

Eight Good Habits 6. See the Significance of Small Things

Preached: 10/17/2021, Germantown;

Scripture

Mark 10:13-16 (NIV)

Message:

See the Significance of Small Things

We are in a series of sermon studies on the subject of **Habits**. A few months ago, I came across an article on ChurchLeaders.com, written by Neal Samudre. The title of the article is: **8 Habits of Christians Who Live Out Their Faith Every Day, Not Just on Sunday.**

Habit; NOUN

1. a settled or regular tendency or practice, especially one that is hard to give up.

Samudre is concerned that too often we push our faith to the margins of our life.

“[we] let the things that matter drown in our flooded schedules. This is what has happened to many of us. We’ve let our faith become a Sunday thing, not a 24/7 thing.”

Samudre identifies some practices that will help us to live out our faith everyday. He identifies 8 practices to develop into habits. As these practices become habits living them out will come automatically to us. They will become settled practices that are hard to give up. We won’t have to think about it. We will just do it. They will be a part of our nature as much as the color of our hair or some other feature that is uniquely ours. These habits will transform our Christian Witness.

So far have talked about four practices that we are trying to turn into habits:

1. People who live out their faith every day are in the habit of having “Restorative Times” built into their days.
2. People who live out their faith every day are in the habit of serving others or demonstrating love as a reflex. They don’t have to schedule “Loving or serving”. It is automatic.
3. People who live out their faith every day are in the habit of considering character over other outcomes (personal gain)
4. People who live out their faith every day are in the habit of cultivating community with others.
5. People who live out their faith every day are in the habit of honoring the roles God has given them

Now today, we are talking about Small Things. ***“People who live out their faith every day see the significance in small moments.”***

Samudre writes about a friend: ***“Bill will not miss the opportunity to chat with the person bagging his groceries about Jesus. He’s aware that small, mundane things can have extraordinary significance.”***

He goes on to say: ***This shift in perspective is honestly difficult for me to maintain. I can’t see everyday things as being bigger than what they are. Instead, I think that in order to serve God, I have to fly to a foreign country and play with kids less fortunate. Bill doesn’t see it that way. Bill sees opportunities to serve God in the small things.”***

For those who are living out their faith every day, and not just on Sundays, they are in the habit of recognizing the opportunities that God brings our way every day. ***Little things are a better test of our character than great things. Little things come Every Day. Great Things do not.*** Sometimes we refer to these ***“Little Things” as God moments.*** We must learn to ***recognize the God moments*** when we become aware of God moving or prompting us to do something for Him..

We are looking today at this story of Jesus and the children. I have heard people say things like “When I get to heaven, I can’t wait until I can talk to.....” Noah, Job, one of the disciples, Paul, Daniel, and of course we all

want to talk to Jesus. If I were to answer that I would say “When I get to heaven, I want to talk about some of these little children whose story is recorded here in our gospel lesson for today. **How did you feel when your mother brought you to see Jesus. Were you nervous? Did you run to jump on His lap? Did he hug you? Did he tickle you? Did He smile? What did His eyes look like?** I would imagine that would be an interesting conversation.

I believe that this story of Jesus with the children is an example of how something that may be been considered to be small and insignificant became an important moment. Matthew, Mark and Luke all include a version of this story. At first it may seem a little out of place to include this story in the gospels. Jesus was on a mission. He preached about repentance from sin, righteousness. He preached about a Kingdom of Heaven? Was it necessary to include this story?

As Jesus is teaching, Mark tells us that **People were bringing little children to Jesus for him to place his hands on them.** It may have been Mothers, Fathers, Brothers, Sisters. But they had a desire to have Jesus touch these children and bless them. This was not unusual. When a famous and respected teacher came around Parents would often bring their children to the teacher for his blessing. As Jesus’ disciples observed this, Mark tells us that they rebuked the parents. We are not given any information that would help us to know why they discouraged the parents from bringing their children to Jesus. We are only left to speculate. It may be that the disciples knew that Jesus was tired from teaching and ministering and knew that he needed rest. It could be that they were tired, and didn’t have the energy to protect Jesus. G. Campbell Morgan writes that an Old Puritan Commentator suggests that **the idea that so great a teacher, who had answered politicians, could have any interest in a little child was absurd.** Jesus mission and purpose was too big to be interrupted by little children.

But when Jesus saw what the disciples were doing, He was INDIGNANT! (Pretty angry). The disciples have not been paying attention. Everyone is welcome to come to Jesus. **“Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them”** Jesus takes this opportunity to emphasize the nature of His Kingdom. **“Truly I tell you, anyone who will not receive the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it.”** And so this “Small Moment” becomes a moment of great significance in Jesus’ teaching.

This story is included in the gospel as **Jesus is moving toward Jerusalem for the final time.** The cross is casting its shadow over him. We can see that certainly Jesus wanted to have an impact on these children and their parents. But it may be that taking this break with these children would relieve some of the stress that Jesus was feeling. Hugging children and being hugged by them, perhaps playing with them, would have been a comfort for Jesus.

So this seemingly “Small Moment” becomes a Significant moment. **Samudre writes that his friend Bill, tries to be sensitive to the small moments.** He engages people he encounters throughout his day in conversation. Taking advantage of these “Small Moments” can have an impact on someone else. By taking a moment to talk to someone, to address them by name, we are assuring them that they are someone of worth. They are not just a person doing a job. They a Person, and we appreciate them.

So I encourage you in the coming week, to ask God to make you aware of these Small Moments that He is presenting to you as an opportunity to bless someone else. As we are encouraging you to pack a Shoebox, it may seem to be a small thing and an insignificant action, but Samaritan’s Purse has collected thousands of stories of children whose lives were changed because someone sent them a Shoebox.