

How are we? Good. Alright, let's go Matthew chapter 4. On Fridays my family does its Sabbath. And so this past Friday we slept in, which when you have kids that means around 6:30 a.m. and we got up and we watched some cartoons and we ate breakfast there at the house and then we just kind of did a lot of nothing in the morning because that's what you do on Sabbath. And about 11 we headed to the gym and my son was 12 weeks old so we could actually take him to the gym now and Lauren and I took Audrey and Reed and we went to the gym and checked the kids in. And then we went upstairs and just did a little lifting and a little running. I mean, you can probably tell I'm not on the creatine or anything but I was wanting to sweat a little bit and lift a little bit and not so concerned about the abs just wanted to work out a little bit. And we ran for a while and worked out for a while and then went and picked up our kids and went to the pool there, they have an indoor pool. And it was freezing, man. It was freezing in that pool so I just put the floaties on Audrey and just threw her in there. I wasn't going in. And she swam and her lips were blue but she wouldn't get out of the water. I was like, "Are you cold? Are you ready to go home?" And she was like, "No. This is the greatest thing in the world."

She swam forever, man. I mean, golly, it was just forever. After that we went into the little family locker rooms and showered and got dressed. And we went and ate at the little café there. You know, it was one of those days where there was all this clarity in my mind and my heart and I just kept being overwhelmed at how good everything was. Like, everything from sitting on the red chair in our house and watching the same Dora the Explorer for the 15th time, the one where she tries to get to the lost city, never mind. And how awesome it was to sit there with my daughter to how nice it was outside to... like, here's where I knew something was going on in me. Like, I ordered this turkey panini and I'm not even really sure what that was. It's a sandwich, alright?

But it's a seven dollar way to call it a sandwich and so I got this sandwich and I took a bite of it and I don't know, it tasted so good. It was turkey on bread. I mean, nothing fancy, nothing, it was just a turkey sandwich. And I knew something was going on in me when I took a bite of that and it just tasted amazing. And so we left there after spending a couple of hours and got in the car and we drove home. And we get home and I put Audrey down for a nap and she goes. I mean, normally we have to drug her, and so without this she just climbed into bed and went to sleep. And little Reed went down and Lauren had shower today and one of her friends, in fact most of her friends are pregnant and so she did that shower deal. And she had to run and buy some flowers and get some things like that. So she left me with the kids and both the kids were sound asleep and I was just looking over my sermon notes for today.

At 2:30 my telephone rang and some good friends of ours from California, he's a test pilot for the Air Force, she called us... I actually introduced them to you last year. I don't know if you'll remember or not but they have an eight year old daughter named Isabel and we brought her up on stage and we laid hands on her and prayed for her because she has lymphoma. And Tess was calling me yesterday because she's gone through all her chemo and all her radiation and they scanned her and she's not clean. And I want to confess that I am so ready for this to be over, this weekend to be over for me. And so they just sent her home and they don't have anything else they can do. I thought after I got that call that man, isn't this the human experience. That in one moment everything can be so beautiful and so right and then one phone call. One conversation, one letter, and then all of a sudden there is all this weight. Like, all of a sudden the soul gets reacquainted with the gravity of a fallen world. Do you know what I mean by gravity? Like, all of a sudden your soul can't breathe.

And so this is the way I've felt for the last 48 hours. And like, every time my daughter gets anywhere near me I just want to... she's probably going, "What the freak is wrong with my daddy? He won't leave me alone." I mean if she's anywhere near me I'm like kissing her like crazy. "No, sit with me." And I know she's like, "Good Lord, get off me. What has gone wrong with my dad?" But any time she's just anywhere around me I just feel overwhelmed. And I want to be honest, I am frustrated because I know that in an instant if He wanted to He could heal her and for some reason He's not. And I'm talking about God and I'm angry about it. And listen, I know theology. You want to sit down and talk theology with me? I can sit down with you for hours and talk about how all things work together for the good. But right now in this moment, this moment that I'm in, I can't figure out how the life of an eight year old girl has anything to do with where God's doing for His kingdom.

And then...I have all the weight of being a thinker. Sometimes I wish I wasn't a thinker. Sometimes I wish I just hammered crap and then wanted to go home and drink a beer and watch the game. You know? "Oh what are you doing tonight?" "I'm drinking a beer and watching the game. I might drink six or seven of them." And that was all that ever happened in my mind. Like if you could ever read my mind you'd just see "mmm,mm, beer." You know? I wish that was my mind but that's not how I work and I always have all these things that are flying through my head and on top of me being so frustrated at what God's doing or rather what He's not doing, then on top of that I'm wondering how He relates to me in this moment.

