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BETHANY LUTHERAN CHURCH
ELKHORN NEBRASKA
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PASTOR MARK FRY

1 PASTOR MARK FRY: A lot of you maybe weren't here on
2 Easter. I spoke on the raising of Lazarus and this is a
3 picture of the Bethany sculpture, you might call it.

4 What I've learned is we have these three wonderful
5 role models in that story.

6 We have Mary sitting at Jesus' feet. We have
7 Martha, who loves to have people in her home, and we have
8 Lazarus, who is called out from the tomb.

9 And then the last part of that story is what I
10 believe is the most important part where Lazarus comes out
11 and he's still wrapped up, he's still bound, and Jesus said
12 to the church, he said unbind him and let him go.

13 And so that is a three-dimensional relationship with
14 God.

15 We've got Mary as our model of the up relationship.
16 She's sitting at Jesus' feet.

17 Martha is our model of the in relationships, she has
18 people at her home.

19 Lazarus is our out model. He goes out and then also
20 we as a church unbind others.

21 I've been having some fun with that, and one of my
22 favorite little learnings is that there's more to live than
23 not dying.

24 I don't believe Lazarus is really alive until the
25 church has its way with him.

1 There's a lot of people who are just kind of walking
2 around going through the motions and they are not really
3 alive because they are not living a three-dimensional life,
4 and so unbind him.

5 So that's what the church's job is, is to install
6 and instill and enthuse people so that we can make a
7 difference in the world.

8 I want to press in a bit further on that with you
9 today, and that RISE has a bit of an acronym in it.

10 Real Involvement Satisfies Everyone. So I want to
11 talk about being real, let's get real kind of thing today.

12 Real Involvement Satisfies Everyone. That's my
13 acronym for RISE.

14 And it looks like a lot of different things. It has
15 three components.

16 It's got being around the table with people. Also
17 for us it's being at the table with Gary and Tony, the two
18 that were leading the worship here.

19 Gary is a huddle leader, a group leader, on our
20 men's ministry and all of the guys from his table on Friday
21 morning, we had dinner in their home on Friday night.

22 It was awesome, but now they are exploring the
23 opportunity of how do we meld that into a three-dimensional
24 relationship?

25 How do we make that into part of a life group

1 experience?

2 So that is a piece of it. Then we have the language
3 that we'll share.

4 And a very import part is to understand God's
5 covenant with us.

6 That's what I want to Biblically look at with you
7 today, because there's a lot of questionable theology out
8 there, and oftentimes even in here, that talks about it's all
9 about doing stuff.

10 But it's first and foremost about being in
11 relationship with God.

12 So before I direct you to your Bibles that you
13 brought, do we have that one slide with all the different
14 covenants on it?

15 Let's look at that. These are the different
16 covenants throughout the Bible.

17 And I'm excited because we are going to have a
18 series this fall on all the different Biblical covenants.

19 And the beautiful thing is that the ones in
20 existence at the very beginning haven't been thrown out, but
21 they have just been substantiated.

22 And then through time they've become all the more
23 meaningful and that's why we want you to have your Bibles
24 here, because we are going to be going back through all these
25 different covenants and that's what is exciting about Awana.

1 These kids are learning Biblical passages and they
2 are being together and doing things with those passages.

3 We are going to be looking at a fascinating chapter
4 that talks about covenants.

5 And again in the context of let's be real, I want to
6 talk about our calling, a real calling.

7 So take your Bible, First Samuel 16 is where we are
8 going to be jumping in and talking about real calling.

9 And one of the things I just need to name right away
10 is a lot of people think that just ordained people are
11 called.

12 Nothing could be further from the truth. The Bible
13 teaches that everyone is called. Through water and word
14 we're called.

15 God names us and claims us and welcomes us to his
16 family.

17 And so we're called Christians and we are called
18 then to make a difference in the world.

19 But it comes out of that calling that our character,
20 and our competence, and our confidence, all of that stuff
21 comes first and foremost from our calling.

22 So I want to look at one of the Biblical heroes of
23 the Bible today and hopefully have some fun and helpful and
24 challenging things from that passage.

25 First Samuel 16. In my Bible it's on page 263.

1 Samuel is not easy to find, but it's worth it when you get
2 there.

3 He's after Ruth, he's in there, but before Kings.
4 First Samuel 16, and so we are going to look at the calling
5 of David.

