

- If you wouldn't mind at all of our church locations, would you stand to your feet? As you're standing, I wanna ask you a question today and before you answer I wanna kind of explain where I'm going. I wanna ask you, how many of you are here? How many of you are here? Not just in the building or not just watching on YouTube or watching at Church Online but you're actually here, present in the moment right now? If you're here, would you just say I'm here?

- [Congregation] I'm here.

- Those of you watching online, just type it in the chat. Type in I'm here. In fact, wherever you're from all over the world, if you'll just tell us in the chat. I'm here watching wherever and tell us wherever you're watching. If you're here I'd just like to tell you welcome. I'm so honored and so thankful that you're here with us in this moment. And what I'd like to do is I wanna take a moment with you here just to acknowledge and thank God that we have the freedom to gather together. Both physically and online as disciples of Jesus. To feed on the bread of life, the living Word of God. Standing in the presence of the same spirit that raised Jesus from the dead to worship the lamb of God who was slain for the forgiveness of our sins. I wanna welcome you here in this holy moment. I am so glad that you're here. And the reason I say that is because unfortunately some of you won't be here for long. Some of you won't be here for long. You may still be here physically but mentally or emotionally your attention will be somewhere else. You're here right now but in a moment, you're gonna get a text message and your mind is gonna go to that message. Some of you, God help you, you'll actually initiate a text message in the middle of my sermon. Some of you, you won't be able to take it anymore and you'll have to check your Instagram feed because you don't know what's going on out there for the last seven minutes and you've gotta be in touch. Some of you, you'll be thinking about all that you have to do. Or like me, you might be thinking of where you're gonna eat. You might be worried about something and your mind drifts towards your bills or the distracting person two rows in front of you or the cute girl three rows in front of you that doesn't have a ring on her praise hand when she was worshiping God and if you're here right now, I just wanna say I am so glad you're here. Because I know some of you won't be here for long. As you're standing today, I want to read to you God's Word and we're gonna look at an unusual text to introduce this message. It was Jesus' first miracle that he performed and it was at a wedding and if you don't know the context, it was an incredibly embarrassing moment for the host who at this wedding ran out of wine. And Jesus' mom said, "Jesus, go do something about it." And so he said to the servants, "Go get these jars, these massive jars "and what I want you to do is I want you to fill them up "with water." These were not regular jars, they were maybe 20 or 30 gallon jars and Jesus said to the servants, "What I want you to do, "is I want you to draw the water out of the jars "and then go give it to the master of the banquet." And God's Word tells us this in John 8, John 2:8. "The servants, they did so and the master of the banquet "tasted the water that had been turned into wine. "And he didn't realize where it had come from "though the servants who had drawn the water, they knew. "Then he called the bridegroom aside and said, "'Everyone brings out the choice wine first "'and then the cheaper wine after the guests get drunk.'" It's what it says in the Greek. "After they've had too much we bring the cheap stuff." Now I always thought the next line said, "But you saved the best for last." But that's not what God's Word says. What God's Word said is this. "But you've saved the best till now." The title of today's message is "Your Best Days Are Now". Father we ask that in the name of your Son Jesus that you would invade our hearts in this moment with your goodness and just as Jesus lived with an undivided attention in the moment, draw us

into your presence and your calling in the now to do your will on earth as it is in heaven. We pray this in Jesus' name and everybody said?

- Amen.

- Would you look at the person next to you and say, "Your best days are now?"

- Your best days are now.

