If you come around to the Shanks house, which is my house, on a Monday night, you might find something like this happening. It's affectionately known as the House of Pain. Thanks, Trinity.

It's a Monday night. It's fun down in the garage.

What's really good about it is, there are men from teenagers all the way through to 50s, and every generation, every decade in between, who are hanging out and spending time together, but also doing some exercise.

That particular type of exercise is like a circuit class, where there was circuit classes, circuit training, where there were 11 stations, and no matter how much I tell people, be careful.

I think when we did that about 5 or 6 weeks in a row, there was always someone who ended up on the floor, lightheaded, needing me to go and open up the fridge and get some frosty fruits or chewy snakes to get some sugar into them.

Now, when you're doing something like that, you guys have done different types of exercise. There's technique in doing the training. You need to learn how to do things, or you could injure yourself.

There's also self-awareness if you're running out of puff. You need to have some idea of what's going on in your heart rate, don't you? Anyone found that in exercise?

I mean, you end up hurting yourself if you don't. There's lots of things going on. If you got serious, your nutrition is going to affect how you can train, your sleep is going to affect how you can train.

The time that you take between sets of exercise, the rest as it's called, is really important because without it, things go bad. As I said, I always say, pace yourself.

I think the last time we did that, someone who is in this building, ended up out on the driveway with their head between their legs, fighting off that urge. But it's all fun. I can't help but think that that is a picture of our spiritual lives.

Anyone, believe that. I think it actually is, because if you run your life under the guidance of the wrong coach, you can get in trouble. You end up getting yourself sick.

So tonight, it's a different type of message. It's not the sort of message I'm preaching for my old preaching lecturer on Expository Preaching 101. But it's all true, and it's coming out of a very important text.

So tell me later if I took too many liberties. But I'm asking the question, who is setting the rhythm of your life? Who is setting the rhythm, the cadence of rest, work, rest, work?

jesus says in Matthew 11, this well-known verse we've looked at many times in the last couple of months. Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest.

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. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light. jesus is saying, following me is about learning the easy yoke rhythms of the way.

The easy yoke rhythms of the way. We're in the seventh message in our series, which you've heard all this before if you're part of our church, but it's called Wayform, spiritual formation in the way of the Master.

And we're actually looking at the easy yoke rhythms of the way. That's really what this whole series is about. And it's from this passage, the idea of the yoke.

And as you know, if you've been at church, it's the two oxen, it's the one older oxen and the big wooden yoke around the two necks.

And jesus is saying to a disciple, like you and me potentially, come this life that's going to bring on you all sorts of demands, I'm going to show you how to live God's way and we'll pull the plow at just the right speed and we won't get off track.

And you're going to have to keep up with me or it's not going to work. I'm going to show you the cadence, the rhythm, the direction so that you don't run out of puff.

It's easy if you stay with me, hard if you don't, if you fight, but it's this weird idea of hard work that's easy. The easy yoke rhythms of the way.

I want us to look at four words, these key words that are helpful to consider and contemplate about the easy yoke and they are unhurry, love, rest and work. Unhurry, love, rest, work. So let's start with unhurry.

Here's a quick test for a bit of fun. All you have to do is when you have a yes, just count your fingers. So don't worry about no's.

Don't think too, just blink it. Knock, I'm glad it will blink it. Are you often in a hurry rush, rushing from one thing to the next?

Thumb, finger, if it's a yes. During a typical day, do you work with intensity on something that seems urgent? Do you tend to do two or three things at once to be more efficient?

Are you productive, busy or active almost all the time? Do you regularly rely on caffeine to feel energetic and focused? If you're not working on something, do you rely on stimulation from activity, entertainment or noise?

When you are resting, do you feel fidgety, pace, drum your fingers, tap your feet or chew fast? If you're idle, do you feel guilty or restless? When you're waiting, are you usually uncomfortably impatient?

When you go to bed at night, do you typically think about all the things that you didn't get done and need to get done? When you go on holidays, do you feel empty, bored or depressed? You got enough fingers?

Do you often have physical stress symptoms like gastric distress, rapid heartbeat, headaches, muscle pain, teeth grinding at night and sleep problems? My son Josiah is here to make scripts out. That's a joke.

I'm not a doctor. I can't prescribe anything if you were to have more than four of these as yeses. Because if you did, cardiologists, Maya Friedman and Ray Rosenman have coined a phrase, hurry sickness, and you may have it.

I don't know. I can't diagnose that. But the idea of being in a hurry all the time is the vibe of life in Australia.

