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***Waiting on God***  
***Isaiah 40: 28-31, Mark 1: 29-39***

<sup>29</sup> As soon as they<sup>[a]</sup> left the synagogue, they entered the house of Simon and Andrew, with James and John. <sup>30</sup> Now Simon's mother-in-law was in bed with a fever, and they told him about her at once. <sup>31</sup> He came and took her by the hand and lifted her up. Then the fever left her, and she began to serve them.

<sup>32</sup> That evening, at sunset, they brought to him all who were sick or possessed with demons. <sup>33</sup> And the whole city was gathered around the door. <sup>34</sup> And he cured many who were sick with various diseases, and cast out many demons; and he would not permit the demons to speak, because they knew him.

<sup>35</sup> In the morning, while it was still very dark, he got up and went out to a deserted place, and there he prayed. <sup>36</sup> And Simon and his companions hunted for him.

<sup>37</sup> When they found him, they said to him, "Everyone is searching for you." <sup>38</sup> He answered, "Let us go on to the neighboring towns, so that I may proclaim the message there also; for that is what I came out to do." <sup>39</sup> And he went throughout Galilee, proclaiming the message in their synagogues and casting out demons.

There's a word in the gospels that occurs quite frequently, 80 times, most of that in Matthew and Mark.

The word is *eutheos*.

It's a Greek word meaning *immediately, forthwith, straightway, as soon as*.

And do you know when that word is used a lot, especially by Mark?

When talking about *Jesus' ministry*.

It's used often in healings, he touched them and 'immediately' they were healed.

It's used when the disciples drop everything and follow Jesus.

And it's used in today's passage, just like last week's, to remind us that *Jesus is a very busy teacher and healer*.

Jesus is baptized, tempted by Satan, calls his disciples, and *immediately* he goes to the temple and heals the man possessed by a demon, then *immediately* his fame spreads, then *immediately* he left the synagogue and went to heal Simon Peter's mother-in-law of her fever!

In other words, there is *no end to the demands* upon Jesus' time and ministry, and he quickly moves from one need to another.

Does that ever sound *familiar* to you?  
 Too many demands on your time?  
 One need after another?  
 Sure sounds familiar to me!

*Some of you* are raising small children,  
 which is a real whirlwind of activity all the time.  
 Others are working a difficult job, or doing both of these things at once!

But even if we are not working a full time job, or raising small children,  
*most of us are familiar* with times when life is just one need after another, right?  
 When too many things and people are demanding our time?

Well, that was just the kind of day that Jesus was having,  
 when we pick up the story today in Mark 1.

After casting out demons in the synagogue,  
 we see him going into Simon's house,  
 and healing his mother-in-law of a fever (which then was a very serious illness),  
 and talk about his day getting really *hectic*, after that the scripture says,  
*they brought to him all who were sick or possessed with demons.*<sup>33</sup> *And the whole  
 city was gathered around the door.*<sup>34</sup> *And he cured many who were sick with  
 various diseases, and cast out many demons; and he would not permit the demons  
 to speak, because they knew him.*

Wow.  
 Talk about a *whirlwind* day.  
 And stress---demons, illness, the whole city at the door!  
 Talk about feeling *pulled in different directions!*

*What about you right now?*  
 Feeling a lot of different demands?  
 Pulled in different directions?

Jesus knows just how we feel.  
 Jesus also knows a *solution* to our stressful situation.

<sup>35</sup> *In the morning, while it was still very dark, he got up and went out to a deserted place, and there he **prayed**.* <sup>36</sup> *And Simon and his companions hunted for him.*  
<sup>37</sup> *When they found him, they said to him, “Everyone is searching for you.”*

Jesus, **took the time**, right in the midst of all these people clamoring for his words and his healing, he got up early one morning, went off alone and prayed to God.  
 In Silence.  
 In Solitude.

These were the tools of one of the busiest men on earth,  
 the very things that **gave him the power** to keep on going.

After he finished praying, he told the frantic disciples,  
*“Let us go on to the neighboring towns, so that I may proclaim the message there also; for that is what I came out to do.”* <sup>39</sup> *And he went throughout Galilee, proclaiming the message in their synagogues and casting out demons.*

There was **no breakdown**, no fit, no tantrum or terse words---no need for it.  
 He had made **time to be alone with God**,  
 And like that **power strip** I showed the kids,  
 he had received power from his heavenly Father,  
 the power to continue his ministry.

And Jesus **continues to ‘plug into’** God’s power.  
 We read many times in the Gospels of his going away by himself to pray.  
 And it is that time alone, waiting on God’s strength and power,  
 that enables him to be the Savior to all He meets.

We even see this near the **end of his life**,  
 when he retreats to the Garden of Gethsemane  
 to pray earnestly for the cross to be taken from him.  
 It is in that time of prayer that he gives himself over to the will of the Father.

Now, let’s remember that this prayer time alone,  
**took valuable time AWAY** from his healing and teaching and preaching!

The scriptures don’t say how much time he spent in prayer,  
 but it’s **long enough** for the disciples to wake up, find him missing,  
 and then in the words of Mark it says they *hunted* for him!  
 It wasn’t just that they wanted to find him, they needed him!

