Rumble Strip - Part 1

# Drifting

## (Hebrews 2:1)

Welcome to Christ’s Community Church. We’re kicking off a brand-new message series entitled Rumble Strip and what we’re going to be talking about for the next couple weeks is the warnings, those Rumble Strips that tell us when we’re drifting. And so, just so that we’re all on the same page, a Rumble Strip is a series of grooves or bumps in the road to warn a driver that something dangerous is ahead. Most often we find them on the centerline or maybe the shoulder of the road as a form of advance notification, warning us that the vehicle is drifting out of its lane. Other times you may find them one after another across the road warning the driver of a drastic change in speed or a stop sign ahead. And I personally like Rumble Strips because I think it’s so much better to have a warning, some sort of advance notification, telling you to pay attention, something that will warn you that you’re drifting or you’re close to a potentially dangerous situation.

And so, how do Rumble Strips work, how do they let you know that something dangerous is about to happen to you? Well, when your vehicle’s tires cross over them, those grooves or bumps cause a noise or a vibration which you can hear and you can feel. In other words, it affects your senses, and so often, when I’m driving with the kids, I will purposely drift over onto a Rumble Strip just to get them to stop arguing, to get their attention and refocus them, and it’s so much cheaper than therapy.

And so, we’re talking about Rumble Strips today, you can feel it, you can hear it, and it’s just a really simple way for the road to communicate to the driver, “Pay attention.” It’s as if the car is shouting, “Wake up!” A Rumble Strip is an advance notification of a potential problem, warning you that something needs to be addressed, maybe you’re just drifting a little bit. And that’s why we need Rumble Strips in our lives, because drifting happens.

Our theme verse today is found in Hebrews chapter 2, it is a Rumble Strip warning us, and in verse one it says,

“We must pay more careful attention, therefore, to what we have heard, so that we do not drift away” (Hebrews 2:1).

You see, drifting happens in our lives, drifting happens when you’re distracted, when you’re sleepy, or when you’ve fallen asleep at the wheel. And that’s why rumble strips are so helpful because it’s an alarm telling you that you’re drifting, it’s a wake-up call from the road. And like the Word of God, we must pay careful attention to what we’ve heard, because it is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting, and training in righteousness (2 Timothy 3:16).

The thing about drifting is that it happens in all of our lives, anybody can drift. It was funny this week because I was thinking about drifting and the movie “Cars” with Lightning McQueen and then when I came home Thursday night, the grandkids were over and they were watching it. I can’t remember the names of all the characters in the scene, but at one point in the movie, the tractor-trailer named Mack was falling asleep going down the road with Lightning McQueen in the back and drifted off of the road. And it was a funny scene, but the reality is that drifting happens in many ways in all of our lives; it could be socially, you may be drifting spiritually or even physically, but the thing about drifting is that you never drift the right way. You never drift where you want to go, you never drift to your destination, you never drift into your parking spot in the garage, and so in this series we want to learn to listen to the Holy Spirit’s voice. We want to tune in, having ears to hear, paying more careful attention so that we can make the necessary corrections in the direction that we are traveling.

If you have your Bible or your Bible app, could you turn to the book of Ephesians, because we’re going to camp here for a little while in this amazing letter. Ephesians one of my favorite books in the Bible, six amazing chapters written to the church in Ephesus in which the apostle Paul begins chapter after chapter describing the blessings of being in Christ. From the very beginning you can tell he’s excited, because he begins by saying in verse three,

“Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ” (Ephesians 1:3).

And then he proceeds to tell us one after another of all of these blessings, these perks and benefits of following Jesus. He keeps repeating over and over, because you’re in Christ, because you’re in him, because of your faith, because of your love; and he wants us to know that whatever we think about God’s blessing, it’s just so much better than that. Paul wants us to know that God is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us (Ephesians 3:20).

It’s to these believers in Ephesus, these believers living in this dark culture of the occult, in the pagan, idol worshiping Greek culture of Ephesus that the apostle Paul declares the blessings of being in Christ. He says you were chosen in him, included in him, have redemption in him, and in Christ you were marked with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit. He goes on and on, telling them and us how,

“God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus, in order that in the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of his grace, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus” (Ephesians 2:6-7).

And so, he just drives this point home, line upon line, telling us how we’re sharers in the promise in Christ Jesus, how God accomplished all of this in Christ Jesus.

The apostle continues telling us that we were created in Christ Jesus to do good works, that in Christ we’re brought near, in him God made one new man out of two, in him we’re joined together, in him we’re built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit. And in him and through faith in him we may approach God with freedom and confidence. And so, he says,

“Surely you’ve heard of him and were taught in him in accordance with the truth that is in Jesus” (Ephesians 4:21).

And so, Paul gives this long introduction describing the blessings of being in Christ because he wants you to know just how good God is. In fact, however good you think God is, Paul wants you to know that he’s so much better than that, and so chapter after chapter he makes this point before going on to describe the behaviors which follow that blessing.