Is that fair to say? Hurry syndrome, hurry sickness is probably the spirit of the age. There's not enough time to get everything done.

jesus said, come to me all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. sometimes we can think, you know, it's only a modern day problem, hurrying around and the challenge of not resting enough.

I think it's probably in the first century. There's just always things to be done. sometimes there's a whip on your back if you're a slave in the first century, that's for sure.

It's certainly alive and well in the 21st century, isn't it? This problem of hurry. No matter how much our phones help us.

I read recently in the McCrindle Report, which is a pretty reputable report, that Gen Z, which is the generation coming through just into adulthood, the Zoomers, they are doing really well. They're doing really well.

I can look around and see some of the Zoomers around the place. You are not drinking as much alcohol as your predecessors. Well done.

You're not having promiscuous sex, teenage sex outside of marriage as much, but you're the most stressed out generation they've ever looked at. It's interesting that the internet hasn't made things heaps easier.

It's elevated the anxiety in the latest generation coming through of adults.

Dallas Willard, the great thinker and writer, a hero of mine, a writer on spiritual formation, was once asked by well-known pastor John Ortberg, a pastor in San Francisco, he's finished up now there, but was there for years in a really good church.

John was the disciple of Dallas, and he was talking on the phone one day, and John Ortberg said, Dallas, I just need you to give me some advice on how can I do better at being a Christian? How do I get my life in the way that I want it to be?

And Dallas just went straight to the point and said, John, ruthlessly unhurry your life. And John was taking notes, and he said, you got that. Then what next?

And that's the point, isn't it? ruthlessly unhurry your life. Spiritual formation in the way of the Master involves unhurrying your life.

Anyone agree? Unhurry. It's the way of the easy yoke.

This is where it starts getting interesting to just think about some big concepts. jesus could have come down. He could do anything.

He could have just sort of appeared as like Adam and Eve. I mean, they probably were adult, weren't they? They could have just appeared.

Who is he? He's like Melchizedek. There are characters in the Bible that just appear.

They're sort of mysterious. He could have just appeared and said, I'm running a 10-day intensive. Come, come all who want to know how to live the Father's way.

I'm going to send you my spirit anyway. But it's not what happened. It wasn't a, you know, on the time.

It was three years and a live-in intense apprenticeship. Unhurried, unhurried, not a crash course. So how does your life look right now regarding hurry?

Is it sustainable? Are you finding that the cadence of work, rest, rest work is working for you? Do you have space in your week to have unhurried time in the presence of God?

Do you have space to have unhurried time with people that are significant to you? Or is it like, I just don't have unhurried time? It's a very seasonal thing, isn't it?

Has anyone found that? Like I think some people who have just retired are probably going, oh wow, I've got more time than ever. And then I talk to retired people and they go, unhurried, it's the busiest time of your life.

So it's not, it doesn't work out always the way you think it might. Years ago, we were looking at this sort of stuff about spiritual formation, Leanne and I, in our lives.

We were studying Romans and thinking about spiritual formation, and we decided to unplug our four kids out of the school system. And it wasn't a COVID school through Zoom. It was home school.

We had, our youngest was in second term of kindy, and our eldest was in year eight. And we talked to them about it, and we pulled them out. And we home schooled for 11 years.

And what we found was it takes a couple of months to get the school system out of your system. Now, we're not anti-school at all. We've got two of our family are teachers, three of our family are teachers, one's training to be a teacher.

So, not anti-school at all. But, Leanne and I found it to be a profound experience of unhurrying. At the church we were at, our kids grew up coming to church on Sunday night.

And a lot of other kids couldn't be there, because why? They had to get home to school the next day. Well, our rhythm was different.

It was set by a different coach, and they used to sleep in a bit more on Monday morning. And that's just our story, right? I'm not pushing it.

I'm not judging anybody at all. But have you ever done that? Have you ever spent a season of your life where you have intentionally unplugged from the hurry and seen what happened?

I know some of the young adults, at least one, has done that in recent times. And I applaud them for it. To unhurry.

Typically, in the lives that we live, it takes something a little bit radical to truly unhurry and see what the difference is. jesus says, all you who are weary and burdened come to me. I want to give you rest.

Unhurry, unhurry, unhurry. It's a word to think about. Second word I want to think about is love.

Love is an essential component to the easy yoke rhythms of the way. Have you noticed that love moves slowly? Love moves slowly.

1 John 4, 8 is that wonderful verse that says, God is love. And we know that jesus is God. And we know that love, 1 Corinthians 13, love is, what's the first word?

