

## Moments

GM! Happy New Year! How's everyone doing? Hey...  
We made it. // We made it thru 2018 –

There were moments (I gotta be honest) I wasn't sure we wld. But –  
We DID it! And THIS year... well, I'm praying this year will be OUR year –

Spking of NY – I know some of u are here for the very first time... so –  
allow me to intro myself (please allow... wealth and taste) – At any rate –  
Ryan May – lead pastor of Net Church... And we are SO GLAD you're –  
here today, starting your year off on the RIGHT FOOT!

Got a cpl brief announcements and then we'll get on w/ things –

1. Next Steps...

2. Next wk... as promised near the end of last yr, we're gonna share a bit about where we're headed as a church– and hw we plan to structure ourselves going fwd.

So. That's coming up. AS FOR TODAY –

I want to revisit s'thing we talk'd about at the beginning of 20...18. So 1 yr ago. B/C we did s'thing last yr that proved to be very helpful to a lot of ppl –

AS I'M SAYING THIS THO... s'thing u shld know about your pastor is – that I dn't rly like going back & repeating things we've alrdy done or said.

**Which prob'ly has s'thing to do w/ my childhood (truth be told) –**

B/C I remember some of the pastors I sat under for growing up telling the same stories ovr & ovr again from the stage. *OR – even worse...* the same jokes! Ugh!

Which I think (lking back)... may have had a lot to do w/ the fact that in the particular denominat'n I grew up in – not much prep went into the talks...

Cause... most of the time, you just got up and let “spirit lead” – and so, when the spirit is leading s'times *all you can remember* are the stories and jokes you've alrdy told. Anyone else been exp that? Yeah...

**So, for me... that was a turn off to the pt that – EVEN TODAY...** IF I repeat s'thing, I will usually ALWAYS ref the repeat – AS IN: We've talk'd about this b/f, but – OR – several yrs ago I told this story, but – and THEN I'll share it again.

B/C Idk... I have this deep seeded aversion to the thought that y're going hear what I have to say and respond with – *Ugh. Not that story again.*

OR – *he's told that joke 100 x alrdy! Get some new material wld ya! 😊*  
*// Little insight into your pastor's public spking phobias...*

// I'm also a 4 on the Enneagram, *if any of you are into that* –  
It basically means I like to be original in EVERYTHING I do... So, there's that!

**But... all of it fuels this tension w/in me about repeating myself...**

// **HOWEVER... this was challenged in me a few yrs ago...**

When I was involved in a coaching grp for pastors.

Cause in the grp one day, I was sharing w/ my coach what I just shared w/ you –  
*My aversion to repeating things* – And HE said in response: **But, Ryan...**  
**some things are worth repeat'd.**

Some things NEED to be said more than once.

Some stories need to be told and retold b/c they're just that gd **OR** just that...

**IMP!** Or that CENTRAL TO THE CULTURE we're trying to create. //

In fact – (if u think about it) this is act'ly how much of our bible came TO be –

They were **stories** that were told & retold & then *event'ly* s'one wrote 'em dwn. But, they were told and retold b/c they mattered! It reminded them (and reminds us) of who they/we are!

And so... over the yrs I've come to appreciate this truth.  
That while I have **this aversion** to repeating myself –  
I realize S'TIMES... it's important to repeat things.

And so today is... one of those days.  
Cause today we are gonna go back and revisit an **old story**.

B/f we do that tho... a **NEW** story.

**HM of U ring in the NY?** As in... u stay awake, watch the ball drop and do the whole countdown thing? HM of U do THAT? // Yeah... we gave that up yrs ago!

Not sure when it stop'd act'y...

Cld have bn when start'd having kids, or when we start'd pastoring a church, or when we start'd getting... old. Not sure, exactly. But, at this pt in our lives...

We just fig the New Year will be waiting for us in the morning! **After** we get a GOOD NIGHT'S SLEEP! // Anyone else there?? Yeah. That's how we do it.

Altho I will say – it's TOUGH to do b/c... **U OTHER stay-awaker** ppl are – SO LOUD about things! Yeah. U can't just countdown and go home... No. Some of you have to make a ruckus!

In fact, any of u do... FIREWORKS at midnight??

