

8 Good Habits

1. A Daily Time for Restoration

Mark 1:21-39

Preached: 9/12/2021, Germantown;

Message

A Daily Time for Restoration

I would imagine that everyone has some habits. Good habits, or bad habits. Webster Dictionary definition

habit

NOUN

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

Some people develop bad habits. Some will intentionally try to develop new habits. New habits are hard to implement. But if we do them often enough, they will become habits. Good Habits can affect our ability to be successful or effective. Bad Habits can negatively impact our effectiveness.

I am starting a new series of sermon studies this weekend. A few weeks 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.**

That title caught my attention. Samudre says about himself that he is a **Christian | Writer | Difference maker | Teaching people to live selflessly like Jesus in everything they do.**

As he introduces the article he writes this:

*As our society grows more and more complex, our ability to juggle it all deteriorates. We make choices as to which activity, passion or pursuit we'll entertain with our attention. And in the midst of this, we often **push our faith to the margins of our life**—to become something we do on the side, when we're not focusing on our career or taking care of our family. How do Christians live out their faith every day?*

The danger of today is that in this excess of choice, we'll choose everything and 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.

He set out to look at the lives of people who seem to be able to live out their faith every day. He discovered 8 Habits in their lives that he set out to practice in his own life. His list of Habits will be the outline for our studies over the next several weeks. Here are the 8 Habits:

1. Carve out restorative times.
2. Make love a reflex, not a blocked off time.
3. Consider character, not outcomes.
4. Cultivate community.
5. Honor roles.
6. Cherish the little things.
7. Suffer in godly ways.
8. Talk about spirituality.

I challenge you to endeavor to make these Habits a part of your life.

Today, we will look at Habit #1:

People who live out their faith have restorative times built into their days.

Samudre writes: ***“This is what we all need for a healthy faith. In a time where messages are always being thrown at us, we need the space and quiet to let the right thing speak to us. It’s how we oil the gears of our faith so it can operate daily.”***

Taking time daily to be quiet and still is important to our spiritual health. Psalm 46:10 says, ***“Be Still and know that I am God.”*** As we look at the life of Jesus, he models this habit.

Let’s look at this passage that we read from Mark 1. Jesus is very busy. He is healing people. He is delivering people from evil spirits. People were flocking to him for the miracles. At the end of a particularly busy day, Jesus was with Peter at his house. It is likely that Jesus used Peter’s house for a resting spot. When they got to Peter’s house, they found that Peter’s mother-in-law was burning up with a fever. It was a little unusual that a man would take his mother-in-law into his home. Usually that was the duty of the sons. But Peter makes a place for her. When Jesus comes to the house and discovers that she is sick, he takes her by the hand. Immediately the fever broke and left her. She was energized enough to get up and serve their guests.

Mark tells us that the crowds continue to come to Jesus. He tells us that “the whole town” gathered at the door looking for their miracle. We assume that at some time later in the evening the crowd dispersed and left Jesus alone. I would imagine that he was exhausted from the work of caring for others. But in spite of his fatigue, Jesus gets up very early in the morning, while it was still dark and went out to a solitary place to pray. Both Mark and Luke tell us that Jesus would often retreat to solitary places to be alone and to pray. This was not an exception. Apparently this was a habit for Jesus.

When Peter and his companions, wake up, they discover that Jesus is missing. They went looking for him and found him out in this secluded area. These men were energized by what they had witnessed the day before – People flocking to Jesus, receiving miracle after miracle. Peter and his companions wanted to see more, and more and more. All these miracles enhanced Jesus’ popularity.

But Jesus had an unexpected response to their demand for more miracles. ***“Let us go somewhere else – to the nearby villages – so I can preach there also. (THAT IS WHY I HAVE COME).”*** Jesus had a clear sense of his mission. He had come to preach, to announce the good news of the Kingdom. Having the successful miracle ministry was exhilarating. **Popularity can be intoxicating.** But Jesus knew that he had come for something different. It was his time alone with God that brought him back to center, that kept him focused on the right thing.

For our spiritual health, we must begin to develop the habit of building times of Restoration into our lives.

What do these times for restoration look like. Alan Fadling in his book, **An Unhurried Life** emphasizes the importance of these times of Restoration. They are opportunities for us **to be attentive to God’s presence.** Now, I believe in the importance of spending time reading Scripture and praying as often as we can. But the practice of taking time for **Restoration is more about solitude and silence.** Fadling says that he sometimes is tempted to pack these quiet times with spiritual activities – reading, journaling, sermon preparation. But we must resist the temptation to do that. Instead we must **learn how to be quiet and alone in the welcoming presence of Jesus.** Now, I would guess that for most of us the idea of just going off somewhere without our Bible or other reading resources would drive us crazy. We just can’t seem to be still and quiet for longer than 5 minutes. But we must develop the skill of Psalm 46:10 – ***Be still and know God’s presence.***

If we have found a **“Life Verse”** or **written a mission statement** for our lives, these times of Restoration is an opportunity **to reflect and re-commit ourselves to the mission that we want to live by.** As Jesus spent that time alone, He was reminded of why He came and renewed His commitment to that purpose. He would not give in to the temptation or the addiction of popularity. And because he stayed on focus, He accomplished His mission.

So build into your life a time for Restoration. I challenge you for the next 7 days to begin this practice. Find some time – 15 – 30 minutes to come apart into the presence of Jesus.

Prayer.