6 His covenant relationship with God was then the one
7 that preceded Jesus.

8 So we are going to see this and we're going to
9 hopefully have some light come on in our hearts and brains as
10 we look at this together, beginning right at the first verse.

11 "The Lord said to Samuel," now you remember who
12 Samuel is.

13 Samuel is the guy who in the first part of the Book
14 of Samuel, he's the little boy who is called by God in the
15 middle of the night.

16 It's important. We're called at all different ages.
17 Samuel is taking a nap in First Samuel 3 and three different
18 times during the night he's awakened by God.

19 And so he goes to Ely, the priest, and he says,
20 "What do you want?"

21 And Ely says, "I didn't call you. Go lay down."

22 The second time God calls him, he gets up again and
23 goes to Ely, "What do you want?"

24 He says, "I didn't call you. Go lay down."

25 The third time he's called, Ely says, "The next time

1 this happens, you need to say, 'Speak, Lord, for your servant
2 is listening.'"

3 You see, we are not supposed to lay down; we are
4 supposed to rise in our calling.

5 So what we are going to see then is Samuel now has
6 gotten old, he's been a priest for many, many years, and he
7 is given this awesome opportunity in the 16th Chapter that
8 he's in charge to go find the next king and that's where we
9 enter the story then.

10 First Samuel 16, "The Lord said to Samuel, 'How long
11 will you grieve over Saul?'"

12 See, Saul was the king, but he's about as
13 dysfunctional as could possibly be.

14 He has some mental illness. He has some demons. He
15 literally has an evil spirit in him.

16 And so the people of Israel think he's a rabid king,
17 but they are kind of hoping he would just go ahead and die,
18 but he's not dying.

19 But God calls Samuel to go out and find the next
20 king and here how it is.

21 "How long will you grieve over Saul? I've rejected
22 him from being king over Israel, so fill your horn with oil
23 and set out."

24 This does not mean go out to the Conoco station and
25 fill up your car, it's going to be a long car ride. He says

1 fill up your horn with oil.

2 In other words, get out the religious instrument
3 that contains the oil, because you're going to go and anoint
4 the next king. You are going to need some oil.

5 "I will send you to Jesse the Bethlehemite."

6 Jesse the Bethlehemite, where is that ringing a bell
7 from?

8 Well, Jesus is from Bethlehem, and you might
9 remember Jesse is the guy who has a bunch of sons, so Samuel
10 is being sent to Jesse's ranch in Bethlehem.

11 "For I have provided for myself a king among his
12 sons.

13 "Samuel said, 'How can I go? If Saul hears of it he
14 will kill me.'"

15 In other words, he's afraid, the goofy king, Saul,
16 is still alive, and he has this temper and he'll kill me if
17 he finds out I'm doing this, what is up with this?

18 So God is very good, "And the Lord said, 'Take a
19 heifer with you and say I have come to sacrifice to the Lord.
20 Invite Jesse to the sacrifice and I will show what you shall
21 do and you shall anoint for me the one whom I name to you.'"

22 He says, well, don't worry about Saul right now, but
23 what you are doing is you're doing something that is
24 spiritual and religious, you are going to take a heifer with
25 you.

1 In other words, you are going to take an offering
2 with you and when you get there you're going to cut the
3 heifer in half.

4 This is the way covenants are, you see, they are
5 always cut.

6 So you cut, you sever the limbs of this heifer and
7 then you stand in the middle of that surrounded by the blood,
8 and then this is what you will be doing with Jesse when you
9 get there.

10 This is what the Lord tells Samuel to tell them, and
11 Samuel says okay, fair enough.

12 "Samuel did what the Lord commanded and came to
13 Bethlehem.

14 "The elders of the city came to meet him trembling
15 and said, 'Do you come peaceably?'"

16 Because Samuel is a pretty imposing looking guy.
17 You can see this guy, he's coming in, we don't know what he's
18 traveling with, but he probably has a donkey.

19 It's like, oh, boy, I hope he's not here to lower
20 the boom.

21 "Do you come peaceably?"

22 He said, "Peaceably. I have come to sacrifice to
23 the Lord. Sanctify yourselves and come with me to the
24 sacrifice."

