

Get My People Going Series

Exodus 20:8-11; Psalm 90:1-12; January 26, 2014

This sermon was preached by Pastor Jim Page at Trinity Lutheran Church

Good morning everyone. I'm wrapping up our four week 'Get My People Going' sermon series. Get My People Going aims to encourage all of us to grow in spiritual and physical well-being. Today's theme is Rest for a New Day. Now, the moment you hear that the sermon is about rest, it's tempting to check out. Check out thinking, "I've heard it before. I know I should rest because God said we should." Let me just say: please pay attention today. This topic, and what I'm going to share, is so important that it is worth the next 12 minutes of your life. Let's begin.

When God had the opportunity to create his first society, the nation of Israel, there were no rules and now laws. God gave them a few commandments to follow and live by: 600 total commandments! Out of that 600...there's the top ten, the famous ones which we know as the Ten Commandments. In that list of the Top Ten, God commanded them to take a day off. You've got to love a God who commands you to rest. In essence, God was saying, "When the sun goes down, you go home; you put down your tools; you don't harvest anymore. When the sun goes down, I want you to rest. In the very beginning, I designed you to function better when you rest.

In order to talk about rest, we need to talk about what hinders our rest: our time and our schedules. Our inclination is to cram as much as we can into our days without taking anything out. We soon get caught up doing so much that we don't enjoy much of what we do.

The Bible speaks about one thing with one application that within this fast-paced, hectic way of living will change your life. The reason it'll change your life because it speaks to how you use your time. Your time is your life. This one application is from none other than Moses.

Moses was a cool guy in the Old Testament. He lived to be 120 years old, he had four wives and excellent eyesight as described in the Deuteronomy 34: 8 "Moses was 120 years old when he died; his sight was unimpaired and his vigor had not abated." His life could be divided in four stages:

Part One-he was born a Hebrew but was raised in Egypt by Pharaoh's family. He later murdered a guy so Pharaoh's family threw him out. Part Two-he then became a shepherd...sitting out in a field staring at sheep for 40 years. Part three-He's called by God to speak God's word to Pharaoh and he faces him down with the famous phrase, "Let my people go." Part four-he becomes the leader of God's nation and leads God's people in the wilderness for 40 years; they finally make it to the promised land and God tells Moses he can't enter...he can see the promised land from a high mountain.

With that context we have a man who knew the value of time and he wrote about it in Psalm 90.

Moses writes, "The length of our days is seventy years, or eighty, if we have the strength; yet their span is but trouble and sorrow, for they **quickly** pass, and we fly away.

If only we knew the power of your anger. Your wrath is as great as the fear that is your due."

This verse means: If we could see God as He is, we would give him the reverence he is due. Our time on

earth is brief and quick compared to our everlasting God. Our time on earth is like a second compared to how God views time. Moses is telling us that it is good to contemplate the brevity of life because it will indirectly and directly affect how you live your life and use your time.

He then says in verse 12, “**Teach** us to **number** our days” which is something we don’t do. We can also read it as “Teach us to live as if our days were numbered.” There are a few times in life when people live as if their days are numbered. Brides do it...from the moment they say, ‘I will marry you’ to ‘I do’...most of them know exactly how many days they have until their wedding day. Students who are told about a big exam in their class-they know how many days they have to study. Yet, we live our lives and spend our time as if we’re going to live forever. Our time with our spouse, our kids, our parents...time goes by without considering that someday, our time will be up. It’s not a morbid fact, it’s just a reality and Moses wants us to always be aware...live as if your days are numbered.

Moses ends the verse, “...that we may gain a heart of wisdom.” When you live as if your days are numbered, you immediately begin to choose what to devote your time to and what to let go. I need to spend more time on that. I’m not spending any more time on that.

Bronnie Ware is a nurse in Australia who works in hospice with individuals in the final 12 weeks of their life. She eventually decided to ask her patients an array of questions about themselves and life in general. One of the questions she asked was, “Do you have any regrets?” Her findings are in her book titled, “The Top Five Regrets of the Dying.”

