



Title: Restart

Series: Restart

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Smythe Street Church

## Opening – Welcome to Fall

I like summer, really do, but I also welcome fall.

- Apple crisp
- Fall colours
- Love of routine
  - Our life is made up mostly of ‘regular time’ the rhythms of everyday life.
  - I want to experience God in the everyday (not just the retreat on the beach, which I also value)

**This Summer I have been reading the gospels, looking at Jesus again**

Matthew 4:17 (NIV)  
From that time on Jesus began to preach, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near.”

- This is the foundation of the gospel. This is what Jesus preached (in one convenient sentence).

## Three Ways We Distort the Gospel

1. We forget God calls us to leave our ways (sin, distraction)
  - a. (this is very important, will get back to it in next couple weeks)
2. We forget God calls us to something new

**"BEING A CHRISTIAN IS LESS ABOUT CAUTIOUSLY AVOIDING SIN THAN ABOUT COURAGEOUSLY AND ACTIVELY DOING GOD'S WILL." ~ DIETRICH BONHOEFFER**

When Jesus says turn around, he is inviting everyone to turn towards something, towards the kingdom that he is establishing in the world.

## Jesus invites us to His kingdom life

- This is God's kind of kingdom
  - Where children and the poor are not ignored, but they are valued and even lifted up as models of faith and trust in God
  - A kingdom where the greatest are those who understand what it means to serve, and not to lord power
  - A kingdom where God's subjects find their value, not in the applause and acclaim of other people, but are content to do their good in secret, knowing that their Heavenly father sees and will reward in his time and way.
  - A kingdom where God's people care greatly about sin, but mostly about our own, more than the sins of others.
  - A kingdom where God's people see that they exist not to clump together, but to be agents of God's spirit to act in our community and nation and world like yeast does in dough, although a small ingredient it transforms and raises up everything it touches.

Isn't that what you want to be a part of?

## Why Do I bring this Up Today?

Sometimes we think that all we have to do in life is to decide we are on Jesus' team, wanting to follow him and then it is all set and we will coast along the Kingdom way.

Reality: We can start, but then we can in our sin or distraction start to make decisions that we think are without consequence, but are consequential.

## It is very possible to be in church and get off track

Revelation 2-3 – letters to 7 churches.

Of the 7, God said 5 of them needed to repent of a problem, they needed to turn around again.

- Issues included:
  - Loss of love for God
  - tolerating false teaching and immorality,
  - hypocrisy (having a reputation of being alive but are inwardly dead)
  - pride
  - 'luke warm'

5 out of 7 churches needed God to tap them on the shoulder and say, you're getting off track, but then tells them if they overcome, if they turn around, there is a reward, there is life, there is a better story for them.

He does this because he knows when we lose sight of who we are called to be, we will find our own story, and it doesn't lead us where we want to be.

To his churches he comes and says you don't need to start, you need a restart.

**Revelation 2:4–5 (NIV) – to church in Ephesus**

4 Yet I hold this against you: You have forsaken the love you had at first. 5 Consider how far you have fallen! Repent and do the things you did at first. If you do not repent, I will come to you and remove your lampstand from its place.

What was happening when your walk with Jesus was young and most exciting:

- I was praying
- I was excited to go to church
- I was connected with other believers that encouraged me
- I was really interested in Scripture
- I wanted to serve others any way I could

When those things were happening, you started heading somewhere, you were kingdom oriented.

Here's the thing,

God is calling you to make the choice to turn around again.

- That's why we have circle groups
- That's why I'm here on a Sunday
- That's why we encourage learning Scripture.
- That's why we talk about prayer
- That's why we remember what Jesus did in communion.
- That's why we have circle groups and youth groups.

These choices orient us in our journey. It takes us somewhere.

## **The fall is a key time when we choose the paths that will carry us to next summer.**

### **What are you choosing?**

The choices we make for our families take them somewhere.

- Are you plugging your child/youth into something.
  - I've seen kids make long journeys back but are you planting the relational and scriptural foundations so they have something they can come back to?

## **What is God calling you to do?**

### **THE STORY OF THE PRAYER BOOK**

- **IMAGE OF ELIYA SCRAPBOOKING**

**Don't wait for the perfect conditions, listen to the voice of the Spirit and turn around.**

## The final danger

- We can forget that God initiates his work in our lives.

### **Revelation 3:20 (NIV)**

Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with that person, and they with me.

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### Matthew 4:17 (NIV)

From that time on Jesus began to preach, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near.”

**WHAT HAS GOD BEEN TAPPING ON YOUR SHOULDER? WE NEED TO PAY ATTENTION BECAUSE HE IS DRAWING NEAR TO US.**

## Prayer

God, what is it you are calling us towards. Who are you calling us to be this fall / year. May we be courageous and active in pursuing your will.