Like, does He ever lose patience at how slow I am to trust Him. Like, I don't know about you but I fall into the same sin over and over and over and over again. Like, does He ever just go, "Gah, when are you going to figure this thing out?" And so this is the tear in my own soul in such who I am where in one breathe I'm frustrated with God but yet in another breathe I still want Him to like me. You know? I'm like, "Why are you...love me." You know I'm just torn inside. So it's been a rough 48hours for me to be honest. And then to preach what I'm preaching this morning. You know, today hasn't helped. So I got to thinking and wrestling with all this stuff, you know, real stuff. And I started thinking about the life of Jesus and how He lived and what He lived through. I want you to take a walk with me through the life of Jesus because I think you'll look around while we take the walk. Maybe our struggles, maybe our short comings, maybe our struggle with sin, maybe our lack of faith sometimes, maybe we'll see those things in a new perspective. At least that's my hope. So Matthew chapter 4 starting in verse 1.

"Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the Devil. And after He had fasted for 40 days and 40 nights He then became hungry and the Tempter came and said to Him, 'If you are the Son of God, command these stones become bread.' But He answered and said, 'It is written, 'Man should not live on bread alone but on every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God.'" Then the Devil took Him into a holy city and had Him stand on the pinnacle of the temple and said to Him, 'If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down for it is written, 'He will command His angels concerning you and on His hands they will bear you up so that you will not strike your foot against a stone.'" And Jesus said to Him, 'On the other hand it is written, 'You shall not put the Lord your God to the test.'" Again the Devil took Him to a very high mountain and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world in their glory. Then he said to Him, 'All these things I will give you if you fall down and worship me.'

But Jesus answered and said to Him, 'Go Satan, for it is written, 'You shall worship the Lord your God and serve Him only.'"' Have you ever had this moment where for whatever reason God kind of stirs the pot of your soul and all of a sudden you just want to know Him. Like, maybe you come into a service like this. Or maybe somebody just says something to you in conversation and all of a sudden you're going, "Ok, I want to know Him. I want to know Him and I want to experience Him and I want to walk with Him." And so you start setting up all the things necessary for that to happen. So you get your Bible and you grab that journal you started in '97 but only put one entry in, or one of the journals you started in '97 but you only put one entry in. And you lay that down and maybe light a vanilla candle and play

the Braveheart soundtrack. Just whatever you can to kind of get contemplative and to slow the soul down. And you do all that you know to get yourself in that place where you can experience Him and kind of sync up with Him and get back into the groove with Him.

And so the candle's lit and the music's in the background and the Scriptures are open and the pen's sitting on your journal. And in that moment when all you wanted was to sync up with Him, when all you wanted was to sit in His lap, when all you wanted was to hear from Him, when all you wanted was to get back to that place where you were so near to Him and so intertwined into who He was. And although everything's in place, the only voice you hear is your own darkness or maybe the Devil himself. Or maybe worse than that, nothing. You hear nothing.

Like, if you had this moment where you just wanted to know Him so bad but it seemed like every time you try to get near to Him, just the voice of what's dark in you got louder and louder. Your own lust, your own pride, your own fear. It seems like the gravity of knowing God, the weight of trying to sync up with Him, it seems like Jesus walked in some of that. Jesus heads to the wilderness and goes, "Ok, I'm about to start my ministry. I want to sync up with myself here. I want to sync up with God the Father. I want to sync up and then I want to start ministering." And then He gets out there and who is it that keeps talking? It seems like the gravity of trying to find God, it seems like He lived through it. Or like, I've always been intrigued with the fact that on Monday or actually Sunday evening Jesus in Matthew 21 rides into town and the town blows up. They're ripping off these palm leaves, and their saying "Hossanah, you're the king, you're the king, we love you." They're whipping out their Torah scrolls and getting Him to autograph it, and I mean, the place is just going mad for Jesus. I mean, their just going crazy. And then on Monday, this entire crowd followed Him. And then on Tuesday this entire crowd follows Him. And then on Wednesday this entire crowd follows Him. And then on Wednesday evening they've all followed Him. And then on Thursday they've all followed Him.

And this whole time they're talking about how great He is. This whole time they're going, "Man, you should be our king, you should conquer the Romans on Thursday or something. And then we'll follow you because you're the one, you're the King, you're the Messiah. You are amazing." And then on Thursday night He gets arrested and they just beat Him senseless. And then they stand His broken, bloodied body in front of that same crowd and now they want Him to die. And the same crowd that had been following Him around talking about how great He was is now screaming in a rage, "Crucify Him." With their autographed copy of the Torah in their back pocket.

