

Pastor Gwen's Sermon
13th Sunday after Pentecost
"Worry Sickness"
Sunday, August 18, 2024



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

Last week I started my message by reminding you that Lectionary B has bread, bread, bread, and bread for the Gospel lesson. And today folks, is no different. In fact, it is the continuation of the text we read last week in Mark's Gospel. So, this morning I am going to look at the other three texts that Kurt read this morning, especially Ephesians.

In Ephesians chapter 4 and 5 Paul is suggesting that the people of Ephesus, live their life according to how they are called by God. From very early times, Jews used the word "walk" to speak of the manner in which one conducted their life. Enoch and Noah walked with God. God challenged Abram to "Walk before me and be blameless". And the Psalmist said, "Blessed is the man who doesn't walk in the council of the wicked, nor stand in the way of sinners." (Psalm 1:1) And our text for today, Paul calls these Ephesian Christians to walk or live their lives as wise people, not as unwise.

So, what does it mean to walk or live being worthy of God? Paul said to "make the most of the time", "understand what the will of God is", and "be filled with the Spirit". It is the making most of our time that I would like to look at this morning, because that is the way we find time to be, as verse 20 says, "giving thanks to God the Father at all times and for everything in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ".

In my study this week, I came across an article about a problem that began in the 1950's, when I was born. So, some 70 years ago this problem was already identified and began to rear its ugly head. It is called "Hurry Sickness". Think about the name and I would guess that you agree, it is a sickness that still exists today in epidemic proportions.

Hurry sickness is defined as a "modern malady" caused by rushing about; a compulsion to do everything quickly or a chronic feeling of being short of time, attributed to the fast pace of modern

life and causing symptoms, such as anxiety and insomnia. Sounds like our society today, doesn't it. How many times a day do we hear, "I'm running later for an appointment"? "I don't have enough time." Or how about having to wait. Nothing worse when you are in a hurry.

Now be truthful, do you always get in the wrong line at the grocery store? We watch the line next to us and it seems to go so much more quickly than ours. The person before us is actually writing a check to pay for groceries. Who does that anymore? Or how many of you have driven on Hwy 13 in town and missed both stop lights. We only have two in the entire county, and you hit them both and have to sit and wait. Or how many of you have flown lately? You wait in line to get a ticket to park your car. Then you have to wait in line to drop off your bags, wait in line to get screened and then wait inline until it is your turn to board the plane. And then an even longer wait to finally take off. What patience it takes to fly today?

Rodney used to tell me that when we did something with the military to slow down, because the military way is to "Hurry up and wait". And if the people in front of you in line don't hurry, you think that there is something wrong with them. Hurry sickness has a whole range of behavior that betrays our desperate need to save time and to be angry when time is wasted.

Do you hit the close door symbol when you get in the elevator, instead of waiting for the door to close automatically? Do you take yesterday's coffee and reheat it in the microwave instead of brewing a new pot? Do you watch your watch when waiting for a Dr appointment? Or do you think that the years go by faster when you get older? Or like me, have you ever given your son or daughter "One Minute Bible Stories" to read to your grandchildren? Did you ever think that retirement would give you more time to do the things you want to do? I overheard our church council president saying last week that he is busier now that he is retired than ever before. Guess some of us need to say "NO". Well, if any of this sounds like you, then you might have hurry sickness!

And so, what do you think God would have to say about our having this epidemic? Well, first of all God gives us 24 hours in each day. NO more, NO less. God gives us all the time we need on this earth to do everything that He feels is important. Time is a gift from God. How much time you have here on earth is not up to you. God is in control.

God gives us time to enjoy ourselves. God gives us time to work, to worship, to pray, to spend with our families, to serve and help others. God gives us time to witness to others about Jesus. Remember the Ecclesiastes 3:1 statement that the Byrds turned into a song called, Turn, Turn, Turn; "For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven: a time to be born, a time to die; a time to plant and a time to pluck up what is planted, etc." God has a plan and a purpose for your life.

Ephesians 2:10 says "we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works" and you can bet that he has also provided the time we need to do them. And here we go, drum roll. If we haven't got the time to do what God has created us for, then you can be sure that we haven't managed the time God has given us very well. We are told by Paul in our reading today to, "Be careful then how you live, not as unwise people but as wise, making the most of the time, because the days are evil."

Yes, there is much evil in the world, and we need to waste our time on it. Rathe, snap up the entire bargain that God is giving us and use each day, 24 hours of it to invest our energies in activities that are worthwhile. That is what Paul means by being wise. It does not add to God's kingdom when we

do unwise things like fight, talk behind one another's back, hold grudges, are greedy, drunk, or having sex outside of marriage. God would agree that these things are a waste of the time he has given us. So instead of pursuing the things of the world that look so inviting and waste our time, God would rather have us spend time in prayer, reading His Word and coming to worship and Holy Communion. He wants us to be spiritually healthy and also physically healthy. It is also poor management of our time when we don't take time to care for ourselves. We get stressed out when we don't exercise, eat right and rest. And stress is a huge factor in keeping our minds clear as well. When we are stressed, we are giving in to Hurry Sickness once again.

Yes, Life is too short, and we should not waste any of it. For those of you men who were in the group that studied the book of James, you remember that James was concerned that we presume that we will have a tomorrow and not put off things until then. How many opportunities do we miss because we don't make the time for them? You all know that I like to organize and schedule things in advance, no secret there. But we must not be so ridged that we miss out on what God is calling us to do just because it might not fit into our schedules.

I have spent a good part of my life being truly guilty of Hurry Sickness. I am working on it, even in my ripe old age. And I think you just might be too! Well, it just might be one of the reasons that God sent us a Savior. That is why Jesus died on the cross. All of our misspent hours were nailed with Jesus on the cross. All of the hurt we have caused others because we have been too busy, all of the harm we have done to ourselves because we have failed to slow down, failed to let go of some of the less important things and tried to cram too much into our daily lives, all the times we have given other things priority over spending time with God and doing the work Jesus has given us to do in our lives and in the church. All these were nailed with Jesus onto the cross. WOW!

Jesus is the Great Healer of our Hurry Sickness. At the end of one's life, at funerals we often times hear these verses being read. Matthew 11:18-20, "Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest or your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light." That is what God is calling us to, not after we go to our eternal rest, but now, here on earth. God will give us what we need to get over our Hurry Sickness if we just give ourselves up to Him and just ask Him. Afterall He knows what is best for each one of us and will guide us, lead us to use our time in this life for His glory. AMEN