



Grace to you and peace from God our Father and our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. **AMEN**

*I knelt to pray but not for long,
 I had too much to do.
 I had to hurry and get to work
 For bills would soon be due. I knelt to
 pray but not for long,
 I had too much to do.
 I had to hurry and get to work
 For bills would soon be due.
 So I knelt and said a hurried prayer,
 And jumped up off my knees.
 My Christian duty was now done
 My soul could rest at ease.
 All day long I had no time
 To spread a word of cheer.*

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*No time to speak of Christ to friends,
 They'd laugh at me I'd fear.
 No time, no time, too much to do,
 That was my constant cry,
 No time to give to those in need
 But at last the time, the time to die.
 I went before the Lord, I came.
 I stood with downcast eyes.
 For in his hands God held a book;
 It was the book of life.
 God looked into his book and said,
 "Your name I cannot find.
 I once was going to write it down—
 But never found the time."
 (Author Unknown)*

No doubt about it, we live in a very busy world. Ironically, if you sit back and think about it, we have many time saving devices in our homes today. You would think that we should have plenty of time to do the things that give us pleasure, the things we want to do with our families and still some leftover time to volunteer to help others and our church.

I used to complain to Rodney that I had to do the laundry today. He said sarcastically, "Yes, and that takes a lot of time and energy." One day a friend of mine called from back home and he told her I was too busy to come to the phone cause I was out doing laundry. She questioned him about being "Out" and he said that I was down at the creek working on the laundry. Gullible but loveable my friend asked, "Really". Ah, having a washer and a clothes dryer in the house does save time, from olden days. But what do we do with that time saved?

Last month when our church secretary sent out the newsletter, I believe that she commented in the email that Christmas was just 6 months away. Yikes, how will we ever get everything done before then!

Silly as this may sound, I do believe that we all struggle with the issue of time. Our lives are so full, even without going down to the creek to wash clothes, that our days end comes long before we have everything checked off our TO DO list. And folks this does not just apply to those of us that are still working. I hear retired folks say they are so busy and that their time flies by, too!

In our Gospel reading for this morning from the book of Mark, we hear the apostles telling Jesus what they had all done and taught in the days they were sent out two by two to share the news of the kingdom of God. Jesus then tells them, "Come away to a deserted place all by yourselves and rest a while." In fact, I don't think it was a suggestion, but rather a command. Rest and renew. Jesus found it important to take time to reflect on what we have done, where we are going and what is important in life. There will always be people wanting our time, but it is necessary to have a break now and then.

This week Rodney and I watched a bit of Buck's basketball. You all know that is certainly not my favorite sport, but I did realize something watching this week. Time outs are really important in basketball. Sometimes, especially, when the game is not going your way, it is particularly important to slow it down. Other times a time out is a good idea to give the players a rest, not to mention, mop the floor beneath their feet. And then there is the advice given by the coach that might, just might be helpful to make that basket and win the

game. Or at the very least there would be time to encourage and support the player. At any rate, I came to see a time out as a good strategy in basketball.

I also think that time outs are a good practice for everyday living. Maybe with the same idea as basketball, we should slow down our day and take time to focus in on what is important. We need to take time to renew and rest so we can continue with our day. And most of all it is important to take time to listen to what our ultimate coach, Jesus is saying to us. We need his support and advice, so we don't go off course. We need His Word to find our way in the world in which we live.

I think that is one of the things I did appreciate about the last year during our pandemic is that I felt less guilty when I sat down, closed my eyes and just prayed. Yes, I still do struggle with taking time for myself. I often feel guilty when I do stop for a while to just smell the roses, read scripture or have a conversation with the Lord. However, there is nothing in our scripture text that says that either Jesus or the disciples felt guilty about wanting time to rest and renew.

Jesus knew where he was headed, yet he still took time away to pray, to rest in the garden. People followed Him everywhere to be healed and cured of their sicknesses. Jesus was surrounded with a great cloud of people that needed and wanted him to do for them. In many ways, He had a more hectic life than you or I do. Yet he found time to rest, to go out and talk with His father in heaven. I think it is wise to listen to Jesus and "Come away to a deserted place all by yourselves and rest a while." For I think you will agree that it is easier to collect our thoughts when we are alone, apart from the noise and hustle of daily life. It is easier to talk to God, when we are not distracted by the din of other voices vying for our time.

God made us and created for us a plan. He laid down a clear principle when He too rested on the 7th day. He reminded us of that need for rest from work, when he gave us the commandments. Exodus 20:11 says, "For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, but rested the seventh day; therefore, the Lord blessed the seventh day and consecrated it." So, what has happened to that 7th day, the timeout God planned for us? The day He set aside for us to worship Him and rest in His kingdom.

Remember back to Sundays of your youth. No stores were open, there was no internet and only black and white TV. The whole family went to church together and then to grandma's house for dinner and conversation. We

prepared food together, played games and talked to each other. We shared what we had done during the week. Sometimes my grandpa would watch a football game through closed eyelids as the women sat at the kitchen table peeling potatoes, shucking corn and getting the canned chicken ready to stew. Life was so much simpler then. Sunday was a family day that always began with worshiping God at church. It was a different day from the other 6. But today in our busyness we treat it like any other day to get more and more stuff done.

We have lost that restful time, that out of the ordinary time. And we need to get it back. I am convinced that if we could go back to simpler days like those kinds of Sundays, we all remember, that the world would be a better place. But we know that we can never go back. I found that out about two years after we moved to Park Falls. Going back to the Town of Erin was not like going home again. Things change and it was impossible to go back in time.

So, I think the lesson here from Jesus is to take time out to rest and relax. Take time out to spend it with the God who loves us so very much He sent His only Son to die for us on a rugged cross. God gave us everything when he gave up his Son to make our lives abundant and give us the hope of eternal life. We need to use our lives to honor him. We need to let the Holy Spirit work in us to turn our focus on God for at least some time during the week. Come to worship for that one-hour Sunday morning.

Here at Christ the Servant we even start our worship with advice from Psalm 46 as we pause and quiet our hearts and, "Be still and know that I am God." What a great way to start the hour, to meditate on that one verse. It will quiet our hearts to be able to focus on God. And it is not a bad way to renew our spirits throughout our week, not just sitting here in the pews.

Jesus knew how very stressed our lives would be. He knew that this busyness would cause us to get our priorities confused. He knew that our frenzied lives would allow the devil to separate us from our closeness to our Father in Heaven. That is why God sent Jesus to us to be our Savior. That is why Jesus had to die on the cross. And that is why we need to rest and renew our spirit. We need to take time out to think about the abundant life Jesus gave us and where the Holy Spirit is leading us. We need to spend time with God and rest and relax in the glory of Jesus. **AMEN**