Have you ever been hated. Like, have you ever unjustly been hated? Maybe it's because it's the color of your skin, or because the way you look, or maybe you have know clue why but there's this group of people, there's this person, there's this part of the family that just hates you. The funny thing about standing on a stage in front of people is it's this really romantic idea. I tell guys all the time who want to stand up here and preach that be prepared for this one because you'll have a lot of friends and you have some people who hate you for nothing, man. Or you'll make some random comment about how beer's not sin but light beer is. And then for six months, you know, every email is....I probably just fired that one back up again. I probably should have let that go. Probably should have let that one go. I wonder what Jesus must have thought as He stood there and the very people that He came to love and heal cry out for His own brutal death. I wonder what goes on in the soul in those moments. Like, the gravity of being hated, the weight of it, seems like Jesus is walking in some of that.

Or how about this, flip over to Luke 22. Luke 22 starting in verse 47. "And while He was still speaking, behold, a crowd came and the one called Judas, one of the twelve..." Now if you're not church people and you haven't, I mean you haven't been in church for a long time or this is your first time here, just a couple of things: I don't normally cry like a baby is one, and two is that Jesus, He runs with this crew of about 120, but then inside that 120 He has this other crew of 12 that He's really really tight with, and then inside that group of 12 He has this other group of 3, like, this really inner, inner circle that

He's really, really tight with. And this guy that we're reading about, Judas, he's one of the 12, like, he's in the inner circle with Jesus. He's one of the closer ones to Him. Now look what happens. "...one of the twelve was preceding them and he approached Jesus to kiss Him. But Jesus said to him, 'Judas are you betraying me with a kiss?'" Judas, he had been there since day one.

Like, he had saw Talatha get raised from the dead. He saw Jesus calm the seas. He saw the poor cared for. He saw the feeding of the 5,000. He heard the kingdom of God preached. And then in the middle of one night he sails Jesus down the river for 30 pieces of silver. And then, he doesn't just punk Him out and then disappear, but he literally walks up to Him and kisses Him to betray Him. And you hear it in Jesus' voice here. He's going, "You're going to betray me with a kiss? You're one of my boys. You're one of my twelve. Judas you're going to..." Have you ever been betrayed? Like the kind of betrayal that puts you in a fog, man. Like, the kind of betrayal that you're like, "no, no, no there's got to be... not this person...not this person, not this group. I love them, I let them in. I don't trust anybody and I trusted them." Like, have you ever been betrayed that badly. Like, the one person, like, if you had to swear there was this one person who would never hurt you, never betray you, never abuse you. And it turns out to be them. It seems like the gravity of betrayal, it seems like Jesus walks in it.

Or how about this, have you ever been tired? I mean the kind of tired that finally kills your pride. Especially men, and I can speak about men because I'm one of them, alright, I can't speak about women because I'm not. So I use the male reference because I know it. Guys, even if like we're working out together or something like that and one of us is getting really, really tired but the other two look like they're not, then you're just going to fight through it, man. It doesn't matter if everything in your body goes, "Shut her down." I mean, you're going to push through. You know, running next to your buddy and you look over and his eye fell out. And you're like, "Hey, you can stop." And they're like, "I'm all right, happens all the time." You know, you're like, "You can stop." I mean, have you ever been so tired that you finally don't care that you look weak? That's what I'm saying because, man, we've got this pride and we will say we're ok when we're not. And we will pretend that we're not exhausted when we are. I mean, have you ever been so tired that you just couldn't pretend anymore. Like, you were just done. In John chapter 4, the Scriptures tell us that Jesus was walking through Samaria and He just finally couldn't go anymore. And what makes it even stranger is the disciples seem to be ok. So Jesus says "I'm done" and He sits down and the rest of the disciples go into town and get some food and bring it back out to Him. It seems like the gravity and the weight of being tired was known by Jesus.

Or how about this one, flip over if you have your Scriptures to Matthew 26 starting in verse 36. "Then Jesus came with them to a place called Gethsemane and He said to His disciples..." that's the twelve "...sit here while I go over there and pray." Verse 37 is where we're going to find out about the three I was telling you about. "And He took with Him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee and He began to be grieved and distressed. And then He said to them, 'My soul is deeply grieved.'" Or if you're reading out of the NIV version it says that "my soul was overwhelmed." "My soul is overwhelmed to the point of death. Remain here and keep watch with me. And He went a little beyond them..." and what does He do? He walks away from them only a few feet and He falls on His face and prays. In my 31 years of life there have been two instances where sorrow and anger and frustration have collided in such a way that I just didn't know what to do. Like, it didn't matter how hard I cried it wouldn't come out and it didn't matter how much I cursed or who I cursed to it just seemed to fuel it. And I just wanted to hit something but there was nothing to hit. Have you ever gotten to that place where you just don't know what to do. Like, there's nothing left to do. You've screamed the curse words. You've waded through doubt. You've sobbed your eyes out. You've shaken your fist and you've just got nothing left. Because it seems like the gravity, it seems like the weight of being overwhelmed was known by Jesus.

