

Vanderbilt Presbyterian Church

Sermon

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Vanderbilt Presbyterian Church

1225 Piper Boulevard, Naples, FL 34110

Hurry Up and Wait

Mark 6:30-34, 53-56

As parents, Kathleen and I encourage our children to be independent. Sometimes we are more successful than other times. My son, Jordan, unknown to us, fixed breakfast for the first time not to long ago. How excited he was to know he could do it all by himself (without his parents) and share it with the family. “Come dada! Come momma! Look what I did!” “Wow, Jordan. You did such a great job! Tell me how you did it.”

“Well, I got out the bread and put it in the toaster. I found the stepstool and poured out the cereal. I took the yogurt from the refrigerator. I climbed on the counter to reach the plates and glasses. And look Dada and Momma, I even remembered the napkins.”

“That’s great Jordan! You did such a wonderful job. And the food tastes so yummy.” And Kathleen and I were excited for him, thanked him, heaped praise upon him, and hugged him. We were all so happy and excited.

Jesus and the disciples must have been excited, too. Earlier in Mark, Jesus sent out the disciples in twos to preach, cast out evil spirits, and anointed and healed the sick. (Mark 6:12-13) Then Mark tells us that King Herod hears of Jesus and the name of Jesus is spreading quickly, which is a threat to his rule. And Mark includes a rather curious retelling of the story of King Herod’s beheading of John the Baptist. In other words, Mark is reminding his audience, who are gentiles, that Jesus is not John the Baptist.

The disciples’ return was a grand moment. Good work was accomplished. Excitement and amazement about exercising Jesus’ gift of new authority over demons and healing was shared with their Master and Teacher. Like a proud parent, Jesus was excited to hear about their experiences and rejoice in their accomplishments. “Come here all of you and let me give you a hug? Tell me about your experience. How was your trip? What did you do? What was it like? Who did you see?”

“Let me tell you, Jesus, you wouldn’t believe it! We did it. I didn’t believe it. You said we could do it. I didn’t quite believe it. But you were so right. There was one man who was so sick. For years he was falling down. And we healed him. And then there was this woman. Oh, man was she in trouble.”

“That’s great! I want to hear all about it. You must be tired. Let’s take some time away and share with each other what you did, who you saw. There are too many distractions here. ‘Come away to a deserted place all by ourselves and rest a while,’” Jesus said.

Jesus wanted to hear them, appreciate their accomplishments, and reconnect with his closest friends. He also recognizes that his popularity is on the rise. He is a rising star and because of this popularity interruptions and distractions will keep him from what is important. So, for him to be fully present with them without all the distractions he starts to lead them away.

What a powerful message for today. In the age of instant access through email, cell phones, web cams, and call waiting, we need to be careful to carve out time and pay full attention to the people who are close to us.

Jesus actions remind us that we need to carve out time for those people close to us. That means shutting off the phone, putting away the Nintendo DS and Gameboy, taking our vacation e-mail free, and make sure we are present in the present so that we can receive the present. For, with crowds of people present and people interrupting Jesus and the disciples so they couldn't even eat, we can see why Jesus wanted to get away.

Jesus needed time apart with his friends just like we do. We all need our fellowship time with friends and family no matter how busy our lives are. There is ministry in our fellowship together. Yet, for Jesus and his friends the solitary place wasn't so solitary.

Mark tells us when the boat landed a large crowd followed Jesus and the disciples. "Come on Jesus. Let's get out of here. We just got back. We are tired and we wanted to tell you everything that happened. Come on Jesus, we missed our friends and want some time relax and be alone. We worked hard, and we did it in your name. Come on, Jesus. Let's go away. You said we would!"

"No," says Jesus, "look at them. They followed us all the way over here. We enjoyed a nice boat ride and they are here. Let me go and meet with them. Come on. Let's go."

"Yeh! Yeh! Why doesn't he do that for us? Doesn't he even care? I was looking forward to some one-on-one time with Jesus. Now he goes off and does this. And topping it off, I'm hungry."

So, Jesus sees the crowd and has compassion, but the disciples were disappointed. Even though they just did all kinds of miracles and casting out demons, they weren't living their life with the eye of the heart. They could see with their eyes, but they were blind to the ministry right in front of them.

We must see and respond to the needs of the world around us. We must open the eye of our heart and see the world as Jesus does. (From Steven Covey's *Seven Habits of Highly Effective People*) A man is sitting in a seat reading his paper along with a few other people in a mostly empty subway car when a man with several children boarded. The man looks terrible and is silent and slumped over, looking at the floor while the children loudly ran up and down the car.

After a few stops the adults are agitated and frustrated. "Can't he take care of those kids? In our day, parents took care of their kids. A little swat on the bottom is what is needed. What is the world coming too?" The frustration grew and grew as people were not able to "use" their time reading or even thinking quiet thoughts. Finally one man decides to do something. "Sir, your children are really disturbing a lot of people. I wonder if you couldn't control them a little more?"

The man turns and looks up and as if seeing for the first time he says, "Oh, you're right. I guess I should do something about it. We just came from the hospital where their mother died about an hour ago. I don't know what to think and I guess they don't know how to handle it either."

Suddenly, the man has compassion for he sees with his heart the opportunity to be a presence with the man. One woman comes forward and shares her food with the kids and calms them down. And what seems like a bad parent is suddenly changed when seen from the heart. We are given opportunities every day to minister to and with others. We just need eyes to see and ears to

hear. (1 Corinthians 13:12-13) “For now we see in a **mirror**, dimly, but then we will see face to face. Now I know only in part; then I will know fully, even as I have been fully known. And now faith, hope, and love abide, these three; and the greatest of these is love.” And Jesus sees the crowd and has compassion on them. Jesus loves them.

So we must learn to live our life in balance. We do need to get away with friends and family. Sometimes we need to get away and be alone. We also need to use the eye of our heart and see God’s opportunity challenging us and ministering in his name.