



Sunday, September 25, 2022
Sabbatical Meeting Notes

- I. First thing! We are super thankful for this gift. We know it was a sacrifice you made for us and we are very thankful for it.
 - I. I continue to feel very thankful for what I am doing and where I am doing it.
 - II. It is hard to know just how you feel about something without taking a break from it.
 - III. This sort of break was really good.

- II. However, perhaps it's more accurate to say it is more of an investment than a gift!
 - I. If it was just pure rest and away time, then maybe it would be merely a gift. It would still be a great one, but it would not be what sabbatical is.
 - II. What I mean this sort of activity is an investment in our future. The Wheeler's, but also Redeemer.
 - I. Sabbaticals encourage pastoral health and so prevent pastoral burnout (more below)
 - II. Sabbaticals strengthen marriages (a healthy marriage is necessary for a healthy ministry; Sabbaticals give time for focused time together)
 - III. Sabbaticals help the congregation be healthier: less dependence on one person, increase use of gifts within the body, a way to show special support to your pastor that you don't often have
 - I. Also it helps us see that the type of Christianity we practice often— the always hustling and bustling kind— may not be the best way.
 - II. I'm hoping we will be a congregation that rests in Christ more often because of this; a congregation who is more aware of the fact that we are dependent upon Christ and his work more than our own efforts.
 - III. It is an act of faith, this whole process, and I hope that helps us.

- III. How does it encourage pastoral health and prevent pastoral burnout?
 - I. We have to trust others to do our job. First action. And a difficult one for me, but so helpful.
 - II. We have to plan to rest. It forces us to look at ourselves and our family and really make provision for what we want. Again, a difficult task for me, but so helpful.
 - III. We have the opportunity to be still. Because of your provision, I was able to spend a great deal of time in stillness before God and with my family. With no agenda or pressing demand, my soul could really breath.
 - IV. When all the problems and challenges are removed, I was able to see how much of the stress of my life is self-induced!
 - I. This was a painful reality, but, again, so good.
 - II. You can see how much of your stress is because of pressure you put on yourself.
 - V. I am increasingly aware of my own fears and deeper desires. I was able to spend a good deal of time with these this summer.
 - I. Jesus has met me in these places: through Rachel, through my counselor, through extended time in the mountains and at the beach, through my family.
 - VI. Sabbatical gave me time to cultivate healthy patterns
 - I. Daily prayer; one I am working on but seeing really good progress
 - II. Weekly Sabbath rhythm

- III. Monthly Day of Prayer
- IV. Yearly study leave
- V. Yearly vacation
- VI. I know I am both too slow and too hasty in my ministry!
- VII. Sabbath gave me a season to acknowledge the truth of my limits and vulnerability.
 - I. We are all vulnerable and NONE of us like to think about that. But it is so important we are aware of this truth about ourselves. Then we can be aware of how much energy we spend protecting ourselves.
 - II. As I meditated upon this idea, I was reminded of Paul's words in 1 Corinthians 2:2-5
 - I. [2] For I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and him crucified. [3] And I was with you in weakness and in fear and much trembling, [4] and my speech and my message were not in plausible words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, [5] so that your faith might not rest in the wisdom of men but in the power of God.
 - II. Who wants a weak, fearful, trembling pastor? Who wants to BE a weak, fearful, trembling pastor? And yet, it is in our weakness we begin to see the power of God!
 - III. Since my return, God has been showing me how this hard thing is actually the best part of sabbatical. That is they were the parts I needed the most. I really did.
 - IV. I am going to continue to speak to you about our struggles. I hope it helps you understand your own struggles better.
- VIII. Many of you have asked how Rachel is.
 - I. She is taking this time to do some extended work on a variety of things. And it is going really, really well.
 - II. One way to think about this season for her is that it's like the seminary she could never do before. With 4 kids at home when I went to school there was no way she could.... Instead of Greek and Preaching classes she is seeing a counselor frequently, reading and listening to a ton of good content, praying and processing with God and others.
 - I. This is a time for her to really cultivate her gifts and discern how the Lord is calling her to use them.
- IV. WHAT'S NEXT FOR REDEEMER?
 - I. Worship is going to continue to shape us and guide us...
 - II. The community is going to continue to shape us and guide us...
 - III. I invite you to dive in deeper, cling more tightly to Jesus and to one another. Come to church, don't miss, make it a priority. And see all the ways you can cultivate community. Join a small group. Join a Bible study. Start a Bible study.
 - IV. I'm not sure what is next, but I'm asking and I'm ready for whatever the Lord calls us to.

For the Glory of God,

Rev. Benjamin Wheeler