

# Chasing Carrots 5 - Comfort

## Chasing Carrots: Comfort Bumper Vid

Redemption Church! My favorite peeps! People online! My favorite digital peeps!

My name is Chris Fluitt and I am so blessed to be a part of Redemption Church. We are not a mega church, but we are a mighty church doing huge things for God.

## Chasing Carrots

Many people are chasing something they will never catch. We are in the final week of our Chasing Carrots message series. We have talked about the carrots of Fame, Money & Things, Perfection, and Approval. Today I want to talk to you about one more carrot.

Have you noticed that our culture is obsessed with the idea of “living our best life.”

A lot of advertising hits on this obsession.

- Medication – Take this medication so that you can have your best life...
- Buy this car. You deserve luxury.

Social media

- Hashtag #bestlife with cliché pics
- Tanned legs at the beach facing the ocean
- Legs or hotdogs

There are several books with the titles like find your best life, choose your best life, live your best life... One such televangelist even wrote a hugely successful book “Your best life now.”

Our culture is obsessed with the idea of our best life. So with that in mind, we are going to talk about a carrot we have chased most of our life... Comfort.

## Comfort

I do not like to be uncomfortable. Raise your hand if you don't like being uncomfortable. How could there possibly be anything wrong with chasing comfort?

1 John 2:15 (NIV2011) Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, love for the Father is not in them.

Stern words from John to not love the world. What do you think that means?

Let's start with what loving "The World" doesn't mean?

- Doesn't mean we shouldn't love people in world...Jesus tells us to even love our enemies. (Matt 5:44)
- Doesn't mean we shouldn't enjoy the gifts God has given...every good gift comes from God. (James 1:17)
- Doesn't mean we shouldn't love things found in nature... God created everything in nature and it all testifies to the glory of God! (Psalm 19:1, Romans 1:20)

So what does John mean by "THE WORLD?" The Greek word here for "World" is the work Kosmos.

## **The World – Kosmos**

Kosmos means more than just the physical planet. Kosmos means arrangement, order, government, & system.

With that context John must be saying to love the cultural system & order of this world. That makes sense right?

We have seen the system of this world at work. We know what that pattern looks like... power grabbing & corruption... Lust & anger... the idea that you deserve the best things so do whatever it takes to have the best... even if it hurts others. It makes sense that we should not love this cultural system right??

Hidden within this cultural system is the desire for comfort.

## **Comfort**

Think about it. Do people try to grab power, steal, & lie so that they can have a more uncomfortable life or a more comfortable life? Comfortable right!?

Think about the life you desire... do you desire a more comfortable life or a more uncomfortable life?

If we are honest... everyone in the room... everyone watching online... if we are honest we would admit that our desired life... the life we dream of... would be more defined by ease than struggle.

If left unchecked this desire leads us to a life that doesn't need God. You don't need God's help because there is no struggle.

If left unchecked the comfortable life will have us drifting aimlessly down a lazy river.

Comfort makes us lazy.

## **We get lazy**

For you that are married... let me ask you if you remember "dating you?"

Gentlemen, when we were dating we were actively trying to win the heart of the girl.

- You planned out dates and made it special.
- Dudes, you actually cleaned your home... you made the effort. You wore clean clothes!!
- Some of you wrote poems and songs.
- Some of you sent flowers for no reason other than you wanted her to know you loved her.
- You always answered her call and you always called her.

That was dating you... what about married you? Have you gotten lazy?

Ladies: Think about "dating you..."

- You thought and planned out what you would wear.
- You shaved your legs and went to a fitness zumba, taibo, pilates class multiple times a week..
- Some of you made mix tapes...
- You were never tempted to surf social media on date night.

That was dating you... what about married you?

We get comfortable. We get lazy.

I want to challenge every married couple to stop being lazy! Your partner deserves your best effort. Give your best to each other.

We are told to not love the pattern and system of this world. That is a pattern that seeks for ease only to become lazy.

## **Chasing a counterfeit comfort**

We are chasing a counterfeit comfort. Counterfeit is designed to be a close copy... a substitute for something with value while the counterfeit has no value.

Could it be that we are chasing something counterfeit and has no value instead of finding the true valuable thing we desire?

I want to give you 3 things chasing a counterfeit comfort will do.

### **1. REVEALS SPIRITUAL EMPTINESS**

When we are chasing something external it reveals that we are lacking something internal.

We often over eat... we chase food... when we are lacking something inside.

People chase an extra-marital affair when they are lacking something internal.

Maybe you don't need that new phone you are obsessing over... instead you need to ask what am I lacking on the inside?

Maybe your desire for likes and follows in social media is revealing a lack you have internally.

Nothing external can satisfy when you are spiritually empty within!

1 John 2:15 (NIV2011) Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, love for the Father is not in them.

We need the love of the Father within us! Only that will satisfy.

Think about the love of God! Think about the love revealed on the cross as Jesus died for the lost, the hurting, the poor, the weak, the confused, the Jew, the gentile, the Christian, the atheist...

That love is not counterfeit! That love is the real deal! That is the love we need. We need that love on the inside. If that love is on the inside it changes us.

2 Corinthians 5:14-15 (NIV2011) For Christ's love compels us, because we are convinced that one died for all, and therefore all died. And he died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who died for them and was raised again.

The love of Jesus compels us! The love of Jesus causes us to no longer live for our own selves but for HIM who died and was raised again!

