

Sermon Notes



Series: Holy Habits

Sermon: Living on Less

Matthew 6:19-21

“Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust consume and where thieves break in and steal; but store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust consumes and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

Holy Habits: Ancient Truths for an Anxious Age

In its simplest form, a spiritual discipline is an intentional, regularly practiced activity that helps us to grow closer to God. Although that activity may take many forms, traditionally they are thought of as the activities that Christ participated in throughout scripture: prayer, fasting, solitude, study, etc. From its beginning the church linked the desire to know God to intentional practices that gave people space in their lives to ‘keep company’ with Jesus. These intentional practices we know as spiritual disciplines.

Simplicity

An old Shaker song goes, “‘Tis a gift to be simple. ‘Tis a gift to be free.” We may agree with the sentiment, but there has never been a more complicated, cluttered, bureaucratic society than the one we live in today. In fact, the “good life” is often defined by how full, busy and complicated our lives are. Modern life is not simple. It is always about adding one more thing. But the more we add, the more that can go wrong. Adding the latest, the biggest, and the best to our lives wreaks havoc in our souls as well as our environment.

Keeping it simple has fallen on hard times. And though we like the idea, we also like our choices. Jesus teaches us that freedom is not found in having and doing but in keeping God and God’s will first in our heart. Throughout church history, followers of Jesus have intentionally vowed to live simply. Following the example of the Lord, they have given up comfort and possessions and the clutter of life to leave larger spaces for loving God and neighbor.

Simplicity creates margins and spaces and openness in our lives. It honors the resources of our planet. It offers us the leisure of tasting the present moment. Simplicity asks us to let go of the tangle of wants so that we can receive the simple gifts of life that cannot be taken away. Sleeping, eating, walking, giving and receiving love, the benefits we take for granted, are amazing gifts. Simplicity invites us into these daily pleasures that can open us to God, who is present in them all. Learning to live simply cultivates the freedom to truly live here and now.

You are invited to practice the discipline of simplicity over the next week. Each day there is a suggested practice, along with a recommendation for focus. With each intentional act of simplicity, you create space for God.

You may use the daily selections in this guide or choose other mindful acts.

Monday

What is one thing you can let go of today? It could be an item or an activity. Make an intentional decision to let go of that, and as you release it reflect on how it can create space for the Divine.

Prayer: Holy One, help me to let go of the unessential to make more room for you. Amen.

Tuesday

Practice saying no when you can today, so that you make room for those things that really matter.

Prayer: God, remind me to only say yes to those things you value most. Amen.

Wednesday

Eat meals today without your phone; take time to savor the food and conversation or silence.

Prayer: Help me to be fully present in each moment, God. Amen.

Thursday

Embrace the mundane today. Celebrate those in-between moments you would normally hurry through.

Prayer: Let every moment of my day be an act of worship. Amen.

Friday

Let go of an extravagance today (something you want but don’t need). In its place give that money, time, or energy to someone in need.

Prayer: May I live more simply so that others might live more abundantly. Amen.

Saturday

Sit outside or go for a walk; breathe in the fresh air of nature and enjoy in the world in which we live.

Prayer: Lord, I join all of creation singing your praise. Amen.