

## **SLOW IS FAST**

### **Mark 6:31-32**

**PLAY "BREATHE" VIDEO during offering ... 3:30**

Several years ago, one of our Navy's supersonic jets was testing a new canon mounted on its wing above the Nevada desert. The canon shell that was fired from that supersonic jet was designed to fly at subsonic speed. Just a few seconds after the pilot fired the canon, he caught up with the shell ... accidentally ran into it and shot himself out of the sky. Obviously, the jet flew too fast for its own good.

"Holy Contradictions"... page 34

You ever been running through life so quickly that you shot yourself down and you crashed and burned?

- Is a common phrase in your vocabulary "there is not enough hours in a day?"
- Does your week seem like a 7-day marathon?
- Are you so busy doing that you are not being?

Then welcome to the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. BUT ... just because that is the norm for our culture ... does that make it a good thing?

We started a new sermon series last week titled "Against The Grain." We are looking at 11 concepts in the Bible where God turns the world's view of life upside down. And the point we want to grasp us is this ... the only way that we are going to be able to live an unhindered life is to live it in a way that seems to be completely upside down in this world.

In the 6<sup>th</sup> Chapter of the book of Mark we see that Jesus and his apostles have been traveling from town to town sharing the Good News. Then Jesus calls his apostles together and sends them out on their own to do the same. In the meantime ... Jesus' cousin ... John the Baptist is beheaded. So, we see them having such a crazy schedule compounded by grief that they do not even have time to eat. And it is not over. They are about to have a huge Crusade involving 5000 men and their

families. And following that they are providing a fish fry for all of them. HOW EXHAUSTING!

Now notice what Jesus tells them in **MARK 6:31-32** ... Then, because so many people were coming and going that they did not even have a chance to eat, he said to them, “Come with me by yourselves to a quiet place and get some rest.”<sup>32</sup> So they went away by themselves in a boat to a solitary place.

There is something about slowing down so you can keep up ... right?

But listen to what John Ortberg says in his book *The Life You've Always Wanted* ... One of the greatest obstacles to extended solitude (or slowing down) is that frequently it may feel like a waste of time. This is partly because we are conditioned to feel that our existence is justified only when we are doing something.

Turn with me to **GENESIS 1** for a moment. I want us to see what a week for God is like ...

- **VERSES 3-5** tells us that on the first day God created light and darkness ... night and day.
- **VERSES 6-8** tells that on the second day God created the sky
- **VERSES 9-13** says that on the third day God created the land and the seas ... and vegetation and trees.
- **VERSES 14-19** says that on the fourth day God created the sun and moon and stars
- **VERSES 20-23** shows us that on the fifth day God created the fish and sea creatures ... and the birds of the air.
- **VERSES 24-31** records that on the sixth day God created the animals and man.

And we thought our weeks were busy ... right!

But the creation story is not over. It does not end when **CHAPTER ONE** ends. Listen to what **GENESIS 2:1-3** says ... Thus the heavens and the earth were completed in all their vast array.<sup>2</sup> By the seventh day God had finished the work he had been doing; **so on the seventh day he rested from all his work.**<sup>3</sup> Then God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it he rested from all the work of creating that he had done.

**WHY?** Why would God ... who is unlimited in power ... which means that he never gets tired ... never has to take a nap or sleep for that matter ... why would he take time to rest from his work?

He took time to slow down ... not for his sake but for ours! He was teaching us what we need to do by giving us an example.

But God not only gave us an example of slowing down ... he also commanded us to do so. Listen to **EXODUS 20:8-10** ... “Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy. <sup>9</sup> Six days you shall labor and do all your work, <sup>10</sup> but the seventh day is a sabbath to the LORD your God. On it you shall not do any work. The Hebrew word for ‘Sabbath’ is ‘Shab-bawth’ and it literally translates “rest”.

Why does God want us to slow down? **WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF SLOWING DOWN?** Let me share three with you ...

### **1 ... We Draw Near to God**

No doubt we live in a rat-race world. Everything runs at a neck-breaking speed

- Fast food restaurants
- High speed internet
- Speed dating
- Multi-tasking
- Instant potatoes

You name it ... it is fast! Including our lives. We have calendars that are multi-colored ... one color for each family member so we can try to integrate all the activities into one big happy family. And we are like that supersonic Navy jet ... we end up shooting ourselves out of the sky.

We might accomplish a lot ... or think we do ... but in doing so ... we crowd out the most important part of life itself ... the Life-giver.