Can I be honest? **I DESPISE U**. I despise you every NY Day & 4<sup>th</sup> of July!

In fact, THIS year... O despite u MOST OF ALL B/C let me tell u wht hpn'd **this** yr –

We have an outside dog that we brought in b/c we know our neighbors like to light off fireworks and it drives him nuts... AS IT DOES my daughter, incidentally –

And so, at 11:59, all was **fine** in the May household...

Not a creature was stirring AS THEY SAY! // And thn... at midnight – **FIREWRK SFX!!!**

And the next thing I hear is my dog spazzing out in the front room and my daughter screaming at the top of her lungs, “DADDY!!!!!!” //

And so I get up. I grab the dog, we run UP the stairs, into Cally’s rm & tht’s where I spent the next hr of my life... w/ a dog on 1 side & a daughter on the other – In fact, here’s a pic my wife took of us from the monitor we have set up in her rm. **PIC.**

Yeah... So! That’s what I was doing at 12:01am – Cause while the rest of u were singing & kissing, and shooting off your confetti, and blowing on y’r party favors, and toasting in the NY! I was comforting a dog & consoling a terrified little girl.

Yep. That's my life! That's my DAD life!

ALL OF WHICH I SHARE WITH YOU TODAY B/C –

THIS moment L &G quickly became our FIRST – 2019 **MEMORY BOX** ENTRY!

For those of u who don't know what a MEMORY BOX ENTRY is –

THIS will be new info for you. For the rest... well, today I will be repeating myself –

Either way... Here's how it all got start'd – Here's the **OLD** story.

For as long as I can remember my mom had this saying–

A life philosophy of sorts she passed on to me.

And here was the saying –

As long as you're having more good days than bad days, y're doing just fine. (x2)

Now. I held on to that saying for a number of yrs.

In fact, I wld oft USE it to determine hw my life was **going** at any given moment. Which work'd... for a while. B/C earlier on – I didn't face much hardship in life. I was a happy child. I got good grades. I had lots of friends. Everything seem'd to just... work out well for me.

I mean... don't get me wrong... I HAD bad days... they just never came close to outnumbering the GOOD days! So, mom's phrase worked! It held up. I was *just fine*.

And then I got married. 😊

And... well let's just say my wife & I were different!  
And those differences began to clash.

In fact, I remember AFTER getting married –

I was visiting my uncle in Florida (my mom's brother) – and we were talking *about* marriage and he asked (rather nonchalantly), *“So, nefew... how many days has it been since you and Selina last argued?”*

Which, at the time I think we up to like... 18 or 19... hours, maybe. 😊

Which I thought was pretty good, act'ly. Until HE said –  
*“Yeah, your aunt and I are going on 46 days.”*

*F – F – For - What?! 40---si... How in God's name do u go 46 days w/o arguing??*

Which... lking back. 17 yrs in to my *own* marriage –  
And having pastored a *number* of couples along the way –

What I **prob'ly** SHLD have said was...

*Wow... 46 days? That's amazing, unc... mind if I ask your wife if she's been AS pleased w/ the last 46 days??* Yeah... just curious... cause s'times silence can **mask** itself as "getting along" – just saying!

I **didn't** say that tho. Instead I just tuck'd it away & kept asking myself *this* Q: What's wrong w/ *me*? Or (in this case) what's wrong w/ US? Why can't WE have more good days?

Which (incidentally, u shld know) is a Q that TRANSCENDS marriage –

B/C \*here's the truth... when **ANY** of us in **ANY** area of life... can't seem to string together enuf good days. OR "have *more good than* bad"... we're **ALL** prone to ask *that* Q: **What's wrong w/ me?**

**Which is in interesting Q, act'ly –**

B/C while s'times there IS s'thing we're doing to contribute to the days themselves being bad... S'times were NOT. // B/C s'times we can't ctrl the days.

B/C s'times we can't control the **ppl** who help make up the days.  
OR we can't control the **events** that transpire **DURING** the days.

Which means we can't control the **number** OF days that are good or bad...  
NOR CAN WE control the **streak** of days we're able to string together!  
Which *–unfortunately* does s'thing absolutely terrible to us–

B/C 9/10 X when we can't successful **exp more good than bad** or string togethr enuf good *in a row*... well, it begins to prevent us from seeing **ANY. Good. At. All.**

Which, is what event'ly hpn'd to my marriage. //

B/C as the yrs went on. As the stresses and pressures of life began to mount – I found that all I began to SEE were the *arguments*. The *conflict*. The BAD. Days.