Some of you are missing the compulsion of Christ to do big great things in God's kingdom and for others! Could it be that you are spiritually empty and chasing something counterfeit? Maybe God has dealt with you about helping others... giving your time and money... volunteering or simply stopping to help someone broke down on the side of the road... Christ's love COMPELS US... but maybe we are too busy chasing something counterfeit... too busy living for ourselves...

Chasing a counterfeit comfort reveals spiritual emptiness and it eliminates our need for faith.

## **2.ELIMINATES OUR NEED FOR FAITH**

Hebrews 11 is the faith chapter. Nothing in that chapter was done comfortably... it was all done by faith.

By Faith...

- Abel offered a better sacrifice
- Enoch was taken by God
- Noah was convinced about flood even though he had never witnessed such a thing... By faith he built that ark and saved himself and his family.
- Abraham left home to occupy a promised land
- Sarah believed she would have a child at an old age
- Joseph on his death bed spoke of the exodus of Israel from Egyptian slavery
- Moses with a speech impediment was used by God to face down Pharaoh and deliver Israel.

Are any of these things easy? None of the people lived in comfort. They lived in faith!

They all faced hard situations that required faith in God. In faith, God showed up and did the impossible.

Some of you are desiring comfort but I have come to tell you that you have everything you really need when you just stand in faith! ON CHRIST THE SOLID ROCK I STAND... ALL OTHER GROUND IS SINKING SAND!

Hebrews 11:6 (NIV2011) And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him.

## **Without faith it is impossible**

You can't ever get it done chasing something counterfeit... but you can all things through Christ who is your strength!

Chasing a counterfeit comfort reveals spiritual emptiness, it eliminates our need for faith, it will make you a fraud.

### **3. Makes you a fraud**

The people in that Instagram picture that look like they are living their best life... they aren't... they are under such stress. It is all a mirage. It is counterfeit.

We are always so surprised when a wealthy handsome movie star commits suicide... No one living their "Best Life" would commit suicide right??

The chasing of a counterfeit comfort will never bring you the real thing. So you will have to fake it..

We aren't living a life of ease in the real world but we put on a show for everyone else...

When people ask how we are doing we say that everything is great when it really isn't...

We never post anything on social media that doesn't put a happy face on an unhappy life...

This pursuit of the counterfeit makes us frauds. This is the plan of the world... the culture of our age... Do not love this fraud...

Instead we need to embrace the authentic

## **Embrace the authentic**

We need to get real. Life is not always easy. We are not always comfortable. The counterfeit comfort is not always attainable and it is never sustainable.

When our paradigm is off and our expectations are misplaced, we have to realize that the love of the system of this world is leading us down a dangerous and destructive path. We have to align our expectations of life with scripture.

Truths like –

You reap what you sow... sometimes our discomfort is our own fault.

It rains on the just & the unjust... discomfort comes to everyone. Your unease in life does not mean you are out of God's will.

As we align our lives with God's truth we will begin to discover an authentic comfort.

## **Authentic comfort**

We will learn an authentic comfort. There is a comfort that is solely dependent on God and not on the external things of this world.

You can be comfortable even when you are facing a giant... like David facing Goliath.

You can be comfortable in the worst kind of life storm... like Jesus sleeping on the boat.

You can experience a comfort that even though you walk through the valley of the shadow of death you will fear no evil because you are with me... Your rod & your staff they comfort me... You God prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies... You God! I will dwell with you in your house forever.

These aren't just empty words. It is real and it is authentic. This kind of comfort does not wilt under the pressure of the world.

2 Corinthians 1:3-5 (NIV2011) Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves receive from God. For just as we share abundantly in the

sufferings of Christ, so also our comfort abounds through Christ.

You want authentic comfort? We serve the God of all comfort! God is the source of authentic comfort.

He comforts you in all our troubles... so that we can comfort others.

Only in Christ can your suffering be abundant, yet your comfort abound.

This comfort that comes from God is not a counterfeit carrot chase... it is the real deal.

## musician

I am drawing to a close. I am praying that today you will receive the authentic comfort that comes from God. But first I want to challenge you to embrace divine discomfort.

## Embrace Divine Discomfort

There are times where God calls you to discomfort. There are times he leads you through a storm. There are times God draws you into a war zone. There are times the Spirit drives you into the wilderness to face the devil head on. Should we face these moments with dread and fear... nope!

James 1:2-4 (NIV2011) Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance. Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything.

There is a divine discomfort that produces the best in you.

Does comfort produce the best in us...

Does comfort produce six pack abs and growing biceps? No discomfort produces that... Comfort actually produces bad health...

Does comfort produce good grades in school and a promotion? No discomfort produces that... Comfort actually produces the opposite.

There is a divine discomfort that actually brings out the best in you.

The most amazing moments are when God steps into my pain and produces the impossible.

## **This is not your best life yet**

Quit chasing the pattern of this world. Quit faking it. Embrace this moment. Embrace the authentic. Embrace faith. Embrace what only God can do.

Your best life will be in heave. Right now we have work to do.

We need to stop chasing counterfeit comfort.. We need to stop being frauds.

Some in this room you are deeply troubled. You are going through a terrible struggle. The God of all Comfort is here for you today. Come receive His comfort today. Allow Him to bring out the best in you.

Some of you in this room are way too comfortable. God wants to call you into divine discomfort. He wants you to comfort others... serve others... he wants you to get off your couch... Will you follow him into discomfort today?