25 So he gets ready, probably out on the edge of town,

1 "And he sanctified Jesse and his sons and invited them to the
2 sacrifice."

3 Here's the part of the story, if you're old like me
4 you might remember the old TV series in the '70s, may have
5 been in the '60s, Bonanza.

6 Raise your hand if you remember Bonanza. I loved
7 that show.

8 I like to think of this story as kind of like Ben
9 Cartwright with the boys.

10 Do you remember Ben? He's the old man on the
11 Ponderosa, and it's a big ranch, and he's got these three
12 sons.

13 Do you remember their names? Who is the big one?
14 Hoss. Who is the little one? Little Joe. And who is the
15 other one? Adam.

16 And I don't know if you knew this or not, but I
17 learned the words to the song Bonanza when I was in college.
18 Now that is trivia.

19 "Hoss and Joe and Adam know every rock and pine,
20 Bonanza. Isn't that great? I was going to get Gary's guitar
21 out and do that.

22 But, you see, maybe this is helpful for you, because
23 when they came, they are out there having this sacrifice and
24 Jesse gets his three strapping boys out.

25 And we don't have time to look all these guys up in

1 the Bible, but they are in the Bible.

2 "When they came, he looked on Eliab," that's a guy
3 who is kind of like Hoss, big strapping son, mountain of a
4 man, very persuasive personality, and when he came out he
5 thought, "Surely the Lord's anointed is now before the Lord."

6 This has got to be him. He's an impressive looking
7 guy. Look at the size of him, Hoss Cartwright.

8 "But the Lord said to Samuel, 'Do not look on his
9 appearance or on the height of his stature, because I have
10 rejected him, for the Lord does not see as mortals see. They
11 look on the outward appearance, but the Lord looks on the
12 heart.'"

13 So Jesse calls in Adam, the other son, Abinadab.
14 He's the smartest of Jesse's sons and intellectually very
15 astute, he's a good business guy.

16 He made him pass before Samuel and he said, "Neither
17 has the Lord chosen this one."

18 In other words, it's not the big one, it's not the
19 smart one.

20 "Then Jesse made Shammah," Little Joe, "pass by.
21 And he said, 'Neither has the Lord chosen this one.'"

22 So he has passed up Little Joe, who has the really
23 cool cowboy boots on and shiny belt buckle, really killer
24 hair like Michael Landon had, he's kind of a poser in a way,
25 he's pretty cool.

1 The thing I liked about Little Joe, he shot his gun
2 with his left hand. Remember that?

3 So he's just passed up Hoss and Adam and Little Joe,
4 and then Jesse has got to be going, golly, they were the
5 cream of the crop.

6 But what Samuel does hear, and what the Lord does,
7 "Jesse made Shammah pass by and he said, 'Neither has the
8 Lord chosen this one.' Jesse made seven of his sons pass
9 before Samuel."

10 He says get these other four, so all seven of them
11 have passed by Samuel, all to be rejected, and those four
12 aren't even named.

13 Hoss and Joe and Adam, they are the ones that get
14 the father's name, and the other ones, their names are listed
15 in the scriptures, but they are not here oddly.

16 "And Samuel said to Jesse, 'The Lord has not chosen
17 any of these.'

18 "Samuel said to Jesse, 'Are all your sons here?'

19 "And he said, 'There remains yet the youngest, but
20 he is keeping the sheep.'"

21 There's one left, but you don't want him, and he's
22 not even named. He's out taking care of the sheep on the
23 ranch.

24 And it's interesting, "And Samuel says to Jesse,
25 'Send and bring him, for we will not sit down until he comes

1 here.'

2 "He sent and brought him in. Now he was ruddy," he
3 had a bit of a red complexion, he had been out in the field,
4 "and had beautiful eyes and was handsome."

5 He was a little guy, probably about 17 years old.

6 "The Lord said, 'Rise and anoint him.'"

7 Notice it says rise. Get up now.

8 "The Lord said, 'Rise and anoint him, for this is
9 the one.'