I want to fast forward your life to give you wisdom of those who’s weeks, even days, were numbered. I’m going to share the second most popular regret which many would think would be number one.

“I wish I hadn’t worked too hard.” No surprise there. Here’s a statement from her about this regret: This came from every male patient I nursed. They missed their children’s youth and their partner’s companionship. Women also spoke of this regret, but as most were from an older generation, many of the female patients had not been breadwinners. All of the men I nursed deeply regretted spending so much of their lives on the treadmill of work existence.” If we don’t number our days, we will mis-spend our time and have an avoidable regret. When you think you have all the time in the world with your spouse, your kids and then you suddenly realize you don’t have all the time in the world...you can’t go back. You’re only 30 once, your only 40...a couple times. These words come from people who cannot go back and know their days are numbered.

The number one most common regret:

“I wish I’d had the courage to live a life true to myself, not the life others expected of me.” This was the most common regret of all. When people realize their life is almost over and look back clearly on it, it is easy to see how many dreams have gone unfulfilled. Most people had not honored even half of their dreams and had to die knowing that it was due to choices they had made or not made. Health brings a

freedom very few realize, until they no longer have it.” I’ve just fast-forwarded your life to the end. You now have wisdom as if your days were numbered. How does that inform your schedule, your pace?

I understand your pushback, you may be thinking:

If I don’t do as much as I possibly can...

1) I will never make it. What is it? The people Bronnie talked to would say, “You better figure out what it is.” Let’s be honest, we’re too busy to think about it. It can come from your parents-their success or failures, from your network of friends. Thing is, you need to decide what it is...and not have someone decide for you.

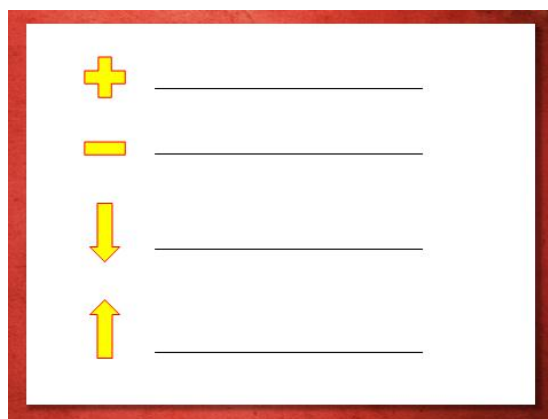
2) I’ll fall behind. Fall behind who? What? Where in our culture do we see that this is the ways things have to be? I don’t want our kids to fall behind. Us to fall behind. Teach us to number our days.

3) I won’t be accepted. By who? Remember being in high school and that being the time of fitting in? What happened to that sentiment 10 years later? Did it even matter?

Is it possible, that if we’re not careful, that if we don’t step back, rest and look at life, we may live chasing something we’ve never even defined? So, how do we apply God’s word to rest and Moses wisdom to number days to our lives?

Here’s four suggestions to help you in addressing your time and your life. You can do this for yourself, spouses and families can do this together. One the line with the plus sign, write one thing you’d like to add to your life. Something you’d like to do, or a certain goal...write it down and do it. Reading that book you haven’t had time to read? Exercising a little each day? Taking Pastor Jim out for coffee at Caribou Coffee?

The line with the minus sign...write what you’d like to remove. For some of you, all you may need to write is a name or some initials. There may be a person in your life that’s stealing your joy and taking too much of your time with no benefit. It’s not that you don’t care about them, you need to set a boundary.



+	_____
-	_____
↓	_____
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On the line with the down arrow, what is something you could limit or decrease? Your not removing it but your simply limiting it? Limiting time on Facebook or screen time in general?

Finally, the final line is key...if your days were numbered, what would you increase? Family time? Time with God?

When you let this huge God perspective into every aspect of our lives, you will gain a heart of wisdom. Your time is limited, so limit what you do with your time...that is what God is asking you to do, everyday. I’ll be waiting for that phone call for that cup of coffee. ☺ Amen.

