I want to tell you a little story tonight—right here on the beach, where it belongs.

One summer evening, a child was building a sandcastle. And not just any sandcastle—this was the kind where the child was completely lost in the moment. You know how kids can get—bent over the sand, hair falling in their eyes, hands digging and packing and shaping.

They dug a deep moat. They piled the walls up high. They took a plastic cup and made perfect little turrets. They even decorated the top with shells and seaweed.

And as it grew, people walking by slowed down. Some even stopped. “Wow, that’s beautiful,” they said. And the child beamed with pride.

But you know what happens. The tide started to turn. The water crept closer. First a little splash at the edge. Then another wave, a little stronger. And pretty soon—it was right up against the walls of the castle.

The child panicked. “No! No, no!” They tried to pile more sand, tried to hold the water back. But of course—you can’t stop the sea.

There was an older person sitting nearby—maybe a grandparent, maybe just someone who had seen this before. They came over and said gently:

“You didn’t build this castle so it would last forever. You built it for the joy of building it. You built it for right now. And for everyone who smiled when they saw it. The waves will take it, yes. But the joy—that will last.”

The child thought about that. And then they smiled too. And together, hand in hand, they sat and watched as the waves slowly carried the castle away.

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And that, I think, is Shabbat.

We don’t keep Shabbat because it lasts forever. We keep it because of the joy it brings in the moment—the songs, the stories, the people gathered right here.

And maybe that feels especially true tonight. This is our last Shabbat on the beach for the summer. Soon the rains will come. The days will get shorter. Just like the sandcastle, just like the sunshine, just like summer itself—Shabbat doesn’t last forever. But that’s what makes it precious.

The things we value most are often the ones we know won’t last forever—summer evenings, a child’s laughter, a meal with friends, a song we sing together, a sunset like the one we’ll see tonight. That’s why we savor them. That’s why they stay with us.

So tonight, let’s build this Shabbat together—not because it will last forever, but because it is beautiful right now.