10 "Then Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him
11 in the presence of his brothers and the spirit of the Lord
12 came mightily upon David from that day forward. Samuel then
13 set out and went to Ramah"

14 This is the first time David is named. We don't
15 know who it is. He's just the eighth son.

16 But it's fascinating, isn't it, that Hoss and Joe
17 and Adam are passed over, then the next four, they aren't
18 quite good enough either, there remains the youngest, he's
19 out there tending the sheep, kind of out there in the lot,
20 playing his guitar, by the way, like Eric Clapton,
21 practicing.

22 I would just like to pause it right there and maybe,
23 if you are like me, you've lived part of this story.

24 Maybe, first of all, you have had those feelings of
25 being rejected, and it might even be from your own parents.

1 That's kind of what the information is here. Well,
2 there is the one youngest one, he's just the runt of the
3 litter, he doesn't really matter, not quite up to the
4 standards of his brothers.

5 So if you have ever had those feelings of rejection,
6 and it may come in a myriad of ways, maybe you were not
7 chosen for the high school musical, maybe you weren't chosen
8 for dodgeball, and you know that feeling of I wish they would
9 choose me and you have been passed over, you were too big,
10 too small, too heavy, too thin, too smart, not smart enough,
11 not productive enough for the corporate ladder. Maybe you've
12 had these feelings.

13 So this story speaks to that, because the world does
14 look at a different qualification than the Lord looks at.

15 So maybe you've been there, and maybe you've even
16 been the parent who has the one child, you know, that's not
17 the one that is the star.

18 There's grace for that as well. You can repent of
19 that.

20 So this is a story that really kind of gets into
21 those feelings of rejection, and here's the thing.

22 Even his father's condescending opinion of him is
23 intimated here.

24 It's kind of this, he stinks, he's out with the
25 sheep, he's no good, he's little, he's less than, he's not

1 qualified, surely you don't want him, I've got better
2 specimens than this.

3 Maybe you've lived part of this story. But, you
4 see, David is chosen because of what God sees in him; not
5 what the world sees in him.

6 And so are you. That's your calling. That's your
7 calling.

8 Some of us have got resumes of cool stuff. Some of
9 us have never been rejected.

10 But, you see, bad theology would say that God just
11 chooses the sharpest knives in the drawer.

12 The ragtag bunch that Jesus chose wasn't because
13 they were all the biggest, smartest, best looking, most
14 capable, you see.

15 The point is that we're really called, and I'm not
16 just talking about people that get up here and talk.

17 You are called, and you're called a child of God, a
18 child of the King.

19 You have been anointed. You have been marked with
20 the cross of Christ forever. You are sealed with the Holy
21 Spirit. The horn of oil.

22 See, what we tend to default back to, I'm not very
23 skilled, I'm not very good at that.

24 So there are two things that come to mind on that.
25 There are some of us that have been called earlier in life

1 like Samuel, some of us later in life like David, or Paul.

2 But the point is we are all called. The Bible is
3 very specific about that.

4 It's not just certain people, and there are these
5 things, some people like to talk about conversion.

6 If you don't have it this way, then you are not
7 really in the tribe kind of thing.

8 I like to think of budding roses and also bee
9 stings.

10 Some of us have been stung by the bee and we know of
11 a dramatic moment when God called us, like a bee sting, whoa,
12 what was that?

13 And others of us it's like a budding rose, we have
14 never had that total intensification of God's presence, but
15 we have been growing in the garden and we are producing this
16 beautiful flower.

17 You know people like that. You are sitting by some
18 of them.

19 But others have had a bee sting and, you see, both
20 are equally valid of calling.

21 They are both real. I want to say they are both
22 absolutely real, and you need to know that.

23 And here is the thing. Like I say, God looks at the
24 heart; he doesn't look at our resume.

25 It's not what you know that matters. It's who you

1 know. You've heard that in business. It's not what you
2 know; it's who you know, family connection kind of thing.

3 But that's theologically not correct either. It's
4 actually who knows you that matters, because you are a child
5 of the King. The King of the universe.

6 Our God is an awesome God, and he has called you
7 really to rise. This is the one.

8 God doesn't call the qualified; he qualifies the
9 called.

10 Look at the dysfunction in the Bible. Ely, this
11 priest that Samuel guess to, his sons are about the rottenest
12 apples in the bunch.