- Your best days are now, go ahead and be seated. You can type that in the chat. If you're still with us, your best days are now. If you're just joining us, we're in a message series called "A Better Way" and what we're doing is we're looking at the way that Jesus lived. Not just the truth that He taught but the way that He lived and one of the most striking qualities about the way that Jesus lived is that no matter who He interacted with, no matter what He was doing, He was always present in the moment. He was fully present, he lived with what I call an undivided attention in the moment. In fact what I wanna do I wanna show you two back to back stories in Scripture that illustrate His heart for the people right in front of Him being fully engaged in the moment. In fact the first one we find in Luke's Gospel and Jesus was walking into Jericho and if you can imagine there were large crowds all around. Now the photo of Jericho was actually about 1400 years prior to this event when the walls of Jericho went down. They went down, they came back up after years and years and this would just give you a mental image of Jesus walking into this magnificent walled city with all of these people gathering around Him, with crowds fighting for His attention and as He's walking in, a blind beggar named Bartimaeus cries out, "Jesus, son of David. "Have mercy on me." And the disciples were offended. Jesus doesn't have time for this guy, Jesus is going somewhere. Jesus is too important, Jesus is too busy, Jesus has an agenda. Jesus isn't gonna stop for some guy who's begging on the side of the road and the disciples rebuked the blind beggar and said go away and then Jesus rebuked the disciples and He engaged with a single hurting person, fully engaged in the moment and Jesus stopped, gave him all of His attention and said, "What would you like for me to do?" And the man cries out, "Could you heal me, could you heal me, "could you please heal me? "I haven't been able to see my whole life." And Jesus spoke a miraculous word of faith and healed the man. One miracle is Jesus healed him. The second thing to notice is that Jesus stopped for a guy that no one had time for. Fully engaged with the person in front of Him. The second and next story, the consecutive story. Here's one and the next one. We see in John 19:1. It mentions Jericho again. "As Jesus entered Jericho" and this time Luke tells us that He was actually going somewhere. He was passing through and so He was moving through, He had somewhere to be. "As Jesus entered Jericho and passing through, "a man was there by the name of Zacchaeus. "He was a chief tax collector and he was wealthy." Now if you notice, Jesus had already been interrupted one time by a poor blind beggar. Now he's interrupted by a rich, corrupt tax collector. What I love about Jesus is He's got time for the down and out and He's got time for the up and out. He's got time for anyone and a heart for anyone. It doesn't matter where you come from, how bad your baggage is, how dirty it is, how rich it is, Jesus cares about you. And Jesus stops for this guy named Zacchaeus. Now if you don't know who Zacchaeus was, I wanna tell you about Zacchaeus. Zacchaeus was a wee little man, a wee little man was he. Who climbed up into a sycamore tree to see what he could see. If anybody was in Sunday School as a kid, you drank the Kool-Aid and you knew who Zacchaeus was. That's the way it went. Well he was a tax collector which may not mean a whole lot to you in this culture because a tax collector can be respectable although

you probably don't enjoy paying taxes but during this time, this was like the most corrupt of all people. A tax collector would've been a person who would charge you what you owed and then add to it an exorbitant amount and keep the difference for himself and so this was one of the most despised, most hated people around and Jesus sees this guy and He calls him by name. Zacchaeus, and Jesus essentially invites Himself over for lunch and as He was going somewhere, after He'd already been interrupted once, He gives a no-good sinner His full attention and when He's talking to Zacchaeus, Zacchaeus has this moment of deep repentance in the presence of the Son of God and he just says something like, "I've sinned so many times, I've hurt so many people "and I am so sorry. "I'll do anything I can to make it up." And then he just blurts out, you can almost feel him making it up and he means it, like I'll give half my possessions to the poor and I'll pay back four times to anyone that I stole from and Jesus looks at this man and says, "Today. "In this moment, right now, "salvation has come to your home." Jesus had a undivided attention in the moment and He stops and gives people one of the greatest gifts He can give, His attention and His love. Jesus was always fully present in the moment and I wanna be like that but unfortunately, I'm not always like that and I've been praying for some time and asking God to help me be engaged in whatever is in front of me. I wanna be where my feet are. And I wanna not just live for the happy moments and the up moments and the powerful moments and the outwardly meaningful moments but I wanna be present in all the moments. Even the annoying moments. I wonder how many of you live in the middle of a lot of annoying moments right now? Don't point at that moment but I'm just saying, you know some seasons of life are more annoying than others. I could remember in the early years of raising six kids, amen. I have six children. People say, "You must really love kids." And I always say, "I like kids but I really love my wife Amy." And all of God's people said?

- Amen.

- Amen and I remember coming home, always being annoyed that there were just toys everywhere, all over the house and I thought, one day, some day, somehow I'm gonna come in to a clean, picked up house and then I blinked. And now I have one of six that hasn't graduated and almost every day I come home to a perfectly clean house and what's interesting is some of you are doing the same thing that I did. You're complaining today about moments you'll miss tomorrow. You're literally complaining about the very moments right now that you're gonna miss one day in the future. Jesus was fully engaged in the moment. You guys still here?

- Yeah, yes.

- Are you still, are you still here. If you're here, say I'm here. Are you here?

- I'm here.