Patient. Love is patient. God is love.

God is patient, slow to anger, which means jesus is patient. And I would put it to you, not just in dealing with others, not just in sort of waiting in line, you know, he's a patient guy. He was patient in becoming the saviour of the world.

He lived every minute of the 33 years. Praise God. Like how amazing is jesus?

Every minute of the 33 years? He didn't start his public ministry until he's 30 years old. We're not told much about jesus' younger years.

In fact, hardly anything from birth to 30 years old. We're a lot about his birth, but there's that scene in the temple of 12 years old, but not much else. What was he doing for 30 years?

I've been a dad for 27 years today. I think I'm 52, so 27 years ago, 25. jesus was obscure for 30 years.

If you've lived a bit longer, you think of 30 year periods, it's like most of your life. It's a big chunk of time. He didn't have an orbital sander, he's a carpenter.

He's a carpenter. Now, carpenter builders can make great livings and live very well in today's society. I'm not sure it's really what you'd expect in Nazareth, as a carpenter, as a labourer.

It's a patient, a patient, slow job, isn't it? And this blows my mind. It absolutely, I was talking to Tim and Linda this morning.

It blows my mind. He is the one who spoke the universe into existence. At the power of his word, boom!

Let there be, and he's the logos. He's the creative utterance of God. And a friend walks past jesus in his shop, in his shed, and he's whittling a spoon.

And they go, hey, hey, jesus, hey, hey, how you doing? Morning. And they come back.

You're still working on that spoon? And he's just finished. Begsy knows all about it. Begsy's not here. I just finished. It's a magnificent spoon. Or he's working on a stool. He's fixing someone's stool. All day! Someone go like this. Is anyone with me? It is amazing. It's just, it's crazy. And you remember in The Temptation, Satan always wants him to stop and cut the corner. Satan comes and goes, you have to go through all this stuff. And jesus has learned the unhurried rhythms of the way. Love is slow. It endures and suffers long with people. It's not easily irritated or impulsive. Love is not in a hurry. The spiritual disciplines, they tend to take time. If you've ever had a go with some spiritual disciplines like solitude, you don't tend to go, okay, solitude, I'll give you one minute. Done. No, it takes time. Anyone tried fasting? You can't fast in three minutes. It doesn't work. You don't get hungry. You got to miss out on a meal, maybe miss out on another meal, and it's got to last the whole day. And the point of fasting is to go, yeah, gotcha, didn't I? God's like, yeah, things take time. Slow down. Slow down and learn from me, is what jesus says.

I found a, I read in a book about a Benedictine monk who created the first mechanical clock in the 11th century, I'm told. And I'm thinking, Evan's going to fact check me on this. He's going to fact check me, so I fact checked myself.

And it wasn't strong. It wasn't strong. I found 14th century, 15th, oh, I can't do it.

these young adults, they're on to you if you don't check your facts. But let's just imagine that there was a monk, and I think it's, it could be 50-50, that a monk created the first mechanical clock.

But the cool thing is, it was created to remind the monks when to pray, not to just keep working. What a classic turnaround of the whip of the clock, the tyranny of time, created that we might rest.

How much of genuine agape love is only experienced or shared in an unhurried space? What do you reckon? I think a lot of it.

Let me just ask you, does anyone enjoy when you're talking to someone and they're just looking at their clock? I mean, I can be a waffle, but when they start looking one minute in, I'm like, no, that's your brokenness. That's not me.

Well, I'm only, you've only been one minute. Give me time, give me two. I don't think people enjoy it.

I don't think people enjoy talking and they're just looking through you, going, yeah, come on, get the wrong way. What does it make you feel? less than, doesn't it?

But when someone gives you presence, attention, it's like, wow, I feel loved. And that is so much part of the Easy Oak Rhythms of the Way. It's a rhythm of unhurried love.

So do you love God slowly? Do you allow God to love you slowly? This is what we're talking about with SUP Salt Scripture Sunday, our rhythms of C23.

We've talked about 75 weeks. We're about six weeks through. And these are all love commitments.

SUP, to stop and love God with time and let him love you. To be the salt of the earth. You got to love people which is inconvenient.

It's like the Samaritan. Oh, I don't have any time to be a good Samaritan to you. To be salty.

No, we're committing to having that time. So love is going to be unhurried. Scripture.

Most people that don't read scripture, they don't have time. Can't be bothered because they just can't fit it in. But we're saying that we're going to try to because it's where we find the love of God for us in scripture.