13 And look at the dysfunctional family that David
14 comes up out of.

15 But, you see, you're being called, and God will
16 qualify you, but you have to rise, not just lay down.

17 And this is crucial to the understanding of
18 covenants; that God is the one who initiates and this being
19 precedes the doing. Grace before law.

20 Jesus loves me, this I know, for the Bible tells me
21 so, and I'm called then to receive that and to rise within
22 that and to share that with the world.

23 Three-dimensional. RISE. Real Involvement
24 Satisfies Everyone. Not just one-dimensional.

25 Sarah Groves is coming this week. I asked Martha in

1 our office, I said is there a song that Sarah sings that
2 might speak about this unconditional grace and covenant of
3 love and Martha sends me this great song.

4 Brad, do you want to hit that great song? She's
5 coming here in a couple of weeks.

6

7 "In the midst of passing bravery

8 In the face of our own injuries

9 It's the constant generosity of grace

10 It's the beauty in the tales we tell

11 It's the pressing on and ending well

12 In the joy that comes when we give ourselves away

13 Friend, I know your heart is raw

14 But love is such a worthy cause

15 Picking up and pressing on

16 Oh, love is still a worthy cause

17 Like the touch that starts the thaw

18 Oh, love is such a worthy cause

19 Or the word that breaks that long hard pause"

20

21 It's the word that breaks that long hard pause, and
22 that word today is the Lord looks upon your heart. He
23 doesn't look at you like mortals look at you.

24 If you are dealing with some of that rejection and
25 body image, you were too tall, you were too small, you would

1 be acceptable if you lost a few pounds, or gained a few
2 pounds, or if you could sing better, or if you were smarter,
3 we need to exorcise that stuff through God's grace.

4 Love is such a worthy cause.

5 I close with a matrix here of challenges and
6 support. Do you remember, Lowell talked about it, we tried
7 to come back to it a bit.

8 Different Christians, different churches, do this
9 differently, unfortunately the way we are.

10 I was just listening to a tape this morning, and
11 what we want is high challenge and high support, instead of
12 just high challenge with no support, or just support and no
13 challenge.

14 And what traditionally might happen in an unbalanced
15 relationship with Jesus, one that is not covenant-based with
16 an understanding that also since God has invested in me I'm
17 part of his kingdom advancement, is in the lower right-hand
18 quadrant you would have high support and no challenge.

19 And what happens when people live in that
20 environment is they are just plain out bored and they are
21 just plain out lazy.

22 It's kind of like I don't have to do anything,
23 because I'm not called.

24 It's just the people who get paid to work at the
25 church are the only ones that are called, but they will come

1 calling me, they will support me in every aspect of life, but
2 there is no challenge, just total lethargy.

3 On the other side of that would be low support, low
4 challenge.

5 We see that in some Christians. It's kind of like
6 the church is totally irrelevant.

7 I was reading in the New York Times yesterday about
8 in Yankee Stadium the pope is coming and I can't imagine the
9 administrative nightmare, because our brothers and sisters of
10 the Roman Catholic persuasion, when they have communion they
11 have to be very careful of no leftovers.

12 And they are trying to figure out how many people
13 are coming to this mass at Yankee Stadium, can you imagine,
14 and they are going to commune eighty thousand people in
15 fourteen minutes.

16 And then they have to make sure they have the exact
17 number of wafers to do this thing, because their belief is
18 the body Christ, you don't put it back in the drawer and use
19 it next week.

20 But you see what can traditionally happen is if we
21 don't have any support and any challenge we are just mumbo
22 jumbo hemoglobin, irrelevant.

23 And then the other quadrant, the upper left, would
24 be high challenge, no support.

25 Those are those churches, those are those Christians

1 that are always trying to come up with the next best thing,
2 challenge, challenge, challenge.

3 And it's interesting, if you read church literature,
4 there's this wonderful document that came out of Willow
5 Creek, the largest church in our country, Christian church,
6 great church, they have determined that most of their most
7 committed, most generous members, are just plain exhausted or
8 bored, because all it is for them is a transaction. Money,
9 worship.

10 There isn't a partnership of three-dimensional lives
11 where they are actually relationally trying to make a
12 difference in the world.

