Individual and Small Group Study: Making Necessary Endings

Verses of the Week
2 Corinthians 3:17 “Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom.”

Sermon Reflection
We have been discussing the concept of margin – the space between our current pace of life and our limits – and how to include more of it in our lives. Keeping our lives too busy affects our physical and spiritual health. God designed us to need and thrive with rest as he did. Besides being disciplined in observing a Sabbath and cutting back the ambient noise in our lives, it is important to evaluate the things we choose to spend our time on and what things we need to eliminate. Saying “no” to people and opportunities can make us anxious, especially when it is something good or we risk letting someone down. But there is power and freedom in saying “no” and making necessary endings. Sometimes we need to say “no” to the sick and dying things in our lives, and God gives us freedom through His Spirit to make those decisions. He doesn’t want us to live in captivity to the stress of an overwhelming schedule or the yoke of obligations that are not in his will for us. Scripture shows that Jesus knew what it was to have many demands for his time. In chapter one of Mark, people were looking for Jesus but he had to say “no” to continuing ministry there in that moment in order to fulfill the great mission God had for him. Endings are a part of the natural order of things (Ecclesiastes 3), and as we prayerfully and wisely choose to prune some things from our lives we can create margin that will allow us to be more free and productive and to grow into the people God created us to be.

Questions for Discussion
Do you struggle to say “no” to things in your life? Why?

What things in your life do you feel enslaved to? Bring these things before the Lord in prayer and ask that he would give you wisdom in addressing them.

Have you ever experienced freedom and growth by saying “no” to something, even if that thing was good? What did that look like for you?

Sometimes our endings involve breaking off or limiting relationship with someone. Have you ever experienced this? What was the result?

Pastor Dan gave the illustration of pruning a tree – cutting off the branches (in our schedule, habits, career, or relationships) that are good but not best, the sick branches that are not going to get better, and the dead branches that are preventing healthy things from thriving. What are these things in your life? How will you begin the process of pruning in your life? Share this with someone who will keep you accountable.

Further Study
Related and encouraging scripture: Ecclesiastes 3:1-9; Mark 1:32-38; Galatians 5:1; Hebrews 12:1; 1 Corinthians 9:24-27; Colossians 3:5; Colossians 3:17; John 10:10; 1 Corinthians 6:12
The Best Yes by Lysa Terkeurst
Boundaries by Dr. Henry Cloud