



Change

Part 6 – You Don't Have to be Exhausted

Shay Robbins

We're continuing in our series called Change. A lot of times, folks from our congregation will ask, "How do you guys come up with the messages and the series?" The truth is I don't come up with them. We've got a creative team that brainstorms this and prays over it, and then we get an email. I'm always excited to get that email. I got the email a couple of months ago. I opened the email and I'm reading through it. It's the fall teaching schedule. I find the series – *Change*. The month – October. The name – Shay Robbins. Then I see the title. *You don't have to be exhausted*. I don't?!

It came at a perfect time because Ashlyn and I are pregnant with baby number six. Oh, my goodness; one last baby girl. We're excited to welcome her into the Robbins Family. I promise you this will be the last one. Mark Ashley Robbins words. Calm down up front. I'm not as excited as you are. So, it's almost as if the creative team felt like I needed to study this topic for 15 or 20 hours and then apply it to my life.

I'm not exhausted; I'm just sleepy, okay? And don't judge me because I've been standing up here many times, pouring out my heart, and I look out in the audience to see there are some of you all nodding off. I'll tell you what hurts even more. You have a coffee in your hand! I'm not sure what to make of that. But anyway... *You don't have to be exhausted*. And we're talking about change, so that's the topic of conversation this morning.

We're going to have three parts of this conversation. Part number one is this. We're going to look at a **biblical model of rest**. We're going to kind of lay down a biblical foundation of what it looks like to live and breathe and enjoy rest. And then we're going to ask some introspective questions to kind of take a personal inventory to see where we're at personally. Then we're going to move into **finding rest for the soul**, which ultimately, our rest comes from faith in Jesus. Then, finally, **exercising disciplines of rest**. So, we're going to get really practical at the end and talk about some ways where we can manage or be stewards of the life that God has given us, to live it in a healthy way.

Biblical Model of Rest – What's really interesting, as I've studied this from Genesis 2 all the way to Revelation 21, is there is a golden-thread theme of rest. It almost caught me off guard how thorough it is throughout the scripture. Starting in Genesis, as you know, God created the heavens and the earth in six days. He looked back and he said, "This is good. I love what I've made," and on the seventh day, he rested.

Did God need to rest? No. When he created, he just spoke everything into existence. To assume that God needed to take a nap after creation, would be like saying I could clean up the house, having my kids do all the work... Lulu feed the chicken, Belle, run a vacuum, Knox clean up this mess. Whew, that's exhausting; Daddy needs a nap.

That wasn't the case with God. He gave us a model right off the bat. He said, "I've worked hard; I love what I've created. I'm going to sit back and rest and enjoy the work of my hands." Isn't that a fun model for us?

Shortly thereafter, he reinforced this concept through Moses. Moses brought the Law to God's people. He came down off the mountain and he brought the Ten Commandments. The third commandment is to honor the Sabbath day and to keep it holy. The Sabbath day was that seventh day of the week that was set aside for God's people to rest. To think that made number three of the top ten laws of God, just after You'll have no other gods before me and you'll not take my name in vain. He said, "I want you to rest." That's a powerful truth.

Then we go to the New Testament and we look at Jesus' life in the gospels. It's interesting that we see a little snapshot of him in his childhood. Then for about 20 years, he kind of disappears off the scene. Then when he reappears, he's got three years to change the course of human history. It seems like that would be a busy three years, don't you think? Surely it was, but you see time and time again, as Jesus is moving throughout the county side, he is healing people and ministering to people, and the crowds are increasing and the need is increasing. What would Jesus do? He would slip away. In fact, there were some times the disciples didn't even know where he went. The Bible says it was his custom that he would often slip away into the wilderness to a lonely place and he would pray with his Father in heaven. Not only did he do that, but he also modeled it to his disciples. He instructed them to step away and to rest. It's really interesting that you see that in Jesus' life.

