

"TAKING TIME OUT"

TEXT: And Jesus said to his disciples, "Come away by yourselves to a lonely place and rest a while". For many were coming and going, and they had not even leisure to eat. Mark 6: 31

And so it was that Jesus suggested to his disciples that they "take time out" to rediscover the secret source of strength. Evidently there was a great deal of coming and going; so much, in fact, that they didn't even have time to eat. It all sounds strangely familiar. If there was a great deal of coming and going at that time in those small villages of Palestine, one stops to wonder what Jesus would say concerning the human traffic jams caused by the great coming and going of the subways, trains, automobiles and buses of this city. And sometimes, in all of this coming and going, we too have difficulty finding time to eat. But this, I feel, is small and inconsequential in comparison to the little time that is left over for living in the deeper sense of the word. In all of our coming and going, we reserve so little time for the great things of the human soul. We become so involved in life that we never seem to have the opportunity to sit back and really get to know ourselves. This reminds me of Charles Lamb, the English poet. Charles Lamb use to complain that he could never be just Charles Lamb. He was always Charles Lamb and Company. In other words, he had difficulty in finding that measure of quietness and solitude which is so essential and so necessary for sensible living.

So of us are locked up tightly in this trinity of "Hurry, Worry, and Grind". It is true that in all of our coming and going, we do reserve little time for the great things of the soul. The result is that our days become tense, our minds become twisted, our emotions become tangled, and our nerves become tight. Some of us are so closely tied down to our work and our schedules that at times we just have the feeling that we can't think straight, and see clearly. Jesus knew this to be true, and that is why he said to his disciples:

"Come away by yourselves to a lonely place and rest a while." For many were coming and going, and they had not leisure even to eat.

I know that some of you take time out each day to pull together the scattered forces of your souls. You've discovered that this is a great source of strength. In fact, you've come to the point where you feel you could not go through a day unless you first took time out for spiritual refreshment. There are others of you who may have felt a deep need for something like this, but you've never come to the point where you have actually done anything about it. In a sense then, this message is for you, and I hope that it may encourage you to proceed along the lines of taking time out each day for spiritual nourishment.

WHAT DO YOU DO WHEN YOU TAKE TIME OUT? There's a simple formula that's been tried and tested by a great many people, one that can be very helpful. This formula is very easy to remember. Just as there are three R's in education, so there are three R's involved in

this fine art of taking time out. Relax, realize, and resolve. This is what you do when you take time out.

RELAX. First you relax. You untangle those tangled up emotions. You unwind that twisted mind. You relax your mind and your body.

REALIZE. After relaxing, you are then in a mood to realize. Learn to realize how wonderful life is. Realize that God is God. What I mean by this is that many of us are trying to play God. We're carrying many of the concerns, and fears, and worries that we should be handing over to him. Realize that God is God, and that he is good. Realize too that there are limits to what a person can do. Realize too that you should live each day as it comes, and not try to look too far ahead. As you learn to realize, you'll become more effective in your living. Let go and let God is good advice. It's not easy, but this is what we should do: Let Go and let God take over!

RESOLVE But all the relaxing and all the realizing is of little value unless you begin to resolve. Only as we begin to carry through on our realizations, will we find the fulfillment for which we are searching. There are some things that we should do, and it may be that we don't want to do them, but we must resolve, with strength and determination, to do them.

Take fifteen minutes each day to relax, realize, and resolve. Do it in the morning or in the evening. It really doesn't matter when you do it or where you do it so long as you do it. But as you do this, you'll discover a change in your living. You'll get to know yourself better. You'll discover a new sense of balance, and have new purpose and new direction in your living. For as a person climbs above the petty and the partial, then he begins to see life as a whole. He sees what wonderful opportunities there are. And he begins to realize that as a "child of God" he has the power and the capacity to do some great living.

It was said of George Bernard Shaw that:

"Whenever he was seen walking in the streets of London or striding the Molvern hills, he always walked as though he had an appointment with himself and might be late for it."

This is a secret of life, making appointments with oneself. We make them with others. We need to make them with ourselves. As we do we shall ultimately be making them with God, and this, I feel, will enable us to walk steadily through each day without being spiritually crushed by the crowds that come and go.

(TEXT)

PRAYER: Our Father and our God, as we come to thy table this morning, may we come seeking how to deepen our living, and may we go, having rediscovered here, in these quiet moments, the great source of strength. Amen.