

NINTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

Mark 6:30-32

Make no mistake 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.

Time is something we wrestle with every day. Our lives are packed so full that the day is finished before we have accomplished half of what we wanted to do. In fact, experts tell us that we are trying to do in one day what took three days not so long ago.

The Bible tells us Jesus was a very busy person. There was a constant flow of people wanting to see Him, to hear Him, and to have Him heal their sick. This was also true for the disciples so Jesus said to them: 'Let's get away for a while to a quiet spot and rest.'

Time out is also a wise principle in everyday living. We need to take time out and slow down from our busy lives. We need to take time out to listen to advice from Jesus, to hear His encouragement, His words of support when it seems that the world and our own selfish desires, are getting the best of us. We need to take time out to reassess where we are going, what we have done wrong, and how we can do things a different way. We know all this, but more often than not we struggle on, we don't have time to stop for a while. In fact, we often feel guilty when we do stop for a while and have a bit of 'me' time.

Jesus had no problem with taking a little bit of time away from the pressures that had been placed on Him by others. He also had a concern for His disciples, who have just come back from a strenuous mission, and so He says, 'Let's get away for a while to a quiet spot and rest.'

If we are honest with ourselves, we all have days where we need that kind of invitation. Just as Jesus needed to get away for a while, so do we. We cannot keep up the pace under constant pressure from all directions. We need to retreat, so that we might be refreshed and renewed to continue to do what has to be done.

Jesus was never too busy, or too overwhelmed by everything that was happening in His life, to take time out with His heavenly Father and pray. Of course we can pray anywhere, but we can collect our thoughts a lot better when we are alone, apart from the noise and the hustle of the crowd, fixing our thoughts on God and talking to Him about what is in our hearts and on our minds at that time.

But what has happened to the timeout that God commanded for us? Not only do we fill in every moment of the working week by doing our job, by driving someone here, dropping someone off there, meeting someone else, but we do it all on God's day as well. God said as a general principle that: One day out of seven goes for God.

That seventh day is supposed to be a day of rest. It is a day when we take time out to worship God, to spend time in prayer, and to rest for a while from the pressure of our daily lives.

Take time out, change the pace of living. We can't serve God if our body is tired, our nerves are frayed and we shout at everyone who disagrees with us. We are just worn out because everything and everyone is getting to us. We feel like doing anything but

praising God. Both body and mind need a rest for a while. Take time out and change the pace. Take time out to spend it with the God who loves us. He made us, saved us, brought us into His family through baptism and gave us saving grace. He has given us everything, and wants us to continue to bring before Him all our daily needs.

It was so obvious by the empty pews in our churches, that it is time for the Spirit of God to burn this truth into our hearts once again. The most important work we have to do is the work we must do in prayer and worship, alone with God, away from the racket of the world and the noise of people's voices. This work is the most important of all because it forms the foundation for all the other work we have to do in the world, and in the Kingdom of God. It is by prayer that we connect the powers of heaven to our helplessness, the power which can move mountains in our life, and in the lives of others. If we do not pray before and during our work, then it will become nothing but the frenzied work of an over-stressed person.

Nobody is too busy for that. The opposition is strong. It is not too hard to get caught up in so many things that taking time out becomes unimportant. Jesus was a busy man, but He realized that if He was going to keep His ministry in proper perspective, that if He was going to have the strength to carry it out, that if He was going to defeat Satan and sin, He needed to constantly in close contact with His heavenly Father.

One of the greatest problems in today's world is our hectic lifestyle. That's why God sent us a Saviour. That's why Jesus died on a cross. That's why He adopted us into His family through our baptism. That's why He feeds us His body and blood in the Eucharist, and assures us again and again that we are forgiven, that all of the things we do to waste time, are

forgiven. That's hard for us to get our heads around. 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 tried to cram too much into a day, were nailed to the cross with Jesus. Jesus knew just how stressed we can become. He knew that we would get all of our priorities upside down. He was well aware that our hectic lives would take their toll on, not only our health, but also our closeness to our heavenly Father, not to mention the bad example we are giving the younger generations when we hardly have time to spend with those who matter to us: our family, friends, and of course our Saviour. Please, let take time out with Him on a regular basis, and be refreshed by the one who loves us so dearly, our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ.

AMEN.