Have you ever seen people around you or maybe been this person yourself where people ask you, "How are you doing?" "Oh, I'm just so busy. We've got this going on and little Johnny's doing this, and we've got 4H and the tuba lessons..." You look at that person and you're thinking, *Surely you're not more busy than the guy who raises people from the dead.* But, we can fall into this pattern where we are just so consumed with everything coming at us, and sadly, we're living in a life of just absolute exhaustion.

Jesus actually gives us a really cool story. It's one of the most famous stories in the gospel. He goes to visit some dear friends. It was the home of Mary and Martha and Lazarus. He comes into the home and he sits down. Martha apparently seems like she has been given the gift of hospitality because she was serving away and taking care of all of her guest and working very hard. Well, her sister was sitting at the feet of Jesus, listening to every word that came out of his mouth. Martha is getting annoyed, "My lazy sister sitting at the feet of the feet of Jesus..." Martha is just losing it.

Jesus pulls her aside and says this. It's in Luke 10 - ***"Martha, Martha, you are worried and bothered about so many things; 42 but only a few things are necessary, really only one, for Mary has chosen the good part, which shall not be taken away from her."***

I have to tell you... I'm susceptible to this. I love spinning plates. Is anybody like that? Does anybody love to multitask? I love it. I feel like I'm at my best when I've got too much to do. That is often when I find myself worried and bothered and flat out exhausted. It's because I'm living life out in an unhealthy way. We see in Mary's life that she really had the right priority. There are times to work, times to hustle, times to bust it, but there is also a time and a priority to spend time at the feet of Jesus to learn, to walk, to grow, and to rest. God's story of mankind begins and ends with rest.

The author of Hebrews really frees us up. I want to share this truth with you. Hebrews 4 – ***2 For indeed we have had good news preached to us, just as they also...*** The background is that he's talking about the good news of Jesus being shared with people, and there are those that receive it and those that, in disobedience, reject it. ***...but the word they heard did not profit them, because it was not united by faith in those who heard.*** That's a really important piece of the puzzle. It wasn't united with faith.

It goes on to quote an Old Testament passage. ***"They shall not enter My rest."*** Later in that passage it says, ***9 So there remains a Sabbath rest for the people of God. 10 For the one who has entered His rest has himself also rested from his works, as God did from His.*** Now there's kind of a play on words. He's using the Sabbath rest as an example, but he's saying more than that. When you receive Jesus, when you receive the Good News, your soul enters into an eternal resting place.

It is mankind's common error to try and work to earn the favor of God. In fact, a lot of the false religions are just that. Some think they stand before God and heaven and there is a scale that weighs their good works and their bad works. If their good works outweigh their bad works, they get in. If the scale is tipped the other way, it's eternal punishment. That's a work's-based theology. We know that is not true. That's not how we receive the gift that God has handed out to us. In fact, it is just that; it is a gift. When we receive grace, we enter into his rest. If I'm missing anything, you just pipe up and I'll grab hold of it. I like crowd interaction.

We've kind of looked at this biblical foundation of how we enter into rest. Now I want to look at some self-introspection. I want to ask you guys some questions and we're going to just personally filter through them and take a personal inventory to kind of see where we're at.

We enter into rest through faith, so **why are you exhausted?** There are a number of things. This is an exhausted list, but it might be kids, your schedule, work hours, no down time, doing too much, not enough sleep, stress, worried, bothered, annoyed, angry, etc. There are all these things that can mount up to zap us. What is it that is draining your life source?

Also, our sin continues to separate us from God. When we bring sin into the picture and it comes between us and him, there is an abundant life that he offers to us through the Holy Spirit and that life and vitality and energy and passion can be blocked up when there is sin in our life. **Is there a sin in your life that has been zapping your strength?** Can y'all picture that? We've all experienced it before. When there is something up that you know that you've done wrong... It's bottled up and, out of pride, you're hiding it or you don't want to confess it. There is fear connected to being open and honest. And it physically drains your body.

