

Margin
Lynn Haven UMC
September 18, 2016

Introduction

“Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.” (Matthew 11:28-30 NIV)

Margin is the space that exists between ourselves and our limits. It is a space for spontaneity, for resting in His Word, for the things that allow room in our schedules for God, His will, His ways. I am sure you have heard this expression: If you are too busy to pray, you’re too busy! And friends, if you are too busy you are missing out on a lot of the good things God desires for you that can only be perceived if a state of margin has been achieved.

Digging Deeper

Presenting Condition: Pain

- Physical pain is our body’s way of telling us something is wrong. It is our check engine light, if you will. If we are too busy chasing the things society tells us are important, we are apt to ignore the warning signs of a lifestyle that is detrimental to our health. Have you (or someone you know) ever developed health problems that were a direct result of a hectic life? What steps were taken to remedy the problem? Was more time with God a part of the treatment plan?

Problem: Overload

- Are you a multi-tasker? Over committer? Could the things you are saying yes to be taking you away from the good things God intends for you? Read Luke 10: 38-42 (NIV). Are you a Mary or a Martha? Do you need to say no more often?
- A friend once shared her purposeful intention to avoid making plans one day a week in order to leave room for spontaneity. Is this something you would be willing to try? If once a week is too hard to imagine, perhaps once a month? Think of it as an experiment. Schedule nothing and see what God brings you that day. Journal your results and share them with your family or small group the next time you meet.
- If you choose to accept this “No Plan but God’s” challenge, what do you anticipate as some of the spiritual “side effects”?

Prescription: Margin

- In Matthew 11:29b (NIV) Jesus invites us to let Him teach us because He is “humble and gentle in heart” and with Him we will find “rest for our souls”. This is a directive we should all follow, but for whatever reason, mostly ignore. We all need the peace only Jesus can provide. What steps will you take this week to fill this prescription?

Prognosis: Health

- Read Proverbs 3:1-2, 5-8. Generally speaking, God's people will by nature be healthy in mind, body, spirit, and relationships as a direct result of obedience to His Word. This is not meant to imply that people with illnesses or facing hardships are not living according to God's Word. Rather, it suggests that God's Word tells us everything we need to know about how to live a godly lifestyle that makes us healthy and whole in every area of our lives. How would you describe a healthy Christian lifestyle? What would good health look like for you? (think in terms of your physical condition, emotional well-being, faith, relationships, and finances)
- Psalm 116 also teaches us some habits for a healthy lifestyle. Read and discuss the many "pointers" found in these verses. (Hint: There are at least 8 different things listed here that we should be doing to be healthy Christians!)

Conclusion

"Are you tired? Worn out? Burned out on religion? Come to me. Get away with me and you'll recover your life. I'll show you how to take a real rest. Walk with me and work with me – watch how I do it. Learn the unforced rhythms of grace. I won't lay anything heavy or ill-fitting on you. Keep company with me and you'll learn to live freely and lightly." (Matthew 11:28-30 The Message)

The basic premise of this series is that Jesus knows how to live...and we don't. It's why we're stressed out and overloaded...and it's why Jesus says, "Come to me." The first (and really only) step needed in finding margin is coming to Jesus, walking with Him, learning from Him, and embracing His way of life.

As we embark on this journey toward margin, will you do that? Specifically, what types of overload are you experiencing brought about by the pace of life, the pressures of life, or the pain of life? Hear Jesus say, "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest (**margin**)."