

Busy: Reconnecting with an Unhurried God

Preparing a Table

Lent 2

March 17, 2019

Taking a Breather

As we gather together, we will use the first part of the service to slow down, to settle our souls so that we might reconnect with an “unhurried God.”

Prelude

A Lenten Meditation
Daynes

Slow It Down

[A clock soundtrack starts ticking and 3 people stand up and shout to each other from their seats around the sanctuary...]

Voice 1: Oh my goodness, it's been way too long since we got together!

Voice 2: I know! I'm soooooo busy!

Voice 3: You can say that again!

Voice 2: I'm soooooo busy!

Voice 3: [rolls eyes dramatically] Here we go again. Can we grab a quick bite sometime? I miss you two!

Voice 1 & 2: [looking at phone calendars and talking over each other] Hmmm... I've got 45 minutes next week... I'm booked until next Friday.... Well, wait, if I move this appointment I could maybe squeeze you in... I was going to call my mother but I could put her off... [etc.]

[The clock-ticking recedes as the instrumentation (BEACH SPRING) comes in and continues under the next words...]

Pastor: Sound familiar to some of you? Or maybe that's not you but you've been on the receiving end of a loved one's too-busy-to-connect schedule and

remembering those conversations provokes a sadness for you. All of us, at one time in our lives, have found ourselves in the position of feeling anxious about not having enough time for just being with each other. Then when we do, we wonder why it took us so long to carve out the time because we remember that connection can feed our souls. Our scripture today—the familiar Psalm 23—beckons us to green pastures and still waters and reminds us that God prepares a table for us and calls us to do the same. Have we been too busy to be really present to one another?

Gathering Song 2128
Center

Come and Find the Quiet

***Come and find the quiet center in the crowded lives we lead
Find the room for hope to enter, find the frame where we are freed:
Clear the chaos and the clutter, clear our eyes that we can see
All the things that really matter, be at peace, and simply be...***

Catching our Breath

I invite you to a deep breath...

[take a moment to breathe in and out slowly]

If you have a watch on, I invite you to take it off for this hour of worship.

If you have a phone, I invite you to turn it off or put it away now.

If that makes you very anxious, that's OK.

Just notice the feeling and give it some thought.

As Lent begins, let these simple acts (or maybe not-so-simple acts)

be a sign of the commitment to give ourselves a break,

to give ourselves just a moment to catch our breath,

to give ourselves time to give God attention.

Prayer for Clearing Out (responsive)

Let us pray a "prayer for clearing out..."

Table-Setting God, we come today hungry for company.

Let us make room for you.

Draw us in to this time of worship to sit down

at the place you have prepared for us.

Let us find room for you.

Help us clear out the calendar of our lives to make room for others in it.

Let us be room for you.

In the name of Jesus, who invites us to wholeness.

Amen.

+Hymn 802

The King of Love My Shepherd Is

Taking Note

The second part of our service invites us to “take note” of what God is saying to us this day, through scripture, music, and sermon.

Welcome and The Peace

May the peace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you.

And also with you.

Opening the Word with Young Disciples

Take time to be holy, speak oft with the Lord;

Abide in him always, and feed on his Word.

Make friends of God's children, help those who are weak,

Forgetting in nothing, his blessing to seek.

Scripture Reading

Psalm 23

The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want. He makes me lie down in green pastures. He leads me beside still waters. He restores my soul. He leads me in right paths for his name's sake. Even though I walk through the darkest valley, I fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me. You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies. You anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows. Surely goodness and mercy shall

follow me all the days of my life, and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord my whole life long.

Anthem

Lamb of God, What Wondrous Love

Foure
Chancel Choir

Sermon

Liz Rolf

Kanerva

Sermon Note: The Twenty-third Psalm is a great comfort to us as we imagine the green pastures and still waters. It also recalls the dark valleys and calls us into the not-so-easy practice of sitting down at the table with our enemies. An unhurried God is present with us in the good times AND in the difficult times and invites us to be radically present to each other in the same way. Have we been too busy to be really present to one another? Especially in the difficult times, is it really working HARDER (which can isolate us) that will bring us out of our discomfort?

