

Jim Gill

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'Time Off'

2 Samuel 7:1-14a Mark 6:30-34 Ephesians 2:11-22

### INTRODUCTION TO 2 SAMUEL 7:1-14A

Last week we saw that David had rested from leading campaigns and wanted to settle down. But David is still restless. He knew how to wage battle campaigns. Now he wanted to mount a capital campaign to build a house for God. Hear the word of the Lord from 2 Samuel 7:1-14a

### INTRODUCTION TO MARK 6:30-34.

Jesus' disciples returned from their first foray into mission overjoyed. They came back pumped up ready to go again. But Jesus has other plans. Jesus plans to take them to a deserted place to eat and rest. Hear the word of the Lord from Mark, chapter 6, verses 30 to 34.

Let us pray. Dear Lord, Give us the peace of your presence in a world that is on fast forward. Slow us down long enough to hear your voice. Lord, thank you for this, your word. Open our eyes to see, our minds to understand, our hearts to receive and our lives to respond to your word through the power of your Holy Spirit. In Jesus name we pray. Amen.

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A young family was moving to a new house. On moving day, Joe announced that an important meeting had been called at his new job, and he couldn't afford to take the time off to help. Consequently, Jean had to handle the move by herself. After the moving van came and left, Jean found herself standing in the living room surrounded by boxes to be unpacked, appliances to be hooked up, a screaming baby and a five-year-old who decided to throw a metal toy truck through the picture window. Fortunately nobody was hurt, but jagged glass fell everywhere and a gale-force wind blew through the house.

Jean felt that she had to call Joe and tell him what had happened. Joe's secretary informed her that he was in a meeting and couldn't be disturbed. "May I take a message?" the secretary asked. "No, that's okay," Jean said, knowing Joe was notoriously lax about returning her phone calls. "Wait," Jean said, "Just tell him the insurance will cover everything."

The instant Joe got the message he called home. 1

Suddenly Joe was able to take some time out to make a phone call.

"Time out" is a good strategy in sports. It's a good move when the game needs to be slowed down; when weary players need a short break; when advice from the coach is needed to give the team the winning edge; when a player needs encouragement and support; when it seems that the opponents are getting an upper hand. "Time out" is also a wise principle in everyday living.

There are times when we need to take time out and slow down from the often break-neck pace of our lives. There's no doubt about it – we live in a busy world. With all the time saving devices in our homes and work places one would think that we would have so much more time to do the things we like to do, to spend more time with our families, volunteer more of our time to charity and the church; but, more importantly, we do not spend time alone, in meditation and prayer. Jesus knew that was important for his disciples back then; it is still important for his modern-day disciples. **2**

Of course there once was another application of “time out.” Time out used to be a method of discipline in pre-school and maybe even school-school. When a student got too rowdy or too disruptive that student would be put in “time out.” This week I heard about a teacher that had a different word for it. When students would get too restless she would tell them it was time to take a vacation. The student would go to an area that was designed to help the student refocus and recharge....and get some rest so they wouldn't continue to be “rest-less”

In his book Taking Time Out Vince Gerhardy wrote, “In 1960, expert testimony concerning Time Management was presented to a Senate subcommittee. The experts said that because of advances in technology, within twenty years or so, people would be radically cutting back on how many hours a week they worked, or how many weeks a year they worked, or else they would have to start retiring sooner. The great challenge, according to the experts of the sixties, was what people in our decade would do with all their free time.”

Free time? Now we have the office in our pocket ...even when we're on vacation. (the real kind not the “time out” discipline kind)

In today's culture, we find it difficult to wait for anything. We grow impatient waiting for an elevator. We anxiously pace while waiting for a phone call. We can start acting like caged animals waiting in line at the store. I took my friend to the airport last Sunday and they have a moving sidewalk that has instructions that say, standing to the right and passing to the left. We can't even let a moving sidewalk move us; we have to pass on the left.