I remember I had a breakup with a girl in high school. I was mad and angry and wanting revenge. That consumed my thoughts in my mind and it exhausted me and brought me into this depression where I didn't even want to get out of bed. That's because I had bottled up this poison and I wasn't willing to give it up and allow God to heal me.

Psalms 32 says this. This is David wrestling with sin. **3 When I kept silent about my sin, my body wasted away through my groaning all day long. 4 For day and night Your hand was heavy upon me; my vitality was drained away as with the fever heat of summer.** Sometimes, God uses exhaustion to get our attention. Perhaps there are some things in our lives that we need to confess to get out in the open and receive forgiveness on.

Here are a few more questions to process. **What do you do when you're exhausted? How do you let off steam?** What are some of the coping mechanisms you built into your life as a response to this hunger or this longing? Here are just a few examples. Perhaps it's drinking in excess, getting high, emotionally checking out. This is a big one for guys – working hard all day long, coming home and turning off ESPN and emotionally checking out at the expense of our family. Getting angry, indulging in pornography, eating too much, eating too little, taking God off the throne and putting ourselves on it, trying to control everything around us, spending money recklessly.

Take a personal inventory. What are some areas in your life? Where's the drain or the energy vacuum that is sucking the life out of you? With kind of that thought process... Now that we've laid down our biblical foundation and asked some good questions of ourselves, we're going to look at a two-step process to get healthy.

Finding Rest for the Soul. A lot of people will say that there are only two things that last forever: The Word of God and the Souls of Men. There are some passionate recyclers that would add plastics to that. But I like that: The Word of God and the souls of men. Your soul is eternal. So, your flesh and bones are going to die. From dust you came to dust you shall return. But the souls in men and women last forever. Our souls are naturally restless. They're wanting to find their home. Often times, we're just needing something. We just need something more.

I have so much compassion because one of the things that just wrecked my life was just having this insatiable hunger. I couldn't even put my finger on it. I didn't know what it was, but I just knew I wasn't content. Maybe you're running down this list. "I need something to eat," so you fill your stomach with something good and you're totally full and yet there's that nagging, that gnawing at the soul.

"Maybe I need some coffee or maybe I need another glass of wine." "I wish I had some more money. I think that would make me feel better. I'm going to go out and make more money." "Maybe more kids would help; I don't know." "I need more ice cream." Or perhaps "We need some investment." "I don't have enough purpose; I need to get me some more purpose." Maybe more notoriety, more friends, more likes, more popularity. Are y'all familiar with that? It's the gnawing of a restless soul.

The human soul longs for its home like an orphan longing for his or her parents. Hoping, praying, dreaming, longing for, hungering after. There's something missing. And yet my restless heart can't find

it. **The human soul is like a puzzle piece with endless intricacies and complexity.** There's only one place where that puzzle piece of your soul fits correctly. There's only one place that it will land and find it's rest. Jesus shares it in Matthew 11. It's one of the dearest passages to me personally. **28 "Come to me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest. 29 "Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. 30 "For my yoke is easy and my burden is light."**

A lot of times, in our humanness – and certainly this is a lie of the devil – we convince ourselves that God is strong willed, disappointed, upset with us, and there's nothing that we could do to fix our relationship with God. When we believe that, there's really no option but to cope. There's really no option but to medicate a broken heart or a restless soul. But it's not true. In fact, this is the only place in scripture that I can find that Jesus' describes his heart. He says, "I am gentle and humble in heart."

Men and women of the church, Jesus' heart is a soft place for your soul to land. If you are worn out and exhausted and you can't figure out what to do, this is where you run. You run to the heart of Jesus. He is gentle and humble in heart. What a blessing.

We'll pick up where we left off in Psalm 32. David was talking about the consequences of hiding sin in his life and the consequences were life-draining. He goes on and finishes his thought. **5 Then I acknowledged my sin to you and did not cover up my iniquity. I said, "I will confess my transgressions to the Lord," and you will forgive the guilt of my sin.** That's the truth of the God that we serve. We serve a God that wants to minister to you in your exhaustion. He wants to bring you up out of it gently, carefully, with love and kindness. He wants you to live a healthy life. All of the guilt and the shame that's piled up that we think we can't bear to bring out, there's a soft landing place.