Time Out in the Prayer Chair

Pastor: If you raised children, or are raising children, or even if you haven't or aren't, you've heard of a "time out." We give a time out when a break is needed. Perhaps we need to think about the consequences of an action or we just need to break the intensity. Perhaps we are spiraling emotionally and need some perspective. Perhaps we just need to get quiet so we can change the course of action. In this series, we are giving ourselves a "time out" and we are sending ourselves to the Prayer Chair.

This will be a time for letting go of the things we do not need that are weighing us down, sometimes known as "confession, assurance, and petition." These three ways of reconnecting with God are ancient and just make so much sense.

In confession, we let go of regret about the past—unburdening our hearts. Then we remember the promise and assurance that God will never abandon us, no matter what, even when sometimes we are the ones who have been distant.

And in petitions, we let go of worry about the things we cannot control and worry about the future—giving it all to the loving God who holds us close and rocks us gently.

My hope is that you will also designate a prayer chair at home and find time each day to give yourself a “time-out in your Prayer Chair” to let go, remember God’s presence, and ask God to hold all those you hold dear.

So let’s just start with some silence... and it’s OK not to try to find words to fill that silence in your head. And it’s OK if thoughts won’t quiet down. Just find a stillness, perhaps calling your attention to your feet on the floor or your hands in your lap and your breath in and out. There is nothing expected of you now. There is nowhere to go, nowhere to be. This stillness, this being, is enough.

Song 2128

Come and Find the Quiet Center

***Silence is a friend who claims us, cools the heat and slows the pace,
God it is who speaks and names us, knows our being, touches base
Making space within our thinking, lifting shades to show the sun,
Raising courage when we’re shrinking, finding scope for faith begun.***

For the times when we have put the to-do list before reaching out to others... forgive us.

For the times when we isolated ourselves to “just push through it”... forgive us.

Help us find the place of balance, O God.

Help us be mindful of our need—and other’s need—to be in relationship.

Help us stop and find that relationship with you
as you invite us to beautiful and serene moments of life.

In this moment we hear your promise:

“There is a place for you,
and plenty to go around.”

You do not ask us to work to earn a place at your table.
We are your children, and that comes with a never-ending invitation.
Regardless.

We bring our petitions to you this day, O God. Here are the people and things we are worried about and yet know that we cannot control:

Prayers of Intercession are lifted

Lord's Prayer

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.

Offering

Invitation

Our lives overflow with the goodness of God. Sharing what we have so abundantly received, we bring now our tithes and offerings to God with gladness and gratitude.

Offertory

Lento

Handel

+Doxology

***For time to savor God's good gifts
For space to breathe and hearts to lift
For ways to reach out and to give
We offer thanks and vow to live!***

+Dedication

Let us pray...Holy and generous God, you have anointed us and we are yours. Bless these tithes and offerings that they may become green

pastures and still waters for any and all who need your comfort and restoration. Amen.

Taking It Out

The final movement of our service is a time of committing to take a bit of this serenity and peace out into a busy world. We are reminded to “keep the main thing the main thing.”

+Closing Song 769

For Everyone Born

+Blessing

May the you find green pastures
and still waters along your way.

May you set tables and
talk to loved ones about the deepest things you know.
May your life be emptied of meaningless rambling
and be filled with meaningful encounters.

And may you be re-acquainted each day
with an unhurried God
who is calling you to dive deeply into love.

Gathering Song 2128
Center

Come and Find the Quiet

**In the Spirit let us travel, open to each other's pain,
Let our loves and fears unravel, celebrate the space we gain:
There's a place for deepest dreaming, there's a time for heart to care,
in the Spirit's lively scheming there is always room to spare.**

Postlude

Recessional
Wetherill

