



▶ DAILY DEVOTIONAL.

Saturday/Sunday, 8/4-5/2018

Simplicity — Time

Matthew 6:25-34 (New International Version-NIV)

“Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothes? Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they? Can any one of you by worrying add a single hour to your life?”

“And why do you worry about clothes? See how the flowers of the field grow. They do not labor or spin. Yet I tell you that not even Solomon in all his splendor was dressed like one of these. If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today and tomorrow is thrown into the fire, will he not much more clothe you — you of little faith? So do not worry, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.”

Monday, 8/6/2018

“Time”

Ephesians 6:25 NIV

“Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear.”

Today I met with a recently retired woman. She shared that there is so much space in her head now. She’s not thinking about plans or ways to organize. She’s not worrying about what the next day might bring. One might say she has a clear head. Clarity and clearness are synonyms for simplicity, which is the theme of the current sermon series.

I sensed a new kind of energy in her spirit. She wanted to become a care minister. Her head was clear. She was focused. She was ready to serve. Her life was at a place where she could devote more space and time to be a part of the body of Christ.

When I shared with her a possible area of service, she became tearful. She was so moved by the opportunity. The time was right.

- What is occupying the space in your head that could be retired to give more room to having a closer walk with Jesus through devotion and/or service?
- What is an area of service you want to devote more time and energy towards?

Prayer: Dear God, sometimes my head is so full of voices and choices, I feel overwhelmed. Clear out the clutter of my head, so I can be fully present to your love, compassion and direction for my life. In the name of Jesus. Amen.

Tuesday, 8/7/2018

“Worry”

Ephesians 6:25-27 (NIV)

“Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothes? Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they? Can any one of you by worrying add a single hour to your life?”

I don't think of myself as a worrier. If I am concerned about a situation, I try to address it by surrendering to God through prayer and reflection. For me, surrendering to God means learning to trust in the God who I believe is good, gracious and just.

When I read these verses, the one that grabs my attention is “Can any one of you by worrying add a single hour to your life?” If we took a Sunday worship poll, the response would probably be a resounding “NO!” So that leads me to think that worrying can diminish our lives. Good energy turns into worrying. Relationships become saturated with worry. Worrying is tiring.

Galatians 6:7-9 (NIV) gives some insight into how time with God can add to life.

Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. People reap what they sow. Whoever sows to please their flesh, from the flesh will reap destruction; whoever sows to please the Spirit, from the Spirit will reap eternal life. Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up.

- Are you a worrier? If so, how much time do you give to worrying?
- How much time are you willing to commit to prayer? (Be sure to check out the newly renovated prayer room!) How much time are you willing to commit to being attentive to the presence of God? I suggest you write down how much time you are willing to spend in prayer and paying attention to God. Maybe you will write or meditate.

I promise to do the same. I will commit an hour a day to prayer, writing and reading through the end of August. I look forward to hearing about your experience.

Thought for the day: “Worrying does not empty tomorrow of its troubles. It empties today of its strength.” – Corrie Ten Boom

Wednesday, 8/8/2018

“What to Wear”

Ephesians 6:28-31 (NIV)

“And why do you worry about clothes? See how the flowers of the field grow. They do not labor or spin. Yet I tell you that not even Solomon in all his splendor was dressed like one of these. If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today and tomorrow is thrown into the fire, will he not much more clothe you — you of little faith? So do not worry, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’”

Although I may not be the most fashionable dresser, I do like clothes and shoes. These days it is so easy (i.e., tempting) to shop for clothes – online, with a catalog or at a store. Not only can we be influenced by fashion, there are the seasons to be concerned about. One must have appropriate clothing for sports, social events and even gardening.

So, what do these verses have to say to us? I think they call to our attention that we can easily be distracted by stressing over what to wear, what to purchase – for ourselves and others (i.e., children and grandchildren). Worrying about what to wear drains our energy and takes time.

I find it helpful to think of a former colleague. He wore the same thing every Sunday – white shirt, necktie, black pants, red socks and black shoes. Mark Zuckerberg wears the same shirt every day.

How are we to get dressed? I believe this verse is where we can put our attention: “Therefore, as God’s chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience.” (Colossians 3:12 NIV) In the words of Henry Nouwen, “A gentle person treads lightly, listens carefully, looks tenderly, and touches with reverence ... Let’s dress ourselves with gentleness. In our tough and often unbending world, our gentleness can be a vivid reminder of the presence of God among us.”