- Because the statistical odds would show that I've lost some of you, they would. Harvard did a study and what they found out, their exact words is that 47% of the time people's minds are not the same place their feet are. 47% of the time that you're in a conversation with someone, your mind isn't fully engaged. 47% of the time you're sitting in church or at dinner with your family or engaged with someone at work or talking to someone in the gym or in the middle of life group, almost half of your waking life, your mind is not fully engaged where the rest of your body is. In fact one of the biggest enemies of our attention I would argue is our mobile device. Our cellphone. In fact it's

shocking to think about this, how often you can be distracted from the very place that you are. In fact the average cellphone user, studies show, touches their phone 2617 times a day. That's a lot of times that you're not in the moment. Reaching over, reaching over, reaching over. Whatever's in front of you isn't as important as the being or the potential look or the news thing or the stupid cat video or the conspiracy thing your friend sent you or checking to see if you got any likes. And that's just the average. The amazing thing about some of you is you're so above average. We're not a church full of just average people, when we go all out in our dysfunction, many of us we go way, way out. The average is 2617 times, but the top 10% of cellphone users, they touch their phones more than 5400 times a day. Can I just tell you, that's gross. Like that's disgusting, wash that dang thing right now. Thousands of times a day. You aren't with whatever or whoever is in front of you. And your mind is somewhere else. If it's not on the phone, sometimes it's just playing games. My mind plays games. The top two games my mind plays. I play the when, then game. The when, then. The one day when, then I'm gonna be happy. You might do that, you know like when your a kid it's like, when I get to high school and then you're a freshman, like when I'm a sophomore and then it's like, when I get out of high school then I'll be happy and then it's like when I get out of college and then it's when I pay off that debt and when I get a real job and then when I get married and then when we have children and then when they're not in diapers and then when they're grown up and then when I'm in diapers. No you just happen to. And so many of us, we are literally going through life wishing away the current moment. Wishing away what you have right in front of you. Don't miss what you have now pursuing what you want later. Jesus was fully engaged in the moment. If it's not the when, then game, I often play the what if game. It's projecting into the future. What if this happens? You might do that, what if I don't pass this test? Then what if I don't get into a good college? Then what if I don't get a good job? And then what if I don't attract a good spouse and then what if we have dumb kids? And then what if we can't afford braces, 'cause I didn't a good job and then they're gonna be crooked teeth. I've ruined my kids all because I didn't pass this test and we tend to do this. What if this happens and what if the government and what if the economy and what if aliens attack and on and on and on and on. And Jesus said this in Matthew 6:34. Jesus said, "Therefore don't worry about tomorrow "for tomorrow has enough to, "tomorrow will worry about itself." Jesus says don't worry about what's coming, tomorrow will worry about itself. What I love about Jesus is he wasn't like anti-planning. He said I'm not telling you not to plan for the future but I'm telling you don't worry about the future. Don't worry about it. Let me just ask you again. Are you still here?

- [Congregation] Yes.

- Because it's really, really, really important to be present in the moment. It's really important to be present in the moment. Why is it do you think that we often aren't fully present? Sometimes it's just we're plain distracted but as I prayed about it and thought about it I think one of the reasons why we're often not fully present is because we lack faith. We lack faith. We're all freaked out about something that happened a long time ago and I gotta figure it out and undo it. Or we're all freaked out about what's gonna happen in the future and what I discovered is that all this praying is that the only way we can be present in the moment is to actually surrender the past you can't change and trust God with a future that you can't control. The only way to fully be present in the moment is to let go of a past that you can't change no matter what you do and trust that God has it. Or to surrender your future and trust that God is good, that He cares, that He's already there and because He redeems the past and because He's good in the

future, you can be fully engaged with the person or that which is before you in the present. It takes faith, it takes faith in God to engage in God's calling right in front of you. In fact I love the way James phrases it, the half brother of Jesus in James 4:13 and 14. He says, "Come now." Somebody say now.

- Now.

