and it doesn't work... That's not on you. If you've made every effort, that's the personal responsibility on your end.

When people make waves around you, that's their issue to deal with, not yours. You don't have to keep them. I think that's the problem when someone comes into the No Wake Zone going 20 miles an hour. We think it's our job to stop them. It's not, unless you have the authority to do so. Our job is how are we going to respond to the craziness of this and understanding we can't please everybody. We'll never be able to please everyone. We're not going to influence everyone. Stop trying to change a single person because you can't do it. You take responsibility for the way you're living and the way you're responding, as far as it depends on you. Then it's up to Jesus.

Jesus did not please everyone. Look at what he says in John. **...for I seek not to please myself, but him who sent me.** I understand the interaction I'm about to have with the drainer is not for how I'm going to feel at the end of it. It's not about me and will I be rested, filled, or drained at the end of this interaction with this person who is coming down the way to me or to you in a store. Or, maybe it's a holiday, the 4th of July, as you gather with family. There's this one person. I hope when you leave the presence of that individual... It may be all day, it may be eight hours with that person. However long you are with that person, I hope at the end of the time, you are able to walk away and say, "Heavenly Father, I believe you are pleased. It wasn't what I would do. It's not how I would deal with the knucklehead. I love him, but he needs a job. I should have instructed him. He's making waves in this family, bumming money, etc. Father, I think you were pleased with the way I responded to him or her."

So in Matthew 5, let's look at what Jesus did. In four questions, Jesus is going to talk about something scholars call entry-level love. I love it. Have you ever had an entry-level job? I had like five of them in my teenage years. It's why I'm a big fan of entry-level jobs. What does an entry-level job mean? You don't need any skills. It means you have a warm body and you show up. If you can get there, you've got the job. They'll teach you the skills you need.

You're not going to be a manager. So, for those of you who just came out of college with knowledge, wondering if the CEO position is open, no it's not. Those positions aren't open because you really have no skills. They have an entry-level position. That means come in here, give it your all, you'll learn some skills, and you'll start working your way up in the company. That's how it typically works.

Understand this is entry level and this is what Jesus is teaching. **46 "If you love those who love you, what reward will you get?"** I love how a master teacher is asking questions. In other words, there is no skill in loving givers. There's no skill in loving easy-to-love people. The one who brings life to the relationship or to the conversation is an easy person to love. Jesus says that's entry-level love. That doesn't take anything from you for you to do that.

“Are not even the tax collectors doing that?” In that day, the tax collectors were more looked down on than the IRS is today. In that day, they were dealing with tax collectors who were extorting people and just flat out robbing people. Jesus is saying for those people that you hate, those dangerous people, those drainers, not just of your emotions, but who are financially draining your life, know how to do this. They can love the people in their lives that they love.

47 “And if you greet only your own people...” That kind of goes with the different people. If you only greet and love your own kind, that’s easy. He says that’s not difficult, that doesn’t require anything, but what about loving the people who are very different from you? In the Ozarks, I can’t neglect this because Jesus is teaching it directly. Some of you need to take this verse today... It doesn’t apply at all to drainers, but some of you need to ask the Holy Spirit to call you by name to begin loving people of a different skin color. You need to drop some of the vocabulary that you use towards people of a different race or nationality or ethnicity than you. You need to find love, greeting, and kindness in your heart towards people who are very different from you. Maybe you were raised that way and your trying to break out of that. I pray the Holy Spirit calls you by name and gives you the strength to do that on your journey today.

47 “And if you greet only your own people, what are you doing more than others?” Entry-level love. Everybody does that type of love. That type of love is easy for everyone. ***“Do not even pagans do that?”*** Lost people. We’re different because we profess Jesus Christ as savior. We should be offering CEO-level love. We have the skills because we have the source. We have the strength to deal with the draining individual because we know the source. We know the person coming at us right now is not the source of life. The person coming at us right now is not the source of love. “That person has wronged me for I can’t count how many years. I hate him. I hate her.” The problem is that person is not even your source of forgiveness. Don’t look to them to give you the right apology or make you feel the apology. Forgive as God forgave you in Christ Jesus. Jesus is the source.

Let’s look at some of this for breaking that passage down. Loving easy to love people requires no special skill. It’s entry level. Giving to generous people requires no special skill. Why? It’s because I know I’m going to get it back. “I’ll treat for the meal this time because I know the next time we’re together, you’ll treat.” Giving to generous people is easy. But, what about giving yourself to someone today who will never ever be able to repay or respond in kind. Showing kindness to kind people requires no special skill.