- Are there ways you can simplify dressing yourself or your home that would free space for devotion towards God?
- How might you focus on putting on the clothing as described in Colossians?

Prayer: “Lord, make me an instrument of Your peace. Where there is hatred, let me sow love; where there is injury, pardon; where there is doubt, faith; where there is despair, hope; where there is darkness, light; where there is sadness, joy.”
(Prayer of St. Francis)

Thursday, 8/9/2018

“Time”

Ecclesiastes 3:1

*There is a time for everything,
and a season for every activity under the heavens ...*

It is not unusual for people to respond to a death by saying: “It must have been her time” or “It must have been God’s time for him to die.” It is usually said with Ecclesiastes 3 in mind where 28 times we read a time to ...

This passage, however is not God’s map for everyone’s life. God’s time is very different from ours. Humanity functions out of *Chronos* time which is linear. *Kairos* time is God’s time, which is experiential and non-linear. Ecclesiastes 3 is concerned with God, not time. It is an affirmation that God is present in all time, all space and all things.

God is present in life and death. God is present in weeping and laughter. God is present in mourning and dancing. What wonderful words of comfort and invitation.

When war, conflict, and death come our way, God is present. We can trust in God presence. We are also invited to participate in the dance of life, peace and laughter.

*God has made everything beautiful in its time. God has also set eternity in the human heart; yet no one can fathom what God has done from beginning to end.
(Ecclesiastes 3:11)*

It seems to me that this is God's invitation to focus on the eternal love and grace God has given through Jesus Christ. God invites us to participate in the kingdom, living as though eternity is here and now. It's part of our DNA!

Take time to be holy! Trust in God's presence. Practice living into the kingdom. The time is now.

- Ponder this: What if this life is as good as it gets?
- How can we live as children of God in all situations?

Prayer:

1. Take time to be holy, speak oft with thy Lord;
Abide in Him always, and feed on His Word.
Make friends of God's children, help those who are weak,
Forgetting in nothing His blessing to seek.
2. Take time to be holy, the world rushes on;
Spend much time in secret, with Jesus alone.
By looking to Jesus, like Him thou shalt be;
Thy friends in thy conduct His likeness shall see.
3. Take time to be holy, let Him be thy Guide;
And run not before Him, whatever betide.
In joy or in sorrow, still follow the Lord,
And, looking to Jesus, still trust in His Word.
4. Take time to be holy, be calm in thy soul,
Each thought and each motive beneath His control.
Thus led by His Spirit to fountains of love,
Thou soon shalt be fitted for service above.

Friday, 8/10/2018

"Simplicity"

Luke 9:2-3 (NIV)

"... and he (Jesus) sent them out to proclaim the kingdom of God and to heal the sick. He told them: "Take nothing for the journey — no staff, no bag, no bread, no money, no extra shirt."

I think the first time I heard "simplicity" I was in grade school. Simplicity Patterns. The first garment I made was in 5th grade. (I still have it.) I have used patterns for sewing for years. For the most part, when I follow a pattern, it turns out just like it's supposed to. Of course, sometimes I have to make some adjustments.

In this scripture, Jesus gives the disciples directions. He gives them a pattern, that if followed, will result in them being able to proclaim the kingdom of God and heal the sick. Jesus makes no guarantees about the outcome. He gives directions to keep them focused, to make the journey (the way of sharing God's love) simple. As was the custom of the day, they will rely on the hospitality of others for food and shelter.

Wednesday's devotion also gives us a pattern for Christian living. When we follow the pattern Jesus gives us, we are less focused on self and our stuff, and more attentive to Christian living. Our lives are simplified. Simplicity is a great pattern for living.

*It's a gift to be simple, It's a gift to be free,
It's the gift to come down where you ought to be,
And when we find ourselves in the place just right,
Will be in the valley of love and delight. (Shaker Song)*

- Name one way you can simplify your life.
- How does simplicity connect with your use of time?

Prayer: Dear God, you have given the gift of time. Turn us towards you that we might live in the fullness of your time with devotion to you through prayer, service and worship. In Jesus' name. Amen.

***This week's devotions were written by
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