This is important to understand because the Bible says that we’re saved by grace and therefore the blessing comes first. We’ve got to know and understand that because a lot of people will tell you that you’ve got to behave a certain way, you’ve got to get your act together, you’ve got to quit this or quit that, work on your marriage, get your temper under control, before God will bless you, but that’s actually backwards. The Bible says that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us, and God wants us to know that we’ve got all these blessings even though we don’t deserve them (Romans 5:8).

And so, in the first few chapters the apostle Paul described all these blessings before saying in Ephesians chapter 5, therefore,

“Be imitators of God as dearly loved children and live a life of love, just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God” (Ephesians 5:1-2).

In other words, God is saying, here’s my grace, here’s my forgiveness, here’s my Spirit, and here’s the promise of heaven. And so, as dearly loved children, live a life of love, be imitators of God, changing your behavior because,

“Having believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit, who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God's possession — to the praise of his glory” (Ephesians 1:13-14).

And so, it’s having believed, it’s God’s grace, it’s because you’re in Christ. It’s having believed and recognizing that you don’t deserve his forgiveness or his promised inheritance that drives your behavior. It’s recognizing that you’re already God’s possession, you’re not trying to earn his favor, you’ve already received his favor, and that’s what drives life change, that’s what makes you want to praise him, that’s what motivates you to live for him. God’s grace is what makes you want to work on that temper and to treat others better, so that you’re a living demonstration of his grace.

And that’s why Paul says with confidence in verse three,

“But among you there must not be even a hint of sexual immorality, or of any kind of impurity, or of greed, because these are improper for God's holy people. Nor should there be obscenity, foolish talk or coarse joking, which are out of place, but rather thanksgiving” (Ephesians 5:3-4).

In other words, these things are out of place, because when you truly believe, knowing that you belong to God, and that you’ve been “called you out of darkness into his wonderful light” that understanding changes you (1 Peter 2:9). The revelation of God’s grace changes your life to the very core of your being.

As we begin this series, if I can get one thing through to you today, I pray that you will understand that it’s not your behavior that gets you God’s blessings, it’s the blessings that determine your behavior. The blessings come first, like sowing seed, and so with believing there is an anticipation that there would be a harvest of righteousness, that there will be a correction of behavior. And that’s why the apostle says, “Of this you can be sure,” in verse five,

“No immoral, impure or greedy person — such a man is an idolater — has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God. Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of such things God's wrath comes on those who are disobedient. Therefore, do not be partners with them” (Ephesians 5:5-7).

In other words, it’s beneath the dignity and the high calling of a believer to indulge in the sins that belong to the world of darkness. And Paul has already named some of them here, many of which are prevalent today, but he says these are improper for God’s holy people, they’re out of place. And then in verse eight he reminds us why, he says because,

“You were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Live as children of light (for the fruit of the light consists in all goodness, righteousness and truth) and find out what pleases the Lord” (Ephesians 5:8-10).

The apostle lays out the contrast of light and darkness, and he says, “Now you are light in the Lord.” He echoes the words of Jesus from the Sermon on the Mount where he said, “Let your light shine before men.” And if you remember why? He said, “So that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven” (Matthew 5:16).

And so, to live as children of light, means to live openly before the eyes of God and man. Jesus described it this way in John chapter 3, he said,

“Everyone who does evil hates the light and will not come into the light for fear that his deeds will be exposed. But whoever lives by the truth comes into the light, so that it may be seen plainly that what he has done has been done through God" (John 3:20-21).

Of course, everything is uncovered and laid bare before the eyes of God, nothing is hidden from his sight, and we want to bring the light of God into a dark world. In fact, Jesus said it this way, he said,

“I have come into the world as a light, so that no one who believes in me should stay in darkness” (John 12:46).

Having believed we want to live as children of light, because light reveals God, light produces fruit, light reveals the truth and exposes the true character of all things. Light also exposes what is wrong, and so Paul tells us in verse 11,

“Have nothing to do with the fruitless deeds of darkness, but rather expose them. For it is shameful even to mention what the disobedient do in secret” (Ephesians 5:11-12).

“But everything exposed by the light becomes visible, for it is light that makes everything visible. This is why it is said: "Wake up, O sleeper, rise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you" (Ephesians 5:13-14).

It’s a wake-up call, it’s a Rumble Strip, but of course Paul walked everywhere, he couldn’t call an Uber, and so, we’re comparing walking to driving because we are a mobile society. You and I have the ability to accomplish in an hour what took Paul days because he was walking and we’re driving, but his warning to wake up is even more applicable to us today. Because all you’ve got to do is take your eyes off the road for a few seconds and drifting happens; that’s why Rumble Strips are so helpful when you’re drowsy, when you’re not paying attention, or when you’ve fallen asleep at the wheel. Rumble strips are a wake-up call just like the Scripture shouts at us, shaking us saying, "Wake up, O sleeper.”

