



Going Deeper - Weekly Sermon Discussion Guide

Running in to Rest - 5/23/2021

"He makes me lie down in green pastures" Psalm 23:2

On Sunday, Senior Pastors Bill and Julie Briley briefly shared the journey of the past 19 years of their marriage and how it has led them to the Sabbatical they will begin on June 7. As they spoke it became evident that their narrative is a model for our lives and the message is not just for them but for everyone in our church.

From the beginning of their marriage, Bill and Julie found the story of Caleb and Joshua entering the promised land as a foundation for their life together, providing direction for the trajectory of their marriage. Numbers 13-15 tells of the 12 men God sent into Canaan to explore the land He was giving the Israelites. Their reconnaissance mission was to assess the land and its produce, the people and their towns, and bring back a report on what they found. For 40 days they walked incognito from the south to the north and back again and brought back a sampling of some of the produce growing there.

On their return, ten of the spies reported that they should turn around and head back to Egypt because they couldn't possibly take possession of the land. Of the twelve, two spoke up and said, "We should go, we can certainly do this." Just as Caleb and Joshua knew, so have Bill and Julie known that if they follow the Lord wholeheartedly and stand firm in their faith and hope there will be nothing to fear. Every battle belongs to God and every victory is his. He will always be the one doing the fighting.

With this foundational understanding, Bill and Julie have always leaned in, boldly taken on everything before them, and always moved toward the mountain peaks. Bill jokingly said they could be described by hashtag "I-do-hard-things." Their joyful, energetic, can-do spirit has been inspiring and contagious. But God's way is not for us to drive ourselves endlessly and always run on ahead. God is also Lord of the Sabbath and he makes us lie down in green pastures to restore our souls. Julie wisely stated, "Without rest there is no revival because as we push we begin to rely on our own human effort."

When we walk with God and step out in faith and obedience, his mission is accomplished by his plan and his effort. When we get ahead of him and push on past him, we find that our efforts cannot accomplish his work and the Holy Spirit is rendered helpless. Pastors Bill and Julie continue to say, "We should go, we can certainly do this," and for this season God is leading them to green pastures and still waters. They will learn to discern the difference between leaning into the work of the Holy Spirit as opposed to pushing and relying on their own human effort. When this lesson is learned, there will be no holding back the power of the Holy Spirit and the revival he longs for because they will model this discernment for us and help us also follow the Lord wholeheartedly with faith and hope.

So Consider:

1. We stand before the promise of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit - within which group do you see yourself: the ten who say we can't or the two who say we can? Are you comfortable within the group you find yourself?
2. In your passion and exuberance, do you ever find that you have pushed past God and are relying on your own human effort? What does this look like in your life?
3. Do you follow the Lord wholeheartedly and stand firm in faith, hope, and obedience? How is God leading you and what does your obedience look like?

Take Action: While Pastors Bill and Julie are gone, we can support them in three ways: 1) Pray for them each day. 2) Pray for and offer support to Pastors Linda, Justin, and Dylan as they continue to lead. 3) Anticipate revival and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, leaning in and relying on the power of God and not your own effort.

May the grace and peace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you. ~Tess