I'd be willing to bet that most of us have been there. When you've had something that needs to be confessed... Perhaps you've wronged a parent, a dear friend, a spouse, and you know you're wrong even though your head is telling you over and over again all the reason you're right, but you know in your spirit you're wrong. It robs you of peace and rest. It gnaws at your heart and your mind to the point where you finally, in humility, break down and go to that person and confess it and say, "I was wrong. Will you forgive me?" There is beauty in that moment isn't there. There's peace and there's rest available. It doesn't mean that life is going to be simple. It doesn't mean that it's not going to get any harder or there's not going to be a grind involved. But you can live with your soul at rest when you keep a short record of accounts.

Jesus ushers us into soul rest, so how do we live in this rest as we walk through a life of difficulty and distraction? He makes it really simple in Matthew 6: **33 But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.. 34 Therefore do not be anxious about tomorrow, for tomorrow has enough trouble of its own.** This is prioritization. This is Mary sitting at the feet of Jesus. It's taking a timeout and saying "How do I need to reprioritize my life? Right now, there are about a hundred things that are pulling me in every which way." That was Martha. She was worried and bothered, wasn't she? But her sister Mary came right to the feet of Jesus and that's what this passage is all about. Seek first his kingdom and his righteousness and then all these things will be added to you.

This is the way I think about it. We want to work for tomorrow; that's being responsible. You've got bills to pay, you've got responsibilities to people. You work for tomorrow, but you live for today. Today has all kinds of joys and friendships and adventures and awesome interactions and hills to climb. Today has enough. Let your soul be at rest and enjoy today. Keep working for tomorrow; we're not shirking responsibility, but we're going to enjoy the work of our hands. And that starts with today, not tomorrow. It's easy on Monday to be thinking about Friday. Don't miss out on the whole week.

Alright, we're going to move on. We're going to get practical. **Exercising Disciplines of Rest.** Just because you're busy, it doesn't mean you're getting anything done. Have you ever had your tires in the mud? "I just need to move forward because I need to do something." Just because you're busy doesn't mean you're getting anything done.

Here are some reasons why we fall into unhealthy patterns of busyness. Here are just a handful of ideas. Keeping up with the Jones, social media... This makes it so hard. You're constantly comparing yourself to other people's lives. But let us be reminded that God didn't set you out to live somebody else's life. He gave you your own life. He's got a plan and purpose specifically for you. Enjoy what he's got in front of you. Stop looking to the left and the right and playing the comparison game; it's exhausting.

There's the fear of falling behind or a fear of losing control. You can be distracted, spending time on things that don't matter that much. Allowing others to be the decision makers. Often times, we give that power of control over to our kids, people in our community, our in-laws, neighbors, whatever it might be. Ultimately, God sits on the throne, but you've been given a life to steward. Don't let other people steward your life for you or you'll find yourself exhausted.

The next one is fear of missing out. The kids call it FOMO. When you try and be a part of everything, you're going to miss out on the deep joys of life. There is a richness to having time. When you have time for relationships or family or to sit on the porch with an ice-cold sweet tea, there's something that is rich there. But when we're running from one thing to the next with the fear of missing out, you can't keep up; it's exhausting.

Playing defense rather than offense, having a lack of priority, surviving rather than thriving. In these cases, I just think about being reactive rather than proactive. When you walk through life as a victim, you take on everyone else's chaos. That's no way to live. You've got to take control of your own life and there are times when you need to push away other people's chaos so that your life can be at peace and be at rest. That's a discipline.

Moving from some of these things that we can identify in our life, here are some things that we can do. Let's get practical. In 1 Timothy 4: 7, Paul instructs Timothy. He says, **...discipline yourself for the purpose of godliness...** I believe that rest is a discipline that we can practice. It requires us to practice and to get better at it. As we do that, we can grow in godliness because ultimately our life is healthier.