And Sunday, we come on a Sunday to say, God, we love you and experience His love for us. And also to love one another. Amen.

So these are all rhythms of the way that we're trying to build into what we do. When scripture says God demonstrates His love for us in this, Romans 5, 8, while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Christ died for the ungodly.

That demonstration took 33 years and a couple of thousand years of prophetic build up. God demonstrates His love for us in this, while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. That demonstration was patient.

And then jesus died. What sort of death? A slow agonizing death.

I would put it to you that love is something that moves slowly. God loves in an unhurried pace. Unhurried love, rest.

Take my yoke upon you, jesus says, and learn from me, for I'm gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. I began by sharing about this bunch of guys lifting weights in the garage.

People get lightheaded when they neglect to rest. You can go for a while. What's interesting, you can actually go from one exercise to the next and not have rest, but it catches up on you, and you get lightheaded.

It takes you out. Have you ever found in your life or in the life of those you love, and know people fall into sin that's really debilitating when they don't look after the pace of their heart? Have you found that?

Well, it's just busy, busy. I don't have any time to care for my soul. I'm just, I'm doing the good stuff.

It might even be doing good ministry, but when you're not caring for your soul, it's a dangerous place. And we've been talking about the soul in this visualization, the heart, the will, the spirit comes alive by the grace of God.

And as we respond with repentance and belief, we have our minds renewed and our emotions changed. And it's sort of a bit interchangeable. And our body is part of the package in our social context, who we influence and who we're influenced by.

This particular thinking on spiritual formation would say, that's your soul. You could argue something different. There are different ways of seeing the soul.

We don't know exactly what the soul means, but I think it's from the Old testament as well. It's just the entirety of a person's being. And when we care for souls, we have that holistic idea in our mind.

When we don't care for our soul, things get out of whack. rest, first six days of creation, tell us a lot about rest. Verse three of chapter one, God said, let there be light, and there was light, and he starts this incredible creative process.

At the end of the first day, it says, there was evening, and then there was morning the first day. And it goes to the second day, and he's creating different things.

And then it says, and then there was, verse eight, there was evening, and there was morning the second day. There was evening, and there was morning. You're noticing what's a bit different.

There was evening, and there was morning. rest, work, work comes out of rest. But we tend to work all day, long day, and we fall asleep, like I did on the couch this afternoon.

We slump into bed as a reward for a hard day's work. But the genesis model is rest first, and then work. Out of good rest, we work productively.

First, there was evening, and then there was morning. Who is setting the cadence of rest, work, rest, work for you? Who is?

When you say, how are you going? And the answer is, often, busy. Nothing wrong with saying that, I'm not, that's pretty judgy sounding.

Mike said it today. He said, how are you going? Oh, I'm so busy.

He's got assignments and all sorts of things. We do get busy. sometimes, it can be busy, and you'd have to be important to be busy like I'm a busy.

But sometimes, it's a subconscious way of saying, I'm a really important person. People want some time out of me, and I am really busy. Who is setting the cadence of rest work?

Anyone that heard of Matt Walker, Dr. Matt Walker? Anybody?

Look him up. He's an interesting guy. I found him on Ted Talks on YouTube.

He's a specialist in sleep, and he's got some great 18-minute Ted Talks. But he says all sorts of things that they now are realising. jesus was correct about needing rest, and so was God the Father in having a break, having evening.

He says, this is what we've discovered in all of our tests and research. Short sleep, short life. So if you think, I'm just going to keep burning the candle at both ends all my life, the studies are showing that's not a good way to stay healthy.

In fact, look up Matt Walker and read some of his books. It's just amazing the extent of the damage we do to ourselves when we don't sleep. We're meant to work out of rest.

The scriptures say, God gives his beloved sleep. It's something to pray about, to seek God for.

So then we come to this amazing sacred rhythm that we have no time to go into because it's already a bit too long a message, but Sabbath, rest, Sabbath, the theology of limits, the sacred idea that God has put into the fabric of life on earth, that

he says, seven days cycles, six days work. God was not tired when he took the day off the seventh day, but he's giving an example to the image bearers. If you're going to be the stewardship mandate people, you're going to look after my world.

You need to be like me. You need to realize Sabbath is important. Every seven days, a rhythm of renewal, reset, spiritual reset, physical research, emotional reset, social reset, Sabbath.

jesus said, learn from me. Learn from me. What does that mean?

It's not a trick question. Look at the way he lives and learn what he does. So what does he do with the cadence of rest?