Or, you don't have to turn here, but I'll do this last one and we'll get to Hebrews so we can tie this all together. The Scriptures tell us a good friend of Jesus, his name is Lazarus, and he got sick and he died. And so Jesus, a couple of days

later after he dies shows up in the village. And as soon as He shows up there everybody starts sobbing and wailing and mourning. And if you've never lost anyone, let me try to explain the roller coaster ride that it is. What ends up happening is that you go from mourning and sobbing to kind of into this fog. And then every time someone new shows up, every time a new family member, a new friend, someone else from your circle, shows up it all busts out again. So, there's this initial shock, and then you begin to sob with your family, but then your grandma shows up. So, then you've got to sob and cry all over again. Then, your best friend gets to the house, then you sob, then you finally level off and it feels like it will be alright. But then all of a sudden your sister gets in town and it's this 2 day, 48 hour roller coaster ride of sobbing into being numb, sobbing into being numb, sobbing into being numb. And so this village, they're kind of on this ride. And Jesus walks into the town and as soon as He gets there it just busts out again and everybody is mourning and sobbing. And Lazarus' sister, she comes up to Him and she goes, "Well, man, if you would have just been here. If you would have been here you could have stopped this." And it's this mess. And it's this sobbing, crying mess. And the Scriptures say that Jesus' spirit, that Jesus' spirit was deeply moved by this. That somewhere in the deepest part of Jesus, He resonated with the sorrow and the pain that was going on. And so the Scriptures say that Jesus sits down and He weeps, that He enters in to all this sorrow and loss and He sobs. It seems like the gravity of loss, it seems like Jesus walked in it.

Ok, one more text. Go over to Hebrews chapter 2, Hebrews chapter 2. In Hebrews chapter 2 there are four reasons why Jesus came as a man. That's actually what we're going to preach this weekend until I started wrestling with some of this stuff. But I just want you to see one thing. One of the reasons He came as a man because this is what I'm hoping changes how we see things, ok?

In Hebrews chapter 2 starting in verse 16. I want you to get there, I want you to get this. "For assuredly He does not give help to angels but He gives help to the descendants of Abraham." So let me clarify here. You and I, by being believers in Christ, are a part of the covenant made in Genesis chapter 12 with Abraham that he would be the father of a nation that would bless the world. And we know this out of Romans 11 that you and I are a part of this children of Abraham. So Jesus doesn't help angels, but He helps you and I. Look at verse 17. "Therefore, He had to be made like His brethren..." Who are His brethren? You and me. The Scriptures call Jesus the firstborn of many brothers. "He had to be made like His brethren..." in what? "...all things." In every way. Why? "...so that He might become a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God to make propitiation for the sins of the people. For since He Himself was tempted, since He himself has suffered, He is able to come to the aid of those who are tempted."

Now follow me here because there are some things looking at the life of Christ that don't add up. Like, if you look at His life He lived really hard, man. I mean, He lived really hard. I mean, He's betrayed, He's hated. He feels alone at times. He is...I mean, we've gone through it. He lives this very difficult life. And then it's consummated in this brutal death. And it doesn't add up because He could've been born into the manger, lived an easy life, died on the cross and it's done. And it's done. So why? Why does He have to be betrayed? Why does He have to taste loss? Why does He have to feel hate? Why does He have to walk in that? Why does He have to be tempted? Hebrews 2 says that He endured those things so that when my telephone rang on Friday, and what was going so well started to go so bad, that He could say, "I know, I know."

And as my heart grew frustrated He could go, "I know." And as I'm lost and wonder about where He is and what He's doing here, He's not going, "Oh, come on Chandler, haven't I shown you enough? Haven't I done enough for you to trust me on the this one?" No, He just sits there and goes, "I know, I know, I know. I know this stings and I know it doesn't make any sense. I know and I remember. I lost. I lost, ok?" So I know we have some choices about the kinds of people we are and we some choices about the kind of people we're becoming. And I know that there's this real danger when the gravity of life pushes on us to become bitter and become angry, and become frustrated deep in our soul. And I know the danger's there because it happens all over Scripture. Like, in the book of Ruth there's this woman named Naomi and her

husband dies and then right after her husband dies her two sons die. Then Ruth tries to call her Naomi and she goes, "Don't call me Naomi anymore. Don't call me Naomi, that's not my name. My name is Mara." Mara is the Hebrew word for bitter. The gravity pressed on her that this weight of the fallen world pressed on her. And she let it overcome her and she became bitter and she became angry. And the loss, the hole, the struggle, it became all there was and she became ignorant of the beauty still left.

