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Transaction Complete

After a recent iphone update I went into the alarm app and put in how many hours of sleep I prefer and that syncs up with when my alarm should go off. This triggers a notification to go off when my phone thinks I should start winding down. That alert sounds like the first few notes of a lullaby. It's cute and a bit embarrassing when it goes off at the beginning of a meeting I need to be fully awake for. Chances are, sometime this week, you either said out loud, thought to yourself, "I am so tired."

An internet search reveals articles too numerous to count, with titles like "why we are more exhausted than ever", "1 in 3 Americans admit to waking up already exhausted" and, "Americans spend 15000 hours feeling tired every year." I won't be offended if this sermon gives you the chance to rest your eyes.

If you are like me, you have been shaken awake by a notification or alert, trying to startle you into attention with some kind of breaking news as you attempt to drift off into dreamland. Or your attention has been pulled into the direction of a device and away from another human because of the perpetual draw of screen induced dopamine and persistent productivity in perpetuity. Even if the cost is human connection. I've been there. Guilty as charged. I've responded to mundane emails at obscene hours, because that's how they've trained us and how the world has catechized you and me and lulled us into participation in its liturgies. Gestures. Veneration. Postures of prayer.

There is tiredness that can be caused by a multitude of factors and interruptions then there is *soul tired*. That could be caused by an entourage of outrages and more. That's the point.

You are so worn out that the notifications don't even register for you any longer. You've been striving, reaching, working, stretching, looking so long it's like you've been poured out and left dry. Like you're driving on a high speed interstate with no off ramp. Maybe the notifications come from inside of your heart. You know how they startle you awake. Maybe you are caring for an elderly parent, or trying to stay above water at your job as waves become more tumultuous.

This week we are confronted with two kinds of economies. Both are personified. Living beings. One is familiar. The old ways of the world. A tale as old as time. The rich get richer at the expense of the poor. People are trampled upon as others rush to receive the fruits of their labor. Transactions are everything. It's the game. Bootstraps. Effort. Attention commodified. Earning

our way. Proving and defending our place. Rewarding hustle. Exhausting. No off ramp. Whether this economy has rewarded you or not we know how it goes.

The other economy is something else. Cross shaped. Crooked. From down below.

It's easy to get lost, distracted, and even exhausted trying to exegete our way to an understanding of this parable. Rich man. Squandering wealth. Shrewd management. An exhortation to make friends by means of dishonest wealth.

We need to look through the cross to this story. There we see that the dishonest manager/unjust steward is nothing short of Christ himself. The one who dies and rises and who by his death, brings others to life, resurrection, and a new day. Clean slate. Forgiveness for free. The one who is killed flanked by criminals on a cursed tree is the one who opens up a way for all the lost who've had the ledgers stacked against them. The despised, rejected, you and me.

God's system is about Jesus Christ and his effort. The one mediator between God and humanity. He gives up his life as a ransom. A transaction completed by his work. In God's economy it has all been taken care of. The race is over so the journey can begin. The books have not been cooked but destroyed all together. Torn like the curtain in the temple. It is grace. For real.

Let those notifications wake you up to where you reside. You belong to God, no tyrant or system. Bring it all. Let it go. Put it down. Let the defensiveness fall. Become present to your body, where Christ dwells. Relax into a peace that passes understanding. A God who never leaves you. Gives God's own life as nourishment. Breathes into your dry bones. Accepts you because of God's good pleasure.

Under this copacious canopy of pure gift we learn what Eugene Peterson calls the unforced rhythms of grace. Formed by the alerts we receive in this assembly. You know what those rhythms might sound like and how they feel when you let your body move to its music. Less startling ping more soteriological soul. Your own house music. Tracks like Freedom. Relief. Rest. On repeat. Let those beats be your metronome by day and by night. And your vision too.

It's about time to play me out for this sermon so if you've been asleep, now is the time to start waking up-- but this is your off ramp. Take the exit. It's not about escape but a different kind of posture. Participation. Protesting. Pleading. Praying with your feet. Open not closed. Dancing the world to rights. Not counting the cost. Living lightly in a world so heavy and losing yourself into resurrection, so others can learn the rhythms too. Pull over and turn it up.