- Type it in the chat, now. "Come now," he says. "You who say, 'Today or tomorrow we're gonna go 'into such and such town and spend a year there 'or trade and make a profit.'" Those of you who used to say that, COVID happened and you didn't get to go nowhere. I mean, you who say you've got it all figured out, you don't even what tomorrow will bring. And he asks this pressing question, "What is your life? "For you're a mist that appears for a little while "and then vanishes." You're a mist. Open up your mouth sometime and breathe on glass and watch the mist come and watch the mist fade away. That's our lives. The image that really gets me often is the hourglass and I like to think about this. This is, this is your life. You're here for a little while and the life that God has given you on this earth is passing away in the moment. And there's three things about this that are interesting to me. One is it freaks me out that the sand is going that fast right now but the first thing is that no one knows how much sand is on the top. You think you do but there's a lot of people who thought there was a lot more than there really is. No one knows how much is on the top. The second thing is no matter what you do, you can't stop the sand from flowing. Time is passing, time is passing. Time is passing, every day is a gift from God. Today is a gift from God and some of you are wishing it away. The third thing is once the sand is at the bottom, you can never get it back. You can never get it back. That's why at the beginning of the message I had you stand to celebrate the moment. At that moment we were together in the presence of God. The very way we are at this moment. The most important moment of your life. We could say is experiencing God right now with God's people and that's why I love what David said in Psalm 118. In verse 24 he said, "This is the day the Lord has made." You've got today, this is the day. And because this is God's day, "We're gonna be glad and rejoice in it." If you're still here and I hope you're still here because I wanna tell you, you can't be happy where you're not. And you can't serve Jesus where you're not. And you can't love people the way Jesus did where you're not. This is the day the Lord has made. The most important moment is right now, the most important person is the one right in front of you. That's the most important moment and the most important and what I recognize is this. I used to live for the big moments and the special moments and the powerful moments but the more I've been fully present, I've recognized that the most powerful moments are often the smallest moments. The most meaningful often aren't the mountaintop but the conversation I have with someone that I love. And I've kind of been wrecked over all four, now five of my children leaving home because it happens so fast. Number five was Stephen and we connected this year in ways that were so special and meaningful to me. I tried to get into his head. What do you wanna do, what's your bucket list? What's out there, you name it, I'm gonna try to do it and he said a couple things. He said, I'll show you pictures. One was I wanna fly a plane and so we've been flying planes and he said, "I wanna go on a hot air balloon." And so we went in a hot air balloon. And those were really, really meaningful but they pale in comparison to the moments I've had fully engaged in conversation. One of the most recent was right at capacity. If your kids aren't a part of Switch, you need to repent and get them a part of Switch. It's the best thing going on in this church and he was at an event and I was there and he was so overwhelmed by the presence of God that he came running up to me. Half smiling, half crying and he couldn't get the words out. And he said, "Dad." He

said, "Can you believe how amazing our God is?" And I just stopped and wasn't 4000 feet up, risking our life in a plane or riding in a hot air balloon but just in the moment, embracing the moment and hugged him and held him and didn't let him go and it was so special, guess what. He didn't even get dad awkward and try to push me away either. Because we're fully engaged in the moment. Please don't miss what you have now, pursuing what you want later. This is the day the Lord has made and when you look at the way Jesus lived, not just the truth He taught but the way He lived. As He walked along, people weren't interruptions or inconveniences. They were moments and opportunities to engage and show the goodness and the love of God. This moment's all that you have, this moment. This moment matters, this moment matters. To be fair, I don't want you to feel like I'm trying to make you feel guilty. I get distracted like crazy. I mean I'm like, I got ADD, I can hardly be anywhere so I'm working on it. When you think about Jesus, if there was any time that He would've been distracted from others, if there was any time that He would've been consumed with Himself like we often are, it would've been on the cross. When you think about it, He is the sinless Son of God and people stripped Him down naked, beat Him so he didn't even look like a human being, whipped and flogged Him so His back was left open and bleeding. Probably His internal organs hanging out, hanging on a cross, having to push up His feet with nails through His ankles. Pull up with his wrists, with nails through His wrist just trying to get a breath as people cursed Him and spit on Him and right next to Him was a criminal. Who looked over at Jesus and had a conversation and the guy said something, probably more than what's reported but probably something along the lines of, "I've done a lot of bad things" and I feel really bad about them. "I'm really, really sorry." Whatever he said, we know he said this. He looked at Jesus and he said, "Remember me when you come and your kingdom." And even in the middle of His suffering, the worst, most painful moment of Jesus' life, He's fully engaged with the criminal across and looks over at him and says, "Today, today you'll be with me in paradise. "Fully engaged in the moment." You see, I don't know who this is for but you can't serve Jesus where you're not and you can't be happy and fulfilled where you're not and you can't love people where you're not. And if your mind is not where your body is 47% of the time, you're missing out on the life that God gave you. It's right in front of you, you can't be a great friend if you're not there. You can't be an engaged mom or dad if you're not there. You can't have a great marriage if you're not there until you recognize this is the day the Lord has made. Because of that, I will rejoice and be glad in it. God has saved the best days for you now. Now in this moment you could experience His grace. Now in this moment, you can experience His mercy. Now in this moment, you could experience His forgiveness. Now right now, His power is here. His freedom is here, His grace is here. All His goodness is here, He is with us, can you sense it? This holy moment, God is with us now. And God sent me to tell you that your best days are now. If you'll fully engage with the people that God bring in front of you, pouring out your heart in the moment. Knowing that tomorrow is not a promise but this is a moment you can experience God. Your best moment can be right now. Engage in the moment, be where your feet are and see what God put in front of you. I promise you, His goodness, His grace, His love is better than you could imagine. If you'll look for it in this moment. This is the day, this moment the Lord has made. We will be glad and rejoice in it. If you're still here, let's pray and go before God. Father thank you so much for your Word. Would you bring us God into your perfect will in the moment? So you can do exactly what you wanna do. As you're praying today at all of our churches are watching online, if your mind has drifted let me encourage you to come back for just a moment and those who say yes, just like Jesus, the way that Jesus lived, I wanna live and love like Jesus lived and loved. I wanna be fully engaged with an undivided attention in the moment. If God is speaking to you and

