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BEING WELL

Conversation with Richard, Celia and Anna

I think COVID kind of exposed a few things that said, what we did hope in and what we thought our well-being was in, even like as simple as going to the football or whatever it might be, was just taken away. So where do we then centre that? Where do we place our hope?

Richard: Hello, I'm Richard Fox and you're listening to Messages of Hope. Have you ever considered how you're well-being is going? Or what even is well-being and is it worth looking after and striving for? Today, I'm talking with Celia and Anna about well-being. What is it and how can we live well?

Celia: What is well-being? I mean you hear it a lot.

Anna: It's a buzz word.

Richard: People come at it from all different angles. Some people come at it from a physical thing, some people come from an emotional thing, some come from a spiritual perspective.

Celia: It's actually almost become a pressure in itself. You know, what is your well-being or have you worked enough on your well-being or.....?

Anna: Is this good for your well-being?

Celia: And it's like, Oh my goodness!

Richard: Sometimes well-being is put up on such a pedestal that it's this elite space. You almost have to be Buddha or something, or be Jesus himself. It just sounds like a lot of boxes to tick, like for me, I just want to give up, you know, just surrender and just go, "God, help!"

Anna: So you guys what would you say well-being is to you?

Celia: I have this picture in my head of well-being of just lying on a hammock with a white beach and that's it.

Richard: To me, I come back to my Christian definition, how I understand it in terms of peace. So, when Jesus rose from the dead and came to the disciples, the first thing he said is "Peace be with you." And that has a picture of wholeness, completeness wrapped around it. Now I know in myself, I can't do that because I see all my fears, my failures...

Celia: So, you feel like you can't achieve well being?

Richard: Yeah, that's right. What does well-being mean for you Anna?

Anna: I think about living life to the fullest is something that I kind of banter around a little bit in my work. And a lot of people think that living life to the fullest is ticking everything off your bucket list, you know, like I'm living life to the fullest because I'm jumping out of an airplane because that's what's on my list and I'm living life to the fullest.

Celia: Not on my list, just saying. I hate heights!

Anna: But you know, that whole thing of what if I die tomorrow, so today I would have to live my life to the fullest kind of thing? But as I've thought about well-being, about self-care, about mental health, for me, living life to the fullest and so being well is about having hard conversations. It's about saying "No." It's about making hard choices. So, this idea of living life to the fullest, to me, is about living as true and authentic a life as possible. Not necessarily striving for I have to do it all right and I have to get completely healthy and well or whatever in every single area so that I'm perfect. But instead go, well, what does it actually look like for you? Because it's going to look different for each of us.

Richard: Do you want to live life to the fullest but feel like that just adds a whole lot of extra stress, leaving you with a sense of failing all the time. How do we find the balance between striving for well-being but also being well?

I saw a show and they were asked to design their best house, their dream home. And these people were starting and thinking and trying to work it out. All these wonderful rooms and all the movie theaters and all sorts of things. And they were just getting nowhere, roadblocked. And then they said, "Hang on. Now I'm happiest when I'm just around my family." So, then they said, "I'm just going to design a home that incorporates my family." And I thought well-being's almost getting back to that sense of identity and who we are and what's important to us.

Anna: Yeah, which comes back to values that I talk about all the time. Like, what is most important to you? And having that as a, I don't really like this word, but measuring stick in the sense of, is this whatever that I'm struggling with or that's hard at the moment in my life, is that helping me to honor the thing or people or whatever that's most important. So, it's about reframing your perspective.

Celia: And where is our identity? Like what is it that makes us content in who we are, rather than that constant striving to be what we think we should be. If you've got that identity clear in who you are and, I know were talking about your identity in God. That's what I still need to explore.

Anna: Yeah. I guess that's a good question for all of us to ask ourselves is what is it that we're, having as most important in our life and how does that give us meaning or purpose? Because we can say, "Oh, you know, I'll be secure in who I am when I achieve the whatever, when I reach the ladder of the whatever, when I can say no to whatever the thing is."

Richard: When I reached the best job or...

Anna: buy the best car. Yeah, exactly.

Celia: Just striving isn't there and it's not necessarily just striving for material things, but it's, we're striving aren't we all the time?

Anna: Striving for love and acceptance. That's what I think it is deep down.

