

Sabbath Recycling

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In anticipation of our Sabbath time I have been giving us some tools to prepare us and to guide us during our July Sabbath. The first tool for your Sabbath “toolbox” is the idea of rhythm. I want us to increase our awareness of the different rhythms in our lives especially the rhythms which suck the life out of us, seek out the Rhythm of Life which restores us and do our best to match the Rhythm of Life. The second tool in our Sabbath “toolbox” is obedience. We know the Rhythm of Life. It corresponds with the foundational and overarching structure of life which is love. We know this but we do not always listen and obey. Our hearts, our minds, our bodies, our families, our planet groan in anticipation of us listening and obeying that which is most life giving but we resist. Resist the social structures that demand a certain pace and obey the Rhythm of Life which gives us the most freedom.

Today I give us the final tool. The final tool to help us get the most out of our Sabbath is the idea of recycling our spirits.

The process of re-cycling is to deconstruct the material, reconstruct the material, and then reuse the material. I think this can be a metaphor for "re-cycling" our spirits. I encourage us to think and pray on this process and this question, ***“What is there about our hearts, minds, souls that we need to deconstruct, reconstruct, and then reuse for a greater good?”***

Central to this idea is one of my favorite stories from our tradition.

Jesus Reinstates Peter

¹⁵When they had finished eating, Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Simon son of John, do you truly love me more than these?"

"Yes, Lord," he said, "you know that I love you."

Jesus said, "Feed my lambs."

¹⁶Again Jesus said, "Simon son of John, do you truly love me?"

He answered, "Yes, Lord, you know that I love you."

Jesus said, "Take care of my sheep."

¹⁷ The third time he said to him, "Simon son of John, do you love me?"

Peter was hurt because Jesus asked him the third time, "Do you love me?" He said, "Lord, you know all things; you know that I love you."

Jesus said, "Feed my sheep." ¹⁸ I tell you the truth, when you were younger you dressed yourself and went where you wanted; but when you are old you will stretch out your hands, and someone else will dress you and lead you where you do not want to go."

¹⁹Jesus said this to indicate the kind of death by which Peter would glorify God. Then he said to him, "Follow me!"

There are many things in this story but I will focus only on the process of re-cycling of Peter's spirit. In this story is the process of de-construction, re-construction, and reuse of Peter's spirit.

Before Jesus was killed by the powers of the state and institutionalized religion Jesus suffered the abandonment and betrayal of friends. Peter's denial was a specific incident of this abandonment. With Peter's denial Peter had built a wall of guilt, shame, and resentment between them. Peter denied knowing Jesus three times. Peter denied loving Jesus three times.

Have you ever been at a party or around a group of people and your best friend or your partner all of a sudden started treating you differently. Your friend or partner started to treat you with less respect and esteem than before because other people were around. That says a lot more about them than it does about you but it still hurts. Have you ever been the one who did this to your friend or partner? As you grow in awareness of what you have done you grow in shame, hurt, and resentment. This is the emotional and spiritual dynamic (multiplied by 100) that Jesus is trying to heal. To tear down the wall, to repair the breach, means to **de-construct** the spirit of fear and shame between them.

The three time question and answer exchange of, "Do you love me? – "Yes, you know I love you!" Is the undoing of three time denial of person and love; **the deconstruction**.

Flip over the same coin and we also see that this question and answer cycle provided the restoration of the relationship; **the reconstruction** of Peter's spirit. The restoration of the relationship was dependent on Peter's forgiveness of himself and Jesus' provision of the opportunity for such forgiveness. This question and answer process clears out the wounded spirit like a bulldozer clears the ground of an old shack to make room for a new house. Deconstruction and reconstruction.

So with healing, forgiveness and restoration of the relationship every one can put the past behind them, embrace each other and move on. Move on to what?

When Daniel was in 1st grade he had a strong sense of justice. One day someone was picking on his friend, Becca. Daniel defended her and ended up punching the guy. We asked him what happened next. He said, "Guys are like this; punch each other, shake hands, and get a beer. Of course we are too young for beer so we went to the drinking fountain."

So with healing, forgiveness and restoration of the relationship every one can put the past behind them, embrace each other and move on. Move on to what? Move on to a greater use; a greater work.

The restoration of the relationship was key to the reuse for a greater work “Feed my sheep!” However, there is another dynamic which adds to the reconstruction, deconstruction and reuse process. Peter is not just being used so as to be reused. This is not just a complex manipulation of Peter. It is the call to a greater work, such faith and trust in Peter involved in this call, that is also key to the recycling of Peter’s spirit.

MY PERSONAL EXPERIENCE WITH THIS STORY AND MY TIME AT MURRY STATE UNIVERSITY.

The Rhythm of Life beats for us and gives us opportunity after opportunity to re-cycle our spirits. The re-cycling of our spirits is the path to the reuse of ourselves for a greater work. It is the beginning of re-thinking our vocation in the world.

Today we pass out cards with the well known recycling symbol on them. The idea is for us to take the card with us over our July Sabbath and reflect on what it means to intentionally let our Sabbath time be a time for re-cycling our spirits. The process of re-cycling is deconstruct the material, reconstruct the material, and then reuse the material. I think this can be a metaphor for "re-cycling" our spirits. ***What is there about our hearts, minds, souls that we need to deconstruct, reconstruct, and then reuse for a greater good?***

During the weeks of our return in August we will collect the cards and some people will share their stories about the re-cycling of their spirits.
Words for Mission