To the pt that this statement my mom had lovingly handed to me –  
This life philosophy that said, “As long as your having more good days than bad...  
you’re doing just fine” was not longer **comforting**. Instead it was... **stifling!**

B/C it became in my mind this insurmountable standard.  
This reminder that **MY** life consisted of **MORE bad** than **good** –  
WHICH (for the rec, at that moment)– may **or may not** have been true!

B/C looking back... HAD I bothered to act’ly *count* the days...  
I may have found we were having more good days than bad –

Its just tht... well, 4 ONE at time) I was too afraid *to* count 4 fear my asumpt’ns  
were correct – And 2) It just didn’t **feel** as tho we were having any gd days.

And when that’s how it FEELS, well, who has the energy to think otherwise?  
And why bother? When mentally you’ve alrdy check’d out or given up!!

Yeah. I cldn't SEE anything but the bad that was present.

Which went on for a while... until a few yrs ago at the start of a NEW YEAR! My mentor challenged me to **PICK A WORD** tht wld set the tone for the nxt 12 mo's!

*ONE word, he said, that you can focus ALL y'r energies on.*

*ONE word that u blv **God** wants to see you live out!*

And so I thought... *and* thought... *and* thought. And AS I thought...

I thought about everything I just shared w/ you.

I thought about my marriage. My family. My hopelessness at home.

My frustration that MY life SEEMED to consist of more BAD days than good.

And w/ those thoughts in mind I chose the word: **MOMENTS**.

B/C that's what I felt was missing. **Good. Moments.** Moments of laughter. Moments of fun. Moments of pleasure and enjoyment. The kind of moments you share on fb so everyone else will want YOUR life instead of their own!

Yeah. That's what I want'd. Good. Moments.

Good moments, so that MAYBE, JUST MAYBE I cld tip the scale a bit.

Get a bit closer to the being (as mom always said) just fine. //

And so, I took that WORD and I gave it a tangible expression –

By turning it into a BOX. A **memory** box –

That contained a picture of of our family AND (inside) –

A pen and a stack of 3x5 notecards. ALL with one goal in mind –

To capture **the good**. Which means during that yr... any time s'thing hpn'd. S'thing funny, s'thing cute. S'thing memorable! We would write it down, tuck it away, and then... *here was the plan...* At the end of the year –

We wld take out all the cards that had bn written on – and read them together as a family.

And so that yr that's what we did.

Me, Selina, the kids... ALL OF US! S'thing wld hpn...*S'one wld say s'thing.* *We'd share an exp...* And as often as we wld remember to do so, we'd run over to the fireplace mantle (where we kept our box)... we'd open the box, pull out the pen and a card, and write down what had hpn'd.

**Now. A few things came out of this exp:**

**1. I realized as the days went on, more good was happening IN my life than I had given my life credit for.** B/C initially (as I said), I was bit concerned I wouldn't have much to write down... after all, my life was more BAD than GOOD, right?

Well, that's what I THOUGHT. Turns out tho... I was wrong...

I was wrong b/c once THE BOX existed, I began to **SEE MORE GOOD.**

More GOOD was act'ly HAPPENING.

Which, led to the 2<sup>nd</sup> thing–

**2. I found myself LOOKING more for the good.**

Which was a shift, to be sure! Cause again, going back to what I said a moment ago... 9/10 X when we can't successful **exp more good than bad** or string together enuf good *in a row*... it begins to prevent us from seeing **ANY. Good. At. All.**

And so we tend to STOP looking for it.

But, the way to reverse that trend is to be on the HUNT for the good!

And a physical object placed strategically in my living room was just enuf of a motivator to do just that.

B/C seeing BAD. Focusing on THAT wasn't going to help me fill the box.

No, no... I need'd a few **gd** moments. I needed to spot **those** to get ths thing full!

// And what I found is that once I was **lking** for them... they suddenly appear'd!