you wanna see that as a reality, would you lift up your hands right now? You can type it in the chat, help me be fully engaged in the moment. God thank you for working in the lives of so many people. Here's my prayer God, I know this is not something we can change on our own. I pray God that you by your Holy Spirit would prompt us again and again and again. God, if we have to listen to this message over and over again, put it on repeat. Listen once a day, whatever it is. You drive this deep into our hearts and when our mind drifts from a conversation with a child, when our mind drifts from an intimate moment with the spouse. When our mind drifts away from what could be an opportunity to minister to someone and we're tempted to pick up a phone or worry about the past or obsess about the future. God help us to surrender a past we cannot change and trust you with a future that we cannot control and engage fully in the moment. We draw our minds to where we are so we can love people the way you love us. God convict us, empower us, change us to be more like Jesus. To live the way that Jesus lived, fully engaged in the moment, showing your love in all that we do. As you keep praying today, I've got really good news. For some of you, today, this moment is one of the most important moments of your life. For some of you it'll be the most important moment of your life. I wanna just ask you to think about this. How are you doing with God? Some of you might say, well I don't even know if I believe in God. Like wake up, look outside and ask how did all this get here, God. How you doing with God? If you feel far from God or maybe guilty about something that you've done, let me just tell you about the goodness of God in this moment. You're here, you're watching because God wants you here and He wants you watching. He knew this moment would happen and He loved you enough to bring you to a place where there's a message that might get through to your hearts. Here's what He wants you to know, He loves you right now. No matter what you've done in the past, He loves you. No matter what you're worried about in the future, He loves you. In this moment and He showed His love for you in the person of Jesus. When Jesus who was without sin died on the cross, as a replacement, as a sacrifice in your place and in my place He died for our sins and God raised Him from the dead, why? So that anyone, it doesn't matter who you are, doesn't matter what you've done. Anyone who calls on His name, the name of Jesus, the Son of God. Anyone who calls on His name, your sins would be completely forgiven. Not because you're good but because He's good, He's that good. You'd be made new, your past is gone and you can trust your future to Him. In this moment, when you call on the name of Jesus, God hears your prayer and in a moment you can move from darkness to light. You can move from shame to freedom. You can move from wondering where you stand with God to a peace that goes beyond all understanding. In a moment, the old is gone and the new will come. Today, wherever you're watching those who say "I need His grace." Something's drawing you to God right now, what is it? That's the Holy Spirit, that's God. That's His goodness. You say, "I want His forgiveness, I'm ready to let go." When you call on His name, God hears your prayers, He forgives your sins, you're about to be new. Now this moment, now this moment, you know it, you can feel it, you can sense it, that's why you're here. Wherever you're watching, those who say, "Yes I need His grace. "Yes by faith I surrender my life. "Yes I give my life to Jesus." That's your prayer, lift your hands right now. All over the place, just lift them up and say yes. As we see hands going up at all of our churches, those of you online just type in the chat, I'm giving my life to Jesus just type that right now in the chat. And I would love it today if you would just pray this aloud wherever you're watching. Pray heavenly Father.

- Heavenly Father.

- Forgive all my sins.

- Forgive all my sins.
- Jesus save me.
- Jesus saved me.
- Make me new.
- Make me new.
- Fill me with your Spirit.
- Fill me with your Spirit.
- So I could follow you.
- So I could follow you.
- To show your love.
- To show your love.
- In all that I do.
- In all that I do.
- My life is not my own.
- My life is not my own.
- I give it to you.
- I give it to you.
- In Jesus' name I pray.
- In Jesus' name I pray.
- Today is the day of your salvation, today is the day that you're new. Would you welcome those born into the family of God today.