He steals away... Do you remember that time, this little vignette moment when things are going well and the disciples say, hey, they think they're his agent, like his marketing manager, and they're like, you are really starting to get a following.

We should get you to Jerusalem now because anyone who wants to be a public figure, make a name for themselves, because you've got to do it in the big city. And jesus says, my time has not yet come.

Any time is right for you because you're not listening to the cadence, the seasons, the rhythm of the way. It's not time for me. When he was calling his disciples, he spends the night in prayer.

When he's about to talk about the fact that he will die on a cross, spends time in the presence of his father. Constantly, you see, when he's really busy in ministry, he'll steal away and take time.

When he says, learn from me, he's going to do what I do, right? Do what I do. Listen, watch.

I'm not someone who never stops. Unhurry, love, rest. How do you feel when we talk about this stuff?

Am I agitating you? Is it getting in your face a bit? It's so important, unhurry, love, rest.

Hungry, angry, lonely, tired. Have you heard of those four words? Anyone just interested, anyone familiar with them?

Hungry, angry, lonely, tired. When we're super vulnerable. It's when, not so much that he was angry, but it's when Satan attacked jesus in the wilderness.

When you're hungry, when you're angry, when you're lonely, when you're tired, you are vulnerable if you're not rested up. And it's just a picture of soul care, I think. Our last word is work.

Which might seem a bit weird in the talk about rest, but work, jesus says, is what we're here to accomplish. We're meant to be fruitful. God didn't create us only to be like Mary.

Mary and Martha, remember the friends of jesus? There's that classic scene where Mary's at the feet of jesus, Martha's working, fixing dinner, and jesus sort of says, Martha, you know, you've probably got your priorities wrong.

I'm not gonna be here forever, so Mary's doing the right thing. But I honestly don't believe when you look at jesus' life that he's saying, it's only sitting at feet, even God's feet. There's work to be done.

It is a cadence, rest, work, rest, work. The easy yoke rhythm of the way goes like this. Pruning, next slide, I think.

Pruning, rest, growth, fruit. It's the way it works. Pruning, rest, growth, fruit.

jesus says this in John 15. I am the true vine and my father is the garden. He cuts off every branch in me that bears no fruit.

While every branch that does bear fruit, that's important to hear, the fruit bearing branch gets pruned. The fruit bearing branch gets pruned. So that why?

It will be even more fruitful. It will be even more fruitful. Life tends to look like this next slide.

I am interested in what your thoughts are. I would love to chat with you after. It tends to go pruning, rest, growth, fruit.

And then back again, pruning, rest, growth, work. Pruning, rest, growth, fruit. Is that what you're experienced?

Is it making sense to anybody? I, excuse me, I met a guy called Murray Robertson years ago. He's a pastor.

The pastor of, what was the biggest church in New Zealand, the Sprayden Baptist Church in Christchurch. And he came and spoke at our church. It was really great.

He'd been there 46 years and then now retired. And I had been 14 years at the church I was at at the time. And they were in, someone else was interviewing Murray.

And he said, they said, Oh, you know, John has been here 14 years. And he goes in his dry New Zealand way. That's a good start.

It's not a bad start. Cause I thought, you know, we've been doing this for a long time. And then I ended up having lunch with Murray, and it was a really helpful time to be with a wise brother like Murray.

And he said, you know what I've discovered over the years, looking back on 46 years of pastoral ministry, God's not in a hurry, and he takes a long time to do things. So he said, I'll look back and I'll see seven years of fruitfulness. Seven years.

And then this terribly difficult time of disunity, of purging, of pruning. And it's like, where are you, God? That went for three years.

And then there's four years of sort of mediocre, but some stuff's happening. The growth often happens underneath the surface. Have you noticed that?

And then there's this two year revival. Boom, so much happens. And then it's back again to pruning.

And we don't get to pick what God's doing. Have you noticed that in life? We don't get to choose the seasons.

We get to choose how we respond to the seasons. We get to choose whether we see that God is good no matter what, and His goodness is not confined to only fruitfulness. Amen?

It's not. He's good when He's pruning us. He's good when He's giving us rest.

He's like, no, take time. I've said before when I was at the last church, we were there for 19 years, and we ended up resigning. And I remember saying a prayer.

honestly, I said, God, make them all go away. The busyness of pastoral ministry. Make them go away.

Make the emails go away. And then He made them go away in my rest period. And I went, God, I'm not important.

No one gives me emails. No one even knows I exist. Make it busy again, Lord.