Which led to a 3<sup>rd</sup> thing –

**3. B/C not only did I now see GOOD when good was present. I didn't freak out as much when I had a BAD moment.** But, NOW WHEN I had a bad moment –

I cld lk over, SEE the box & remembr that THIS moment wsn't the ONLY moment my life consisted of – Instead it was 1 of *many*... many bad, BUT many **gd**, as well.

Which left me asking LESS & LESS: What's wrong w/ me? What's wrong w/ US?  
B/C I was realizing what we said earlier, which is that u can't always control it.  
// Things hpn. **Ppl** hpn! Ppl **do** things you don't **expect** them to do! //

But, this too shall pass is the comfort & reassurance the BOX kept giving me.  
B/C there's s'thing powerful about lking for the GOOD over *just seeing* the BAD.

In fact, in the bible... there's act'ly this ltr written by the Apostle Paul to a church  
in a city known as Philippi. And – a quick read of this letter makes it *fairly* clear  
that the Philippian church had either bn overly focus's on the bad –

**OR** at a minimum had bn going **thru** some bad to the pt tht – they cld have easily  
bn **tempt'd** to *focus* on the bad. I'm saying tht B/C – in the txt u find things like –

**Phil 2:14 – Do everything without complaining or arguing.**

Which is s'thing you wld only say to ppl who ARE complaining or arguing OR

(at a minimum again) are being put in a situation where that's a temptat'n.

Here's another ex... next verse. **Phil 2:15 – Hold firmly to the word of life.**

Why tell s'one to hold firmly to s'thing UNLESS a threat existed TO their ability to do so? Clearly, **s'thing** was working against their ability to blv THEIR lives were being fill'd with LIFE giving things.

One more ex... Phil 3:20-21 – [Just a reminder] **We are citizens of heaven, where the Lord Jesus Christ lives. And we are eagerly waiting for him to return as our Savior [and] take our weak mortal bodies and change them into glorious bodies like his own.**

[we EAGERLY wait for this, Paul says... AS IF TO SAY doesn't it s'times I feel as though we can't get out of thing earthbound bodies fast enuf?]

[Please God, tell me there's s'thing better out there than this?  
B/C THIS is all lk'ing very... well... bad.]

Yeah... these guys were facing s'thing. And ALL of it is what event'ly leads Paul to make a statement near the very end of the ltr that has become the quintessent'l verse in ALL of scripture on the **imp'nce** of seeing the good over the bad.

It's Phil 4:8-9 (I'm sure some of you have it memorized) – **Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—[EVEN IF AT TIMES IT'S HARD TO SEE IT] if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things. [B/C if you do...listen] the God of peace will be with you.**

Which is to say... if you *think* about it, event'ly you'll start to see it!

Cause it's easy to get consumed w/ the bad. It's easy to think there's more of **it** than the other. In fact, s'times it's easy to think it's all your life consists of.

It's easy to do that at home, it's easy to do that at work.

It's easy to do that at school. And it's even to do that at church!

But, there's no *life* in it. And there's no peace in it either! Which is why it's SO imp to think about, dwell on, remember, & recall all those things that are GOOD! Which is why last yr – when I delivered this msg –

We encouraged you to join us by giving each of you your **own** memory box.

We ask'd you to decorate it in your own unique way and then fill it with your own unique memories.

And then last wk... we ask'd you to share a few of those memories with us.

Which you did! And so, I thought (as we close) it might be fun (as we encourage you **this** yr to do it all again) to reminisce together on a few of the memories you submitted... And a few of OURS as well (cause u know I luv sharin' stories w/ ya)!

**So... a few of yours and a few of ours...**

**CHAD & JOY COLEY: (1<sup>st</sup> pic)** More than just the finishing the restoration of this 1968 C10...was the actual journey over the last 7 years to get here... gathering the right parts, time with Chad's POP to put the pieces together (the build), finally showing it at the 2018 C10 Nationals, and the opportunities it opened for us once we found a new home for it the latter part of the year. **(2<sup>nd</sup> pic)**

**ZACK & ALYSA BUTTERFIELD:** Took finn to Sports Barn. It was his first time out in underwear. I kept reminding him to make sure to go pee in the potty, not in his pants. At one point he stopped me and said, “Dad, I got this.”

Finn: Can we play with God?

Mom: Not really, but you can talk to him.

Finn: Can we play with God later?