For many people, a simple task like getting to work is extremely draining. There are too many cars on the highway. Roads are too often under construction. Commuting time is getting longer and longer. We have even invented a term for the stress we feel when travel time frustrates us: road rage. There is stress in driving a car, sitting in front of a computer screen. There is stress in working all day long with clients. A person can only perform these emotionally and spiritually draining tasks for so long until it's time to say enough! Jesus says, “Get away from the crowd for a while, find a quiet spot and rest” **3**

Jesus has his reasons for inviting his disciples to rest. They have just returned from their first mission trip. He had sent them out in pairs and in haste. They were not to encumber themselves with gear or supplies, but simply trust local

hospitality to meet their needs. They were not to linger where they were not wanted. Instead, they were to be on the move, calling people to repentance, healing the sick. They were thrilled at what God had done through them. They were so excited. It was work they had never done before, and even though they were pumped up they also must have been exhausted.

Many of us do critically important work and find ourselves exhausted. Sometimes we have to rest from our vacations! Yet we don't rest. We may even believe that we cannot or should not rest. We push ourselves in a way that we would never push others. Our life may be productive, we may check off everything from our daily "to do" list, but deep down we recognize something is wrong, that we lack a sense of deep meaning, and so we feel cheated.

The disciples have returned from their first missionary journeys, but the demands had not slackened. As the Gospel reports, "Many were coming and going, and they had no leisure even to eat." Does that scene sound familiar to you? Is your workplace like that? Is your home like that? This is a common experience for people today. Many are coming and going, and they have no leisure even to eat. We eat fast food ... fast. Wendy's used to have a campaign that claimed, "Wendy's, It's better than fast food." I'm sorry, but Wendy's is not better than fast food. Wendy's IS fast Food. I think I need to fast from fast food!

The trick is to learn to live without hurrying by the people that will make your life a rich blessing. The trick is to learn to do more than save time. The trick is to learn to make the most of the time God has given us- to redeem the time and learn to claim the blessings that God has given us. God's time cannot be measured by mere hours and minutes and seconds alone.

Jesus listens to the disciples as they report on all they did and taught in the numerous places they visited. He does not, however, tell them to throw themselves into action again with even greater abandon. He doesn't ask them to do something difficult and dangerous, big and brave. Instead, what he asks for is disarming in its simplicity: "Come away to a deserted place all by yourselves and rest for a while."

What is Jesus trying to get across to his disciples? He is trying to tell them and tell you and me that from time to time, we need to take time off. Jesus knew the secret of taking time off. He took the 4<sup>th</sup> commandment of Moses seriously. He remembered the Sabbath day to keep it holy. But Jesus took time off even when it wasn't the Sabbath. When the crowds got so large they couldn't take time to eat, Jesus directed them to take time off.

God gives us all the same amount of time every day. Within those 24 hours, there is plenty of time to pray, time enough to work, time enough to play, time enough to ponder and time enough to just be, time off and time on.

As it turned out, the only time off Jesus was allowed was when he was in the boat. The end of our passage tells us that folks got wind that he was going across the lake and they ran on ahead and when the boat reached the shore there was another sea of folks waiting to be taught.

What did Jesus do? Still reeling from the news that his cousin John had been executed, Jesus looked at the people and with compassion in his heart he got out of the boat and began to teach them many things. He had to help them because they were like sheep without a shepherd.

In June 1832, the University of Oxford granted Michael Faraday a Doctor of Civil Law degree (honorary). During his lifetime, he was offered a knighthood in recognition for his services to science, which he turned down on religious grounds, believing that it was against the word of the Bible to accumulate riches and pursue worldly reward, and stating that he preferred to remain "plain Mr. Faraday to the end." 4

Plain Mr. Faraday was an early pioneer of electromagnetic current. In his book Tilted Halos, James Weekley reports: "On one occasion Mr. Faraday addressed convocation of scientists. For an hour he held the audience spellbound with his lecture on the nature of the magnet. After he had finished, he received a thundering ovation. The Prince of Wales, later King Edward VII, stood to congratulate him. The applause thundered again. Just as quickly, a deadened silence pervaded the audience. Faraday had left. It was the hour of a mid-week prayer service in a little church of which he was a member. He stood up a king in order to spend an hour with the King of Kings.