You see, safe driving requires someone who is careful, someone who is paying attention, someone who is cautious because drifting happens on its own. Anybody can drift and drifting can be so subtle it’s almost unnoticeable, it’s natural, it’s automatic, and its involuntary. And so, to drive safely involves an alertness, an awareness of where the vehicle is in its lane, calculating and continually readjusting so that we don’t end up in the ditch or in the oncoming traffic. And as it is with driving, so it is with walking in the Christian life, that’s why the Holy Spirit said,

“We must pay more careful attention, therefore, to what we have heard, so that we do not drift away” (Hebrews 2:1).

I wonder if any of you are drifting, maybe you’re drifting in your relationships, drifting in your marriage, drifting in your diet or your lifestyle? Because drifting happens on its own, it happens in your life, in your health, and in your soul, but you never drift in the right direction. And so, we’ve got to pay more careful attention to what we’ve heard so that we don’t drift away.

I’m afraid that some of you may have fallen asleep. You’re tired of fighting, enduring bad situations, persevering through crisis and dilemmas, and it’s almost as if you’ve resigned yourself to fate just because you’re that tired. And some of you are trying to believe but you don’t know exactly what to believe, you don’t know whether to use your faith to accept your situation or to fight your situation because you don’t know whether this is God’s will or whether the devil is at work again and honestly you’re just tired. Others of you have resigned yourself to that place, that burden, that fear, or that uncertainty because you’re too tired. You don’t know how the story is going to end, but you’ve accepted that just maybe this is it.

The apostle Paul says,

"Wake up, O sleeper, rise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you" (Ephesians 5:14).

And so, we need to have the Holy Spirit apply the Rumble Strip where it’s needed because you can’t correct what you don’t know is coming. Others of us, the Rumble Strip is there, but we’ve learned to tune it out, we’ve dulled our senses so that it no longer has the ability to warn us and keep us out of the ditch, keeping us from a head on collision. And so, the apostle Paul says in verse 15,

“Be very careful, then, how you live — not as unwise but as wise, making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil. Therefore, do not be foolish, but understand what the Lord's will is” (Ephesians 5:15-17).

He says, be careful then how you live, because the days are evil, and some of you need to recognize that you’ve been slumbering. You see, some of you have demonic influences that want to make you accept the unacceptable, accept the abnormal and accept the uncertain. They want you to go to sleep in something that God is trying to get you out of. It’s rumbling, you can hear it, you can feel it, and God wants you to correct your direction, he wants you to move away from something that the enemy is trying to lure you into. It’s rumbling and it’s rumbling but you’ve been lured into a slumber, sleeping in a situation that God is trying to get you out of.

Somebody needs to shake themselves, you need to rouse yourself, because this isn’t just an event, and this isn’t how your story ends. God says, "Wake up, O sleeper, be very careful how you live, because the days are evil.” But I wonder if there’s somebody here or maybe someone watching online and the enemy of your soul has been trying to get you to sleep in a situation that God is trying to get you out of. I believe there are some of you who have drifted into a dark place, you’ve drifted into a place of uncertainty, but God is shaking things today, and you can feel it and you can hear it. God’s been shaking you, because you need to make a little correction in your course, you just need to turn the wheel a little to the left or a little to the right. But your spiritual enemy has lulled you to sleep, he’s trying to make you think that God doesn’t have another word for you, another sermon, another message, but God is shaking you, he’s trying to wake you up.

The Holy Spirit, through the apostle Paul says, “Therefore, do not be foolish, but understand what the Lord's will is. Do not get drunk on wine, which leads to debauchery. Instead, be filled with the Spirit” (Ephesians 5:17-18). And this is the action point in the text, but nothing in your life is going to change until you wake up. In fact, some of you may think you’re waiting on God, but God is waiting on you. He said, don’t be foolish, don’t get drunk on wine, but understand what the Lord’s will is and be filled with the Holy Spirit.

We talked about this last week, it’s as simple as asking and walking in it. God is trying to bring you out, bring you into a safe place, but you’re afraid to trust him, you’re afraid to surrender to him, afraid that it’s not for you or it’s just not real. And some of you have begun to wake up, but you’re still kind of groggy, you’re still not knowing, still uncertain, maybe awake but not fully awake. And I pray that you would understand what the Lord’s will is, that you would be filled with the Holy Spirit, and that you would walk with the Spirit trusting that he knows what he’s doing even when you’re uncertain.

As we close, I’ve been praying that you would have ears to hear, that we would learn to listen for the rumble strip, so that we can make the necessary adjustments. And I wonder if you’re already sensing that hum or that vibration indicating that there’s something in your life that needs to change? And maybe you know exactly what God has been saying to you, it’s been rumbling for a while, and you’ve been turning up the radio, trying to ignore it, trying to act like it’s not there, but God is rumbling about that person, that habit, or that decision.

I wonder if there are maybe a few of you who would be bold enough to say I want to hear it? And maybe you would be bold enough to say, “Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting” (Psalms 139:23-24). As we’re reflecting on God’s word, as he’s stirring us from our slumber, I want to ask you if you will commit to listening for the rumble this week? Leaning in, surrendering to the Holy Spirit, and listening for the rumble that is warning you that you’re moving in the wrong direction. My prayer is that you will listen for the rumble and be faithful to change your direction, changing your speed, and going where he leads you. God bless you.

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