Richard: And I think seeing that it's not something from within us helps. We either need a friend or a colleague or a family member, we're built for that community. And knowing that God is there even in our struggles helps me understand who I am. And that he's a loving God, a forgiving God. Because as well as he said, "Peace, be with you" there also words of forgiveness connected there. We do fail and fall short and then sometimes when we do that, we question, "Is that my identity? Am I just a failure?" And then we start putting guilt and all sorts of stuff on ourselves, but to have that released from us and say, "No, peace, I love you." Those kinds of words lift us and give us a freedom.

Celia: Yeah. But how do I stop stepping back on that treadmill?

Richard: And that's the wrestle we all have.

Celia: And that's accepting yourself too.

Anna: Yeah, and I think it's circuit breaking the default thinking and actions. So, what's an example of something you can practically do to go, okay, next time I find myself saying X, Y, and Z, like, whatever your words are should, or, I'm tired or whatever they are.....

Celia: I don't really want to do that on the weekend!

Richard: How can I say no?

Anna: So, it's kind of like finding markers in your life that help trigger, "Wait, I don't want to do this." So, then you slow down and you go, "Okay, right now, I don't want to do that on the weekend."

Celia: I need a little toolbox. A toolbox to go into and say, "Okay, how do I get out of the things I don't want to do without feeling guilt?"

Anna: Yeah, and the facts are that it's never easy to overcome the things we've always done. It just isn't because our brain is programmed like that. However, the cool thing is that God created us and our brains to change. And so, we can actually overcome that default thinking by finding those markers, to be able to be triggers for us to go "Wait, I have a choice. I don't have to keep going down this road. I am loved and accepted right here, how I am. So, anything that I do or don't do from today, isn't going to change that love and acceptance that I have from God." So, I'm free to do whatever the heck I want to do!

Celia: And for me, it's about realizing that the love and acceptance from God is enough.

Richard: I think where we start walking into trouble is when we say, "Well, I'm God. and I can do this or I can't do this" and then you start those sentences with I and I and I.

Celia: I should, I could.

Richard: Yeah, and sometimes it's actually, literally, sometimes you getting out of the driver's seat and saying, "God, you take it, where are we going?"

Celia: That's a trust thing too. Isn't it?

Richard: It is but it doesn't have to be a blind trust because we hear the promises that he's got us. You're in his arms. He loves us so much that his own son died for us on a horrific cross. So, to me, that just shows how important we are to him. If we weren't, he wouldn't have done any of that. He would've gone "Aah stuff ya, I'm right without you thanks!" So, knowing who we are and who's got us can help us in any situation.

Anna: Paul talks a lot about God's love and grace is sufficient, is enough. I've been reading that lately and I'm like, "Yeah but how does that look practically?" Like, I really need love from people, right? I think sometimes we can just be like, God's love and grace is enough. So that means I don't need a job. And that means I don't need loving people in my life...

Richard: I don't need to eat breakfast!

Anna: Yeah! But actually we do still need all those other things, but all those other things are gifts from God. Therefore, it's his love and his grace to us. I don't have to strive to get that. And then I thought, when God's love and grace is enough for us, by default, that means we will have loving relationships. We will be provided with food and shelter, a job or opportunities to say no.

Richard: Yeah and it's constantly hearing that we are loved. It's like, a wedding day doesn't make a marriage. You need to constantly hear it and like Jesus, when he meets those disciples, after the resurrection, every time he meets them, the first words he says are "Peace be with you." In other words, "Don't worry. I'm here. I've got you." And so all those promises we need to keep hearing again and again and again.

Celia: Otherwise, we just do get stuck in our own cycle of thinking, what can we do? What can we do? What do we need to do? Because we forget to listen or don't hear.

Richard: To hear that peace. And it is a wrestle and a challenge to understand and grasp that, but I think it is important. I think well-being is touching on something that's at the core of our being and who we are.

Anna: I think too, it's that being present in whatever you're in. And so not striving for perfection or not striving for wellness like someone else might be seeking wellness. But become present with your own life and your own situations and go, "What does it look like to be well for me?" Because all of us really will look at that differently and that's okay.

Celia: And recognize our own markers like you said. That's going to be really big for me.

Richard: And I think there's something in that. A poem was given to me when I was a young kid called, The Deciderata. Basically, it meant don't compare yourself to others because there'll always be someone better or worse than yourself, but actually compare yourself to God. And when we do that, we realise we're imperfect, but we also realise that we're loved and he loves us unconditionally and will do anything for us and help us and guide us through. Whatever we're dealing with, whether it's physical, mental, spiritual, emotional, God has us.

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