

Don't Just Do Something, Sit There

02-07-2021 Centenary UMC

Mark 1:28-38

A few years ago I was in a conversation with some folks and we started talking about Sunday morning worship and each of us began sharing what was his or her favorite part.

One person said it was **the Apostles' Creed**, because it was at that moment that he was able to stand up and declare his faith.

Another person said it was **the prayer**, because there were so many things on her heart that she wanted to pray for.

Another person said it was **the prelude**.

I looked at this person and was surprised. **"You mean it is not the sermon?"**

"Oh no, preacher. It's definitely the prelude."

When I asked what made the prelude so meaningful, **he said it was because his whole week was so full, and so busy, and so intense. But when he came into the Sanctuary and the prelude began, it was the only time all week when he could just sit back, be quiet, and be with God.**

Most of us are simply too busy **to stop and do nothing** for even a few moments each week.

Most of us feel like we need to be active every minute of the day.

We confuse busy-ness with **being productive, successful, efficient, effective and meaningful.**

So it comes as a surprise to read our New Testament lesson and to find Jesus, not being so busy with life. In fact, in the midst of a very busy time in his life, he sneaks off to a solitary place and prays.

Quiet time – doing nothing but talking to God.

Most of us are too busy to do anything like that!

Most of us feel like we need to be busy doing something. **And for some reason, prayer just doesn't feel "busy" or "active" enough.**

We are a people and a society in which being busy makes us feel like we are worthwhile.

If we are not doing something, there is something within us that makes us feel like we are lazy, or that we are wasting our time.

A generation or two ago, the life of the family was going to be revolutionized by the automatic washing machine. Up until then, washing the family's laundry literally took an entire day. People referred to one day of their weekly routine as wash day.

Then technology came through with the washing machine, and you could throw the clothing into a machine, and then leave it and go do something else. What a time saver.

So, what happened? Did we get more time to relax? No, we filled our time with other duties.

The computer was the same way. It enables us to do more our work in a lot less time. **But do we get off work early? No. We simply do more work.**

There is something within us that compels us **to fill up every moment of our time.**

Even if we are not talking about work, our families are stretched to the limit with activities as we go from ballet classes, to soccer, to outings at the park, to concerts, to this and to that.

It is as if we are afraid of what might happen if we would just be still for a moment.

In our New Testament lesson, Jesus is very busy. In fact, Mark's Gospel is the most 21st Century-compatible Gospel there is in the Bible. Because Mark gives the impression that everyone is always in a hurry – always busy. **The word "immediately" appears over 50 times in Mark's Gospel.**

Mark tells the story of Jesus being baptized and then he says, **"And immediately the Holy Spirit sent him into the desert."**

Then Jesus encounters Simon and Andrew fishing and invites them to be disciples and Mark says, **"Immediately they left their nets."**

Jesus heals people and casts out demons, and **"immediately and quickly the news spread about Jesus."**

And finally, after a fast-paced beginning, Mark says that “very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house and went off to a solitary place, where he prayed.”

Even in the fast paced, and very successful and meaningful life of Jesus, **there was the need to sometimes retreat to a quiet, lonely place for reflection, meditation, prayer and communion with God.**

This is absolutely necessary in our busy lives. **It makes our busy lives worthwhile and bearable. More than bearable** – times of being in a solitary and quiet place with God enable us to do the work we are to do.

Jesus doesn't just go to that quiet and solitary place and stays there. He goes there to recharge his spiritual batteries. Being there enables him to then get up and move onto find other places to preach his message.

Now if you think that living life in a fast paced, busy fashion is only a problem to the modern age, think again.

Our world is so busy, our lives are so full. Wouldn't it be nice if we could slow down just a bit, and be still, and simply experience the presence of God in our lives.

Being still and quiet from time to time is God's will for our lives.

Wouldn't it be nice if we could, in the midst of work, family pressures, school work, and just turn off the television, turn off the cell phones, leave them at home, and just pray.

Don't just do something. Sit there!

AMEN?