Here are a few ideas:

Schedule out your week on Sunday night. So, this goes from playing defense to playing offense. On Sunday night, get together, whether it's as a family or single people in their home. We sit down and plan out the week. Here are our priorities, here are the things that are untouchable that we're going to invest in. Perhaps it's dinner. We're going to have dinner as a family five nights a week this week and we will say no to everything that impedes on that because it is a priority in our home. When you sit down at the beginning of the week and you plan out your priorities, it gives you the wisdom in the moment to sometimes do the hard thing which is to turn opportunities down. Sometimes there are really great opportunities. But when you say no to something, you're saying yes to something else. When you plan ahead, it helps you prioritize your life.

Go to bed at a reasonable time every night. Last night I exercised this. At 9:00, we put the kids to bed and I was tired, so I just decided to not try to be a hypocrite for the people here, but actually practice this. I went to bed at 9:00 and I woke up so energized, and I found out the Hogs lost anyway. Praise God I just slept through it.

Wake up early enough for your day to start peacefully. I work with so many college students and most college students wake up, and they're immediately frantic because they are behind the eight ball. I think that is probably the worst way to start your day. The thought is if I hit snooze several times, I'm getting more sleep. But when you wake up and you're frantic, you have a lack of focus, you're anxious right off the bat, and the weight of the day just begins to pile on you right off the bat. I really believe that when you sacrifice enough sleep to get up and start your day in peace, it has a great return.

Exercise. Eat healthy. Focus on today. Work hard. Sleep well. Don't be so worried about what you've got tomorrow; there's plenty about today that you can go out and crush it. You can sit back when you get home, rest and enjoy the work of your hands, and put your head on the pillow and sleep well, thinking *I was faithful today*.

Say no, it's okay. It's okay to say no, people. One of the things that Ashley and I have practiced in our home... This is a discipline of rest. We've been saying no to kids' activities. To be honest with you, they are great things. The kids would learn teamwork and they'd be active and healthy and running around and frankly, we'd probably enjoy being out there. But just right now, in our home, with all our kids, we need to say no, so we've said no to soccer for now. It won't be forever, but we've said no to it for now because we value this little season in our home of making sure to prioritize our dinners and our time at home at night together and our Saturday mornings. It's just a decision we've made and there are a thousand decisions like it that could make sense for your family.

Practice solitude. Really, practicing solitude and getting up earlier are kind of package deal. We see Jesus model that.

As you look at the list, it may be overwhelming. You might be thinking, *Golly, I'm not doing any of those things. How do I even get started?* A lot of times we throw up our hands and just give up because it's too much. I want to encourage you. True rest begins with your soul and after that, just look for the first

win. Maybe chose one discipline that creates more space in your life to be restful and do that one. What happens is wins breed wins. They create momentum. When you get one win, you get a hunger for the next one. Then you add another one and make a decision here and make another decision there and you begin to taste the fruit of that good decision making. Then, all of the sudden, what was formerly a burden has now become this delight and you free yourself up to live in a healthy way.

Again, just to reiterate, your soul rest, that's where this all begins. And you can't work to get it; it's a gift. Just like Christmas morning. You're handed that gift you get to open and enjoy. That rest is a gift from God and after that, we each have personal responsibility. You've been given stewardship over your life and you've got to make wise decisions and use spiritual disciplines to create space to live in a healthy way.

Bow your heads with me. Father, we come to you today and we thank you for the truth of your word. We know that God's word does not return void without accomplishing that which you sent it to do. I just want to pray, God, that your Holy Spirit would take the truth of your word and have an impact on our lives. I want to pray, God, for the health, the spiritual soul health of our church. I pray that we would grow in godliness as we choose healthy disciplines. I want to pray today for anybody whose soul is restless and hasn't found their home in Jesus that they would find it today. It's in Jesus' name we pray, amen.