13 That's what happens when we have challenge and
14 support. That's what we are talking about,
15 three-dimensional.

16 That you are challenged, but you're also supported,
17 so that you are not just a partaker; you are a participant.

18 You're called to rise, not just sit in the bleachers
19 and watch. Not just sit in the stands and receive.

20 I just wanted to try and clarify that and we'll
21 speak a little bit more on that as things come.

22 But I don't know where God is calling you to rise.
23 I want to be in the upper right-hand quadrant and I want our
24 church to be there, too, because it's energizing, it's
25 enthusing, and it's Biblical.

1 We have to have the law, the challenge, as well as
2 the gospel, the support, the grace, but it comes from our
3 calling.

4 It comes from the fact that God sees not as mortals
5 see, but he sees what is in your heart.

6 As I said, David is out playing the guitar for
7 seventeen years with the sheep, perfect practice before
8 getting to work with God's people, who are also sheep.

9 You see, some of us have gotten stinky by that and
10 stunk by that, it's dirty, sheep are supposedly the dumbest
11 animal in the kingdom, like the turkey.

12 You know the whole thing, they break a leg every
13 once in awhile when they wander, they can't handle water,
14 they get all disoriented, sheep just aren't real sharp.

15 But what God was doing with David is the same thing
16 he has been doing with you.

17 He's preparing you for this very moment when you
18 just kind of go, oh, I'm called, huh?

19 And I'm not called to go lay down; I'm called to
20 rise, and he's got this horn of oil, he just anoints you
21 today.

22 So I hope that's a blessing to you. I am going to
23 ask Wenda if she would lead us in a response.

24 PASTOR WENDA FRY: I think part of the message that
25 I realize Mark was feeling very passionate about was that

1 you're called.

2 It's not just the two of us up here who are called
3 and set apart for ministry, that you are called.

4 I saw him say that very strongly to you. You are
5 called.

6 And it doesn't matter your age. You are called to
7 Jesus' side and you're called to live a three-dimensional
8 life.

9 I know, I'm thinking also, I'm one that has been
10 rejected, like many of you, and even abandoned at times.

11 And it has taken me a while to give those injuries,
12 as Sarah Groves sang about, to Jesus so that he can use them
13 for his glory.

14 I would like to pray for you, because I know that
15 Mark wants you to know you are called.

16 And sometimes those injuries pile up in our lives
17 and keep us from accepting that call.

18 So it could be something as simple as not being
19 chosen for dodgeball, really, you all remember those times.

20 So if it was that, I invite you to come forward. I
21 want to pray for you, because I do want you to let go of
22 those things that are keeping you from accepting your call.

23 So were you not chosen for dodgeball, or on the
24 team? Come on up. Nobody needs to know.

25 Were you always told unless you take these lessons

1 you're not to be any good.

2 Were you told something like that? Were you not
3 chosen for the musical? Come on up.

4 Did you fall in love with someone and they rejected
5 you? Come on up.

6 Because those injuries tend to pile up and keep us
7 from accepting the call that we are anointed of God.

8 Maybe you tried out for a part in a play or a
9 community theater and you were rejected.

10 Any form of rejection whatsoever, it can hold us
11 back. I'll wait here, if you want to, I would like to pray
12 for you.

13 No one else needs to know what that rejection was,
14 abandonment was.

15 If you would like a release from that, I invite you
16 to come forward.

17 Lord, I praise and thank you for the courage of
18 these disciples before us, because they represent each and
19 every one of us here today.

20 We've all had those moments where we thought I'm not
21 good enough, I have not done enough.

22 We've all had those times as children where we
23 thought why couldn't I have that, get that, do that, even as
24 adults.

25 So, Lord, thank you for the courage of these

1 disciples.

2 I pray your anointing upon them right now. You have
3 given us the oil of anointing through Christ through his
4 anointing of being our Savior.

5 I pray that through Christ these disciples are
6 anointed with your love today and a special release of that
7 memory that brings them forward to your altar of blessing
8 today.

9 Lord, may their courage and their desire to move
10 some of those blocks and give them to you so that they can
11 hear your call, may that inspire them today, Lord, to go from
12 this place.

13 Thank you for your word that brings the truth to our
14 hearts.

15 We ask you to write your name upon our hearts always
16 and burn your word into our minds so we can be the people of
17 God that you want us to be, and all of God's disciples said
18 together, amen.

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