1<sup>st</sup> dinner after returning from GigiLand (name given for Zack’s mom’s house).

Ella: May I have a cup of milk?

Mom: Sure. Go get it yourself.

Ella (forgetting where she was): Gigi! Can you get me a cup of milk?

#detox

Ella got \$5 for good grades.

First thing she says? “Oh, good. Now I have more money to give to church!”

**10/30**

Ella: Mom, what's your favorite Superhero?

Alysa: Wonder Woman. Because she kicks booty!

Ella: Mine is Jesus because he came to save everyone.

Alysa: Yep. You win.

**3/25 – This one made the Butterfield's box AND OURS!**

Great day w/ the Mays at the Zoo. Rode the carousel, took a monkey tour, watched the kids play, and laughed together after Selina got pooped on by a bird! **(VID)**

**TEICHROEWS: Kara, Giananna's birthday** – A quote from Gianna on her 12<sup>th</sup> birthday” “I'm gonna make this last year as a kid a super fun, hyper, and exciting one! Because next year I'll be a teenager and all they do is sleep and other boring stuff.”

**ALBRIGHT FAMILY (pic – Rick, Kristy, Kaylie, Desi, Toby, Holly):** Staying at a beach front vacation condo in the government mandated evacuated town of Pensacola Beach during Hurricane Michael: the third-most intense (category 4) Atlantic hurricane to make landfall in the contiguous United States. **(pic)**

Half inch of snow fun, sledding in the dark! **(pics)**

Toe thumbs up! Realizing that there is an Albright gene for being able to do a thumbs up with your big toe. **(pic)**

When that lady was smoking at Walmart and Toby said, “Why does that lady have that Firestick 3?” **(firestick, firestick 3 pics)**

(speaking of technology... **Alexa pic**) **DEE KING (2/17)**: While looking for ideas for a game to play with the boys, Alexa suggested a skill called Ruin My Day, which gives you a bunch of disturbing facts. Later, when the boys arrived, I said, “Alexa, ruin my day!” Alexa replied, “Calling dad!”

**COUPLE SHALL REMAIN NAMELESS...** *but, this past yr they opened their home to a girl with a history of drug use. Here's the memory:* Today, she was honest about the marijuana she had bought to resell. She told us about it on her own and gave it to us without argument when asked. It was a great trust building moment and opportunity for us to choose love. (that's unique)

**Alright... A few from our box. And then we'll close...**

A gotta tell you... having done this now for the past cpl of yrs...  
This has become my new favorite family tradition. // Sitting together on the  
couch as we close out the old yr and begin a new one by lking back at the yr that  
was via one snapshot after another has been... well... **good**.

More good than I ever IMAGINED a cld have a few short yrs ago...

And my hope and prayer for you (as it was last yr) – is that this tradition wld IN  
YOUR LIFE yield a similar return! As you can see, for some it aldy has. Cause...

Some things are WORTH repeating. Some things NEED 2b said more thn once.

Some stories need to be told and **retold** b/c they're just that gd **OR** just that...  
**IMP!** Or just that **CENTRAL TO THE CULTURE** we're trying to create. //

Let's pray.

Response v1:

**Richard Rohr (Franciscan Monk):** All spiritual teaching—this is not an oversimplification—is about how to be present to the moment. When you're present, you will experience the Presence. But the problem is, we're almost always somewhere else: reliving the past or worrying about the future.

RESPONSE v2:

So... I'm gonna share the same story as we close today that I shared w/ u LAST YR as we closed...

Cpl Xmas's ago... Cally's photo book gift from Momo:

“Oh, you shldn't have gotten me this b/c it makes me remember all those things we did and now I want to go do them again, but we can't.”

I love that line... B/C I think it highlights the problem we ALL face!  
Cause here's what she was ASSUMING – She was assuming all the GREAT things have alrdy been done. The past was as good as it gets.

And it goes back to what I was afraid of when I start'd my first box...  
What if I don't have anything to fill it with!

What if (as Cally said) we've pretty much done everything there is to do!  
But, what if MOMENTS exist just outside that door?  
At home? At work? In the church? Wherever?  
What if you just aren't SEEING it?

We want you to... And so here's what we've done (again).  
Box, pad of paper. #netchurchcc your creations!