Make me busy. Do you know what I'm talking about? these rhythms that are part of the way.

We're meant to be busy doing God's work, and we're also meant to rest well. So how does it all work? You hand over outcomes to God.

You do your best, and you say, God, it's up to you. Amen? You say, God, I'm handing over the outcomes to you.

I don't get to choose how the end works out. I can just be faithful. Matthew 11, come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest.

Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I'm gentle and humble in heart. And you will find rest for your souls, for my yoke is easy, and my burden is light. jesus is the smartest person who ever lived.

He'll teach us if we'll listen about hurry and unhurry. Love, rest, work. The team is going to come and sing a song for us as an item.

As they do so, let me point you towards a breath prayer that links in jess's reading that she did from Psalm 46. It's hard to unhurry when you're anxious.

It's hard to, I don't know, it's hard to throw off the stuff that you cogitate over and ruminate over at four in the morning. It's hard, it's like, how can it make it make... Because we're talking about in here.

This stuff's resting in here. But how do I do that? I think learning some ways to pray, and like we've talked about breath prayers, and please don't think this is new age meditation.

It's not at all, it's just scriptural truth doing the most natural thing a human could do, breathe. So let me encourage you to think about doing this breath prayer to finish off. As you breathe in, you breathe in, be still and know.

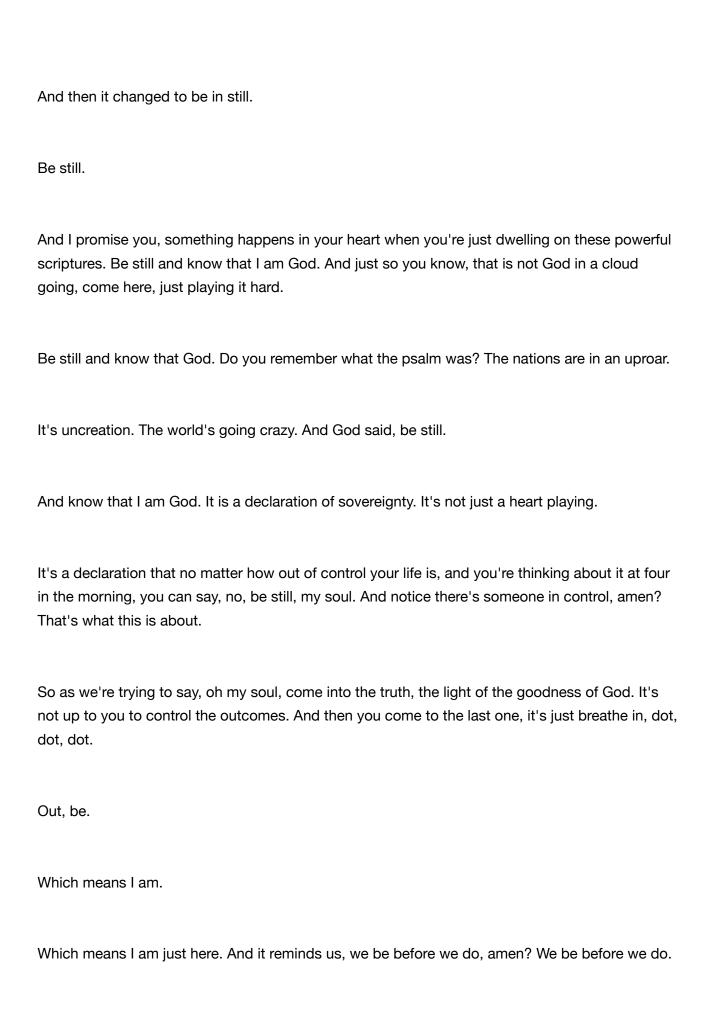
And then as you breathe out, you breathe out that I am God. You breathe in, be still and know that I am God. I often say that I am is God.

God is, Yahweh is I am, which means be, He just is. Be still and know that I am God. And then after a little while, drop off God and say, be still and know that I am.

And as I'm doing that, I'm focusing on I am God. I am the one who knows me. But as I say I am, I'm reminded, oh, I'm in this too.

I'm here. I'm present with I am. I am here with you, God.

And then at four in the morning, when you're trying to get back to sleep and stop worrying, change it to be still and know. You might have to do it ten times. Be still in and know out.



We have to be, we have to learn to be God's child. It's not my performance that makes me be. It's who I am in Christ.
He loved me enough to save me. He's given me an eternal destiny. I belong in the family of God.
I breathe in, breathe out.