We’ve been interacting with some merchants in town over the weekend. You’ve been there where someone just hates their job. It’s so tempting when you go into a store in Branson, you try to do business, and they are bothered that you’re there. Does anybody know what I’m talking about? I’m thinking *You know this is a place where you give us goods and we give you money. That’s how that works. Why are you so mad?* How tempting is it for us to say, “I’m going to teach this young man something.” “I’m going to show her something.” “You don’t talk to me that way.” Showing kindness to that bubbly, over the top person... I always think about Dave at Starbucks. Does everybody remember Dave? He knew your name and everything about your life. He knew more about you than you knew about yourself. Dave is easy to love, easy to give to, easy to show kindness to. It’s hard to show

kindness to the one who is never going to give it back. Jesus is saying, “But that’s what we do. If you follow me, that’s how we handle people.”

Listening to easy to listen to people requires no special skill. I’m learning this skill. I’m asking, “Lord, give me the skill to listen to a draining conversation without zoning out. I want CEO-level love. I want to stay engaged with my body language, posture, eye contact, and tone of voice. I want to stay engaged in this conversation.” That’s because it’s about loving drainers, those people making waves in your life. We love them.

Let me give you four practicals and then we’ll close it out.

1. Reduce the noise level in the room.

I’ve just discovered this helps as I try to practice what Jesus teaches us in Matthew 5. If you’re dealing with a drainer, it helps to reduce the noise level in the room. So, for some of you, the drainer right now may be your kid who is at a season of life where they are just taking and taking. Turn the radio off. At 42 years old, I can’t talk to my kids and listen to the radio. I can’t talk to my kids and watch a movie. I can only do one or the other. Amy’s been doing this for 12 or 13 years.

2. Realize not every person needs a response.

I love this person. I don’t have to answer the question that they are asking right now. I was studying this week and psychologists... I don’t know how much I agree with them and I know they are not coming at it from the scripture, but they were saying that with draining people, you just need to learn how to be rude. I think that’s kind of the opposite of what we are going to be trying to teach. They said you just walk away. Maybe to protect yourself in a dangerous situation or protect your children or your family, but I don’t think, as followers of Jesus, a draining person gives us the right to just walk away.

Now, we can’t do this; this is going to be later on in the series, but what do you do about confronting a drainer? There is a time in life where you do need to confront the person, but confrontation comes after loving. That’s why I don’t go up and discipline kids in stores that aren’t mine. Some of you are thinking, *Why not?* I don’t have a relationship with them. Sometimes for a senior adult in here, some of my 70 and 80-year-old friends, it’s good for you to look down and, in a strong voice, says, “Treat you mom better than that!” I like that. That will be a whole other message some other time. But, we don’t get to be rude. I don’t think we get to just walk away. But, I don’t need to give a response to everyone coming at me. They don’t need a response because where there are many words, sin is not far away.

3. Don’t allow someone else’s inability to rest ruin yours.

Understand that’s their issue to deal with, not yours.

4. Set limits on your time and emotional involvement.

This one is very important. Not every drainer in your life this week is going to need hours and hours of your time. Just set limits. When the phone call comes, maybe you let them know you have to do something else and this can't be an hour-long conversation. I've just found with that type, it's better at the front end of the conversation rather than halfway in when it's really heated or really tense or they are really pouring out their soul. There's nothing harder than someone being emotional or crying to you on the phone and you tell them that you have to wrap up the conversation. It's okay to set limits and I hope you're getting the flow of the No Wake Zone this summer and you're entering into it while loving those who have chosen not to enter into it with you yet.

Father, it's in the name of Jesus that we thank you for our time today. We are grateful for the lesson Jesus teaches us that entry-level love is not what we want when we're connected to the true and only source of life. You are an unlimited supply. Fill us so we have something to give those who drain us in life. May we learn to love them. May we learn to care for them. May we learn to start taking personal responsibility for the way we respond to them without taking responsibility for them. If they are making waves, we'll let that be their responsibility and we'll focus solely on how we respond to them. When it is possible and it depends on us, we desire to live in peace with everyone.

Father, we are grateful for the work you are doing in this church. Bless our church family, as summertime is a time to pause, that they would unplug from technology and mobile devices and would not be so connected that they are disconnected from one another. May this be a good season for them to just enjoy spending time together.

It's in the name of Jesus that everyone agreed and said... Amen.