In Job, if there is a worse day in the history of the world than what Job endures, I've never read it. In Job he says, "Ok, you give, you take away. Blessed be your name." But Job's wife, she snaps, and she goes, "Are you still holding on to your integrity? Curse God and die, you fool." See she let all the pain and all the bitterness and all the frustration eat away at her until she's got nothing left. So she's just in a rage railing against who? Yea. Ok, so hear me. I've had a tough two days. Some of you are sitting in here going, "Man, I've had a tough year, man." And I'm going, "I've had a tough 48 hours."

And you're going, "Man, I can't remember the last time I had a Friday morning like you just did where I saw all the simple beauties." And some of you, you've been betrayed so bad. Some of you feel lost tonight, some of you feel so tired. Maybe you're overwhelmed. Some of you feel lost tonight. Well, I've got no good religious answers for because even the theology I know, for whatever reason, is not a warm blanket for my soul right now. But hear me say this: He knows and He's there. Not to say, "Oh, when are you going to figure this out?" Not to go, "When are you going to have enough faith?" Not to even throw the "I created the whole universe into being" thing in your face. Just to sit there and say, "I know, I know."

So I've got some choices to make right now about what kind of guy I want to be and what kind of person I want to become because it looks like if God doesn't make a major miracle then I'm going to make a flight out to Cali. and do a funeral for an eight year old. And I don't see, I don't know that I have enough emotional capital to pull it off. So this for me, this weekend, this is cathartic because I'm not trying just to throw my junk at you and just pretend for you and go, "Hey, man, I'm having tough time with this." Because I don't want, I do not want to be Mara. So I've got no cute answers, got no bracelets, got no t-shirts, I'm just resting in the fact that Jesus lived really hard so He could sit on the couch with me. So I don't know where you are. Some of you are like, "I'm doing good, dude. You're bringing me down. I felt great till I came in here." You're like, "That Friday morning you were describing, I was just living it until I came here. and now..." So here's what we'll do tonight. I'm just going to pray for us and we'll be dismissed. But here's what I'm going to ask of you.

Like, some of you, some of you right now, right now for the first time in a while you're aware of it right now, that He's here, that He knows whatever awesome reason of God...right now in this moment you know it, you feel it and He's here, and you know it. Maybe we don't rush out of here, maybe we stay in here for a while. Maybe we sit here and just for a while, maybe to get some strength just to make it to tomorrow just to survive. We just stay in here for a bit and we just sit in the fact and in this moment where we know that He knows that we sit here in this moment that we know that He's here and we just sit here and we take a big drink of that. And if you're great, that's awesome. Get out of here. But here's the thing I want, I want you to leave really, really quietly tonight. And even, I don't even want yapping in the foyer. Like, it's a beautiful night outside. Save the conversation and save the things you want to talk about. Meet with friends outside, beautiful night. Look at the stars, talk how good life is right now. But let's leave this place for those of us who just need to sit here and know that He's here and that He knows. So I've got some choices to make because of the kind of man I want to be and the kind of man I want to become. And so do you, whether it's loss, whether it's hate, whether it's being overwhelmed. He's there, He knows. Let's pray. Maybe tonight you need to come up to the altar, you can do that. There's nothing magical about this carpet up here, it's just a way to kind of say, "Ok, I lay this at your feet."

Father, I thank you for these men and women and I thank you even for the weight and the sorrow that sometimes falls in life. And I pray for my brothers and sisters here who might feel so alone in their loss or so alone in their sin or so alone in

their own struggles that you have not abandoned us nor are you sitting over us waiting for us to get it right. And I thank you that the hurt that I feel in my heart right now and the confusion that I feel in my heart right now is felt by you. And I don't know why that helps me, but it does. And so I ask for strength for tonight. I ask that you get me through tonight and that tomorrow morning there would be new mercies and there'd be new strength to get through tomorrow. And I pray for Isabel right now, I just pray that you'd heal here. And I pray for so many in this room that are hurting tonight. I pray that you'd heal. Or at least that you'd make us aware that you're here and that you know. I believe in your love and I believe in your grace and I believe in your goodness. And it's because I believe in those things that I pray tonight and ask you to be that for my friends in this room tonight. And it's because I don't want to be Mara I want to be Naomi that I pray these things tonight. Amen.

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