**Psalm 46:10-11** ... He says, “Be still, and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth.” <sup>11</sup> The LORD Almighty is with us; the God of Jacob is our fortress.

When we don't take time to slow down ... we actually run away from God.

The American devotional writer Lettie Cowman wrote about a traveler visiting Africa and engaging a group of carriers and guides. Hoping to make her journey a swift one, she was pleased with the progress of the many miles they covered that first day. On the second day, though, all the carriers she had hired remained seated and refused to move. She was greatly frustrated and asked the leader of her hired hands why they would not continue the journey. He told her that on the first day they had traveled far too fast, and now they were waiting for their souls to catch up to their bodies.

Ortberg ... *Soul Keeping* ... page 130

When we don't take time to let our souls catch up with our bodies we lose touch with God!

And here is the dichotomy ... When you slow down and spend time with God ... you quit spinning your wheels and you get accomplished what he wants accomplished much faster. That is why slow is fast!

Another benefit of slowing down is ...

## **2 ... We are Restored by God**

Charles Spurgeon once said "Come apart and rest for a while or you'll come apart."

Randy Harris says in his book titled *Life Work* ... "distracted people cannot pay attention to God in the way that they should."

When we are so distracted by a life being lived in high speed ... we cannot possibly find the time to spend with God the way we should. And if we do not spend the time with the restorer ... we cannot be restored!

Listen to what the Psalmist has to say in one of the most well-known Psalms in the Bible ... **PSALM 23:1-2** ... <sup>1</sup> The LORD is my shepherd, I lack nothing. <sup>2</sup>He makes me lie down in green pastures, he leads me beside quiet waters, <sup>3</sup>he refreshes my soul.

The psalmist does a great job painting a picture of 'slowing down' in this psalm. <sup>2</sup>He makes me lie down in green pastures ... when I read this I envision lying on a blanket on a grassy hillside ... starrng up into the sunny sky and watching the puffy clouds lazily float by. And when I hear he leads me beside quiet waters

... I see a small brook finding its way through a valley ... softly tumbling over small rocks and putting forth a mesmerizing sound that drops my blood pressure by 20 points. I hear calm and peace. And here is the message of those 2 verses of slowing down ... **he refreshes my soul.**

Slowing down ... stepping off the gerbils spinning wheel and just breathing in the gifts of God restores our souls! And it does not take a genius to know that if you slow down and let God restore you ... then you are going to function much better ... hence ... slow is fast.

A third benefit is ...

### **3 ... We see God working in our lives**

There is one more reason 'slow means fast' in God's world. One of the reasons we move at break-neck speeds is because we think we are the ones that have to make everything happen and we forget that God is busy working out a plan for us and he will make it happen when it needs to happen. God's timing is always perfect.

**ISAIAH 55:8-9** says "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways," declares the LORD. <sup>9</sup>"As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts.

Friends ... We need to be still and watch God work! We need to quit specializing in the trivial things of the world that consume our time and take time to watch God work in our lives!

If you were to turn to the book of **EXODUS**, you would see a prime example of this when the Israelites have left Egypt and was headed for the Promised Land. They were at the banks of the Red Sea and looked back and saw Pharaoh's army descending upon them. They went into full panic! "What are we going to do? Moses if you had left us in Egypt this would not have happened." And listen to what Moses said ... **EXODUS 14:14** ... **The LORD will fight for you; you need only to be still.**"

You know what happened next? The sea split open and the Israelites walked across on dry land. And Pharaoh's army was destroyed.

You know why we don't see more of that today? Because we are too busy! God has so much he wants to do in us and through us ... but he is not going to chase us to do it. Slow down!

- Let him draw close to you and you to him!
- Let him restore you
- Let him work through you!

Slow down!

## **CONCLUSION ...**

I know that many of you are sitting here right now thinking "I don't have time to slow down." Then you are doing too much. There are things in your life that does not need to be there. IF you don't have time to come away and sit quietly before the Lord ... then something has to go!

I have a video by the Bobby Seay Band that I want us to listen to in a moment. I want you to listen to the words and pray to God to show you specific ways that you can make time to slow down in your life and spend time with him. What are you willing to give up so you can be drawn near to God ... let him restore you ... and to see God working in you? What can you give up so you can do what Christ told us to do ... **Come with me by yourselves to a quiet place and get some rest.**"

**PLAY VIDEO ... "SLOW ME DOWN" ... 3:12**