

What Are You Looking For?

John 1:35-42

March 24, 2019

Most of us, whether we are active or retired, find ourselves very busy. We run from one place to another and from one appointment to the next. In 2007, a survey was conducted to find out how people's busy schedule affects their spirituality. Over 20,000 teens and adults participated in this survey. Sixty percent of the participants said that they were too busy to have a relationship with God.

Among all the groups affected by the epidemic of being busy, the one that suffers the most is the American family with school-age children. Parents want the best for their children academically, socially, physically, and spiritually. But their emphasis on the academic, social and physical aspects of their children's lives is so heavy that the spiritual part of their children's lives is often neglected.

In her book, Not So Fast, the author Ann Kroeker examined how we all became so busy, not just for the young people but all of us. She says that there are certain cultural values that brought us thus far.

The values like: "The best way to keep children out of trouble is to keep them busy." So we sign the kids up for various programs. We take them from one lesson to another. We try to keep them busy. So kids learned to be busy early on.

Another value is "An abundance of activities and volunteer work looks good on college applications." So we make our kids volunteer at nursing homes, hospitals, animal shelters, community centers, and a host of other places. Not only the kids are busy doing all these activities, we parents and grandparents, have to take them there. So everyone is busy.

Another value that influences our busy schedule is the idea that "The important people are always busy." We feel important and indispensable when we're busy.¹

Did you know that busy people are happier than the people who remain idle? In the study, published in Psychological Science, researchers asked college students to take multiple surveys about their school.

¹ <http://www.christianpost.com/news/the-busy-american-family-41331/>

After completing the first survey, the students could either drop it off right outside the room they were in, then wait 15 minutes idly until the next survey was conducted. Or they could walk to another location to drop it off. It would take 15 minutes to complete the round trip, if they choose to do so. Either way, they would receive a candy bar when they turned in the survey.

The result was that the people who remained there and waited for 15 minutes idly felt miserable while the ones who walked to another location to drop off the survey felt much happier.² Based on this and similar research, the study concluded that busy people are happier than those who remain idle.

Being busy is not necessarily a bad thing as long as we are not extremely busy. Of course, if we are too busy, we will be stressed out. As long as our busy schedule does not affect our health in a negative way, being busy is better than being idle.

Most of us are busy, no doubt about that, but for what are we so busy? Is there a purpose for our busy-ness? Yes, we take care of our children and grandchildren. We also take them to various places. Some of us take care of our parents or grandparents, and we have all kinds of chores. Of course, there is a purpose for our busy-ness. We have meetings to attend and things to take care of. We are busy just taking care of everyday things. That is all true.

I believe, however, there is a deep down, undergirding reason for our busy schedule whether we realize it or not. That undergirding reason is the hope for a better future, whether that hope is for ourselves or for our children.

Pause for a moment and consider Jesus' question. "What are you looking for?" Jesus asked this question to two of the disciples of John the Baptist when they came to follow Him. He was basically asking, "Why do you want to follow me? What are you trying to get out of following me?" These questions forced them to examine their own intentions of following Jesus.

The question, "What are you looking for?" also applies to us as well. We need to ask ourselves the same question or same set of questions. "What are we looking for? Why are we following Jesus? What are we trying to get out of following Jesus?" Pondering upon these questions forces us to

² http://greatergood.berkeley.edu/article/item/busy_people_are_happy_people

evaluate our intentions of following Jesus, and our answers to these questions will tell us a lot about who we are and what we are about.

When John the Baptist saw Jesus walking by, he told his disciples that Jesus was “the Lamb of God.” Hearing that, the two disciples began to follow Jesus.

What is “the Lamb of God that takes away the sins of the World” that these disciples began to follow Jesus? A lamb offered to God brings reconciliation between the one who offers the lamb and God. The Lamb of God offered by the hands of sinful men brings reconciliation between God and humanity. In other words, “the Lamb of God” represents hope for humanity. It is the sacrificial lamb that brings hope to the nation of Israel and hope to humanity.

Perhaps this was the reason why the disciples of John decided to follow Jesus. They were searching for hope. When Jesus asked them “What are you looking for?” they did not answer. At least, the Bible did not say what they were looking for. Perhaps their silent answer was “Hope for a new Israel.” They were looking for hope for their nation as well as for themselves.

In a way, we all search for hope. That is why we keep ourselves busy. Perhaps that is the reason for following Jesus: the hope for the present and the hope for the future.

Hope is the source of great power. Without it, life is meaningless. If you lose your possessions, that is a great loss, but if you lose hope, then you have lost everything. Because where there is no hope for the future, and there is no power in the present.

In the novel, Cat’s Cradle by Kurt Vonnegut, Jr., there is a story of the main character wanting to read a book. That book has a long title. The title is a question. The title is, “What Can a Thoughtful Man Hope for Mankind on Earth, Given the Experience of the Past Million Years?” That is the title. Interesting title, isn’t it? The main character is anxious to read that book. When he does, he finds that it doesn’t take long to finish it. The whole book consists of one word. “What Can a Thoughtful Man Hope for Mankind on Earth, Given the Experience of the Past Million Years?” The one word is “Nothing.” In other words, there is nothing we can hope for in humanity. Our hope for our lives, for our nation, and for humanity is only in God.

Having said that, I invite you to ponder upon the following: “If you find what you are looking for and don’t know Jesus, you will still need more to have true contentment in life.” No matter how much work you do, or how much money you make, or how much power you get in terms of authority, you will never be satisfied.

All the things that the world can offer you can only give a temporary fulfillment. Apart from having the security of knowing God and having his protection and provision, there is no real security for the life here and here after. There is no life, no abundant life, no life with meaning for now and eternity, apart from Jesus Christ. We would find true meaning and fulfillment in Jesus, and Jesus alone.

Paul says, “For in Jesus all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, and through him God was pleased to reconcile to himself all things, things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through the blood of the cross.”³ All reality is summed up in Jesus. All the answers for the deepest struggles in life are found in Jesus.

Are we lonely? Jesus said, “I will always be with you until the end of the age.” We feel lonely because we are not opening ourselves to the Lord. When we open ourselves to the Lord, we learn to open ourselves to others, and by opening ourselves to others we can have a true fellowship. Through that fellowship we can deal with our loneliness, but it all starts with opening ourselves up to the Lord.

We need peace, don’t we? Our world needs peace. Our nation needs peace. Our neighborhood needs peace. Our lives need peace. More than anything, our souls need peace. Listen to Jesus, “Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you. My peace is not of this world. My peace comes from trusting God. It comes from within. Do not let your hearts be troubled. Do not let them be afraid. Come unto me, I will give you rest. I will give you peace.” That is what Jesus said. Our souls will be comforted in God. From that peace, we can become an instrument of bringing harmony and accord.

Are we struggling with guilt and shame? Jesus said to a sinful woman caught in the act of adultery, “I do not condemn you. Go and sin no more.” Our lives may be saturated with sins, iniquities, and transgressions, but the Redeemer says, “I have paid for all your sins. I have paid for your soul.

³ Colossians 1:19-20.

You belong to me. You are no longer a prisoner of sin. You, now, have all the resources to become a saint.”

Jesus not only has taught us and shown us the path to walk, but also has given us the power to live the path. He is not merely a noble man or a teacher, who inspires us; but he is The Redeemer, “the Lamb of God” that takes away the sins of the world.⁴ He is the hope, the truth, and the life. May the good Lord be your strength and hope this week and every week!

⁴ Alexander Maclaren, Expositions of Holy Scripture, Volume 10, page 153.