

Corporate Rhythms

Sermon Synopsis: When Jesus rose from the dead, it changed everything, including how God's people meet. Listen as pastor Lazo explains the beauty and power of the Sunday morning gathering, and the story it tells.

[Acts 2:1-4 \(ESV\)](#)

When the day of Pentecost arrived, they were all together in one place. And suddenly there came from heaven a sound like a mighty rushing wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. And divided tongues as of fire appeared to them and rested on each one of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance.

So why *do* we meet on Sundays?

The resurrection changes everything!

1. A new script (Jesus rose)

[Acts 1:4-5 \(ESV\)](#)

And while staying with them he ordered them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to **wait for the promise of the Father**, which, he said, "you heard from me; for John baptized with water, but **you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit** not many days from now."

2. A new practice (gathering)

[Acts 2:1 \(ESV\)](#)

When the day of Pentecost arrived, **they were all together in one place.**

[Acts 20:7 \(ESV\)](#)

On the first day of the week, when we were gathered together to break bread, Paul talked with them, intending to depart on the next day, and he prolonged his speech until midnight.

3. A new rhythm (repeated)

[1 Corinthians 16:2 \(ESV\)](#)¹

On the first day of every week, each of you is to put something aside and store it up, as he may prosper, so that there will be no collecting when I come.

¹ Written 53-57 A.D. (approximately 20 years after Jesus' resurrection)

Historically, Sundays are called, "The Lord's Day."²

The resurrection caused such a shift in some 1st century Jewish followers, that hundreds of them broke from the millennia-old Hebrew practice of meeting on Saturday to meeting on Sunday. Christians have been doing that ever since.

The obstacles to "Sunday" gatherings

- Too busy and come late or miss a bunch
- Here to consume (but only the teaching)
- We don't feel what we used to feel
- We don't feel valued
- We don't see the value

Why make Sunday the best part of your week?

Three reasons...

1. Worship of God

- Worship. (see "tongues" **v4**) Theologians call Pentecost, *the reversal of Babel*

Genesis 11:1-4 (NIV)

Now the whole world had **one language and a common speech**. As people moved eastward, they found a plain in Shinar and settled there. They said to each other, "Come, let's make bricks and bake them thoroughly." They used brick instead of stone, and tar for mortar. Then they said, "Come, let us build ourselves a city, with a tower that reaches to the heavens, **so that we may make a name for ourselves**

People gathered using common language to make a name for *themselves*.

Acts 2:4-11 (NLT)

And everyone present was filled with the Holy Spirit and began speaking in other languages, as the Holy Spirit gave them this ability. At that time there were devout Jews from every nation living in Jerusalem. When they heard the loud noise, everyone came running, and they were bewildered to hear their own languages being spoken by the believers. They were completely amazed. "How can this be?" they exclaimed. "These people are all from Galilee, and yet we hear them speaking in our own native languages! Here we are—Parthians, Medes, Elamites, people from Mesopotamia, Judea, Cappadocia, Pontus, the province of Asia, Phrygia, Pamphylia, Egypt, and the areas of Libya around Cyrene, visitors from Rome (both Jews and converts to Judaism), Cretans, and Arabs. **And we all hear these people speaking in our own languages about the wonderful things God has done!**"

After the resurrection and the pouring out of the Holy Spirit, people gathered using language to make a name for *God*.

²The apostle John seemed to start this tradition: "I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and I heard behind me a loud voice like a trumpet" (Revelation 1:10). This was written between 81-96 A.D., approximately 50 years after the resurrection.

Ever since then, Sundays have been the day that God's people gather together beginning the week on God's terms: risen King!

How do we worship God together?

Worship/Abby

- Expressive singing (**singing, sacraments, prayer, carpets, lift hands!**)
- Emotive preaching (**amen!**)
 - “For all the promises of God find their Yes in him. That is why it is through him that **we utter our Amen** to God for his glory.” (2 Corinthians 1:20, ESV)
- Renew (mind), Express (heart) to God
 - **Yet hundreds of people come late for worship.** (Come on time!)

2. Formation of soul

We are constantly being formed and shaped, sometimes unintentionally, by the stories we continue to live out and practice. James K.A. Smith calls these a *liturgy*.

Liturgy = rituals that are loaded with a story about who we are and what we're for³

Example: the shopping mall⁴

When you immerse yourself in those rituals over and over, it shapes you on the inside.

James K.A. Smith (You Are What You Love: The Spiritual Power of Habit)

Worship works from the top down, you might say. In worship we don't just come to show God our devotion and give him our praise; we are called to worship because in this encounter God (re)makes and molds us top-down. Worship is the arena in which God recalibrates our hearts, reforms our desires, and rehabituates our loves. Worship isn't just something we do; it is where God does something to us. Worship is the heart of discipleship because it is the gymnasium in which God retrains our hearts.⁵

Sunday = liturgy (story told through worship, observance, and practice)

We are being immersed in practices and observances that retell a story:

Christ is risen.

*We have been raised with Christ.*⁶

Sunday is like a mini-Easter!

We immerse ourselves in the story of Christ every week.⁷

INTRO: I've been to many different denominations over the years. Reality is where my life has been most significantly formed. But not because it's better than others—it has its weaknesses—but because I never left. The other churches were great! I just never stuck around long enough to be shaped by them. 700+ Sunday gatherings (and everything in between) at Reality have shaped me tremendously, as they would have at any other church. But Sundays have lost their luster with many.

³ James K.A. Smith. *You Are What You Love: The Spiritual Power of Habit*. (Brazos, 2016). 46

⁴ Ibid. 41

⁵ Ibid. 77

⁶ Colossians 3:1-3

⁷ Mike Cosper. *Rhythms of Grace: How the Church's Worship Tells the Story of the Gospel*. 122

We may look for that momentary experience that makes us feel good. (it happens!)
But learn also to value the slow shaping of our habits, our orientation, our loves.
Partly through *expression*. But also through more formative practices.

Which is also why you see more *practices* on Sundays (not only expressive)
Kids: they learn to naturally express themselves: "I'm hungry." "I want that."
We also need to teach them things that do not come naturally, but are important:
"I'm sorry." "Thank you." "Please."⁸ (e.g. silence, confession, etc)

Sunday's liturgy, from the very beginning,

- We are *called* by God to worship Him,
- We respond by declaring and singing about Who He is.
- We hear about what He is doing, and give generously to His work in our city.
- We hear His heart and will through Scripture.
- We respond by reflecting in song and prayer.
- We practice the Word.
- We are sent out into the world with a blessing.
 - Over and over and over
 - We are recalibrating our hearts to a new script together

Come as often as you can!

3. Encouragement of others

Ephesians 5:18-20 (NIV)

Do not get drunk on wine, which leads to debauchery. Instead, be filled with the Spirit, **speaking to one another with psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit.** Sing and make music from your heart to the Lord, always giving thanks to God the Father for everything, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

There is something powerful about singing "Let the King of my heart be the fire inside my veins" with three hundred other people.

Hebrews 10:24-25 (ESV)

And **let us consider how to stir up one another** to love and good works, **not neglecting to meet together**, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.

Sundays are the unique day of the week where the whole body gathers, and emerges themselves in formative and expressive worship that, over time, begins to shape them together into the people of God who go out into the city.

Sunday Rhythms

1. **Come on time** (because it's for God)
2. **Come often** (because we need to be reshaped)
3. **Come with anticipation** (to participate, to shape your love for God, to express that love)

⁸ I got this analogy from Aaron Niequist. *The Eternal Current: How a Practice-Based Faith Can Save Us From Drowning.* (Moped Media, 2018). 60-61