Do we have a similar commitment? Like Faraday, have we pledged our allegiances to a Power that outlasts the short-lived fads and governments of this world? "What we need ... is a revival of piety - the piety of those like Michael Faraday that counted it good business to stop for daily family prayers before breakfast ... and to leave in the midst of accolades in order to make a church prayer meeting. 5

There are people wandering around like sheep without a shepherd. There is good news to be shared. There are people who need to be on the receiving end of our mission trips so that when we return we can take some well-deserved time off...until we go out again.

I found a poem that expresses the balance between our time on and our time off that Jesus called for and is calling for us to find. It's called, "Take Time"

Take time to think; it is the source of power.  
 Take time to read; it is the foundation of wisdom.  
 Take time to play; it is the secret of staying young.  
 Take time to be quiet; it is the opportunity to seek God.  
 Take time to be aware; it is the opportunity to help others.

Take time to love and be loved; it is God's greatest gift.  
 Take time to laugh; it is the music of the soul.  
 Take time to be friendly; it is the road to happiness.  
 Take time to dream; it is what the future is made of.  
 Take time to pray; it is the greatest power on earth.

Next Sunday, July 29, the same Sunday that our Worship Committee will sponsor a Birthday Luncheon after worship, we will take time out to pray. You probably won't have to skip being honored by the Prince of Wales to do so.

We will have sign-up sheets on the table in the Welcome Center for a Prayer Vigil which will begin Monday, July 30<sup>th</sup> and continue through Saturday August 4<sup>th</sup>. The Monday through Friday sign-up sheet will have space for 10 people to sign-up for each day to say a prayer, at any time during that day, dedicated to praying for our church, our Capital Campaign, and our Designated Pastor Nominating Committee. Last Sunday we elected 8 people to serve as our Designated Pastor Nominating Committee. Last week we mailed letters to the congregation describing the details of our Capital Campaign and last Sunday we placed a basket on the table in the Welcome Center where people can place their donations and pledges to support the Campaign.

On Saturday, Aug 4<sup>th</sup> from 10:00 am - 2:00 pm, the church sanctuary will be open for prayer / meditation / reflection. On Sunday, Aug 5, we will conclude the Prayer Vigil with our Morning Worship Service where we will give thanks to God and for everyone who participated in the Vigil. We will have prayers from the Book of Common Worship available for prayer assistance for individual prayers during the week and for the Saturday part of the Prayer Vigil.

There was a time when Jesus said, "As you are going into the world make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Ghost, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you." Yes, there was also a time when Jesus said to his disciple and says to us, "Come away to a deserted place all by yourselves and rest a while."

May the Lord help us to find a healthy balance between our time on with our time off.

Let us pray. Lord, we try to "do it all!" We have been taught to work hard in order to provide for those we love. When everything is complete, then and only then is it okay to rest. The problem is, we never seem to know when enough is enough. We don't know when to quit. We get caught up in our work. We generate lists for ourselves. We take on more and more, accomplishing less and less. The busier we become, the more we lose our sense of who we are. Jesus took time to rest. He encouraged his disciples to rest. Give us the same sense of rhythm, the same sense of rhyme and Jesus' sense of time.

We agree with your word that there is a time for everything under heaven. There is a time for war, but there is a time for peace. We pray that the time for war passes and that the time for peace comes. We pray for the soldiers we know and for those who have died that we'll never know. We pray for the family of the heart surgeon who was shot and killed while riding his bicycle to work in the Medical Center in Houston. We cry out Lord and wonder when the senseless killing will stop. How can we find deliverance from this violence?

As we think this morning about Jesus and his disciples getting in a boat to find time out we pray for the families devastated by lives lost when their boat sank near Branson Missouri.

Hear us as we lift to you others who are on our hearts this morning.

We thank you that we are like sheep who are not without a shepherd. We thank you that we have found you to be our shepherd. You are a reliable guide who leads us to green pastures and still waters, who restores our souls and protects us and anoints our heads and causes our cups to overflow. We pray for those who have yet to find such a shepherd who need to be taught many things. We pray that through this church that people can come to know the Prince of Peace who brings the Peace that passes understanding.

1. God's Little Lessons on Life for Dad, Honor Books)
2. ChristianGlobe Networks, Inc.,
3. Wikipedia
4. Taking Time Out, by Vince Gerhardy
5. Tilted Halos, by James Weekley