And it was not just Simon looking—the passage says *everyone is searching for you!*

So this was *more than a few minutes* of prayer time.

It was a *chunk of time*—time alone with God.

*Enough* time to *not just tell God* what was pulling him in so many directions, but enough time to *wait on God's response*, to hear God's guidance.

*When do you* take time to be alone with God?

If you don't do it very often, what's holding you back?

It's easy to say—*I'm too busy*.

Ever said that to God?

But, right here in the Gospels we see that *Jesus makes our busy look calm*, and he made time for God!

I wonder if it has to do with our *short attention spans?*

Are we hesitant to take the time to be alone, and listen to God, because that takes too much time?

Are we hesitant to really go to God, and wait for that guidance and presence?

It's *easier said than done*.

When I have to get down on my face each week to pray specifically for the sermon, I have to wait and listen...and keep bringing my mind back from wandering...and wait some more.

After all, I feel like if you ask God for help, you should hang around to listen for the response!

Our verses from Isaiah 40 today are some of my favorite,

And as I was studying it this week I realized that my most favorite words in it are **'WAIT on the Lord'**.

That's the point of those final verses.

We are to wait on the Lord—that's when we find our strength renewed, and we can soar like eagles.

But *what does it mean to wait upon the Lord?*

Well, I wonder if we need to just *spend time* with God.

And time *alone*.

*Away* from all the demands upon us, the stresses around us.

But if you're anything like the rest of the world, you are *not so good at waiting*, right?

I was reading a funny NPR article, entitled, "*The Impatient Nation: I Can't Wait for You to Read This.*" It says:

*We: Speed date. Eat fast food. Use the self-checkout lines .... .. Pay extra for overnight shipping. Honk when the light turns green. ... Speak in half sentences. Start things but don't fin ... We tweet stories ... We cut corners, take shortcuts. We txt.*

*We: Clamor for more safety in the skies, then complain when security takes too long—and is inconvenient. Can't take the time to drive to the video store or to wait for a DVD to arrive in the mail, so we order them on demand or stream them on the Web—well, clips of movies at least.* Linton Weeks, "Impatient Nation: I Can't Wait for You to Read This," NPR (12-6-10)

Apparently there are studies to back all this up!

*Timex (the watch company) asked people how long they would wait before taking action in a wide variety of situations,*

*And researchers discovered that we'll consent to wait only:*

- *thirteen seconds before we honk at a car in front of us that's stopped at a green light;*
- *twenty-six seconds before we shush people who are talking in a movie theater;*
- *twenty-six seconds before we take the seat of someone who's walked away;*
- *thirteen minutes for a table at a restaurant;*
- *and twenty minutes for the last person to show up for Thanksgiving dinner before we dig in.*

Rick Lawrence, *Skin in the Game* (Kregel Publications, 2015), pp. 105-107

We're so impatient that would you believe there are MIT scientists that have been working on getting *ketchup to come out of the bottle faster*? True story. An article in [Time.com](http://Time.com) noted that ketchup flows out of a glass bottle at a rate of .028 miles per hour. That's slower than a Galapagos tortoise, which, according to the San Diego Zoo, zips along at a blazing 0.16 miles per hour, or almost six times faster than ketchup. So, a team of MIT mechanical engineers and nano-technologists have offered a possible solution to this ketchup flow problem, a special liquid coating for the inside of a bottle to cause ketchup and other sauces to slide out faster! Wow. Keith Wagstaff, "MIT Scientists Figure Out How to Get Ketchup Out of the Bottle," [Time.com](http://Time.com) (5-22-12)

Gee, the lengths we go to, in order to have things move faster.

***We are not good at waiting.***

And yet that word in Isaiah, the Hebrew *kava*, it's found so often in Isaiah, and the Psalms, and Lamentations, and it's usual context is just like today's.

***Wait---not just in general---but, on the Lord.***

Not just waiting, but ***waiting on God.***

The word itself is not just any kind of waiting, it's a ***hopeful*** waiting.

Sometimes that word is even translated they that ***hope*** for the Lord.

It's an ***eager expectation.***

I've mentioned before that for the Jewish people remembrance is more than calling a fact into your mind.

Well, waiting is similar.

It's not just standing still.

It's an ***active, eager waiting.***

***A hopeful waiting.***

Mary Frances used to tell me it's ***like kids waiting in the hallway*** on Christmas morning while their parents are in the living room telling them to wait before coming to see the gifts!

Hopeful, eager waiting.

When we wait on God, ***we can know that God is going to respond.***

Maybe not in an expected way, but God is going to respond!

Waiting is part of the ***music of life.***

The January 22<sup>nd</sup> entry in ***Streams in the Desert*** said that waiting on the Lord is like ***observing a 'rest' in a piece of music.***

The rest is ***essential*** for the piece.

It's is ***part of*** the music.

Without the rest, the music is not the same,

without some of the instruments resting in the band or orchestra the whole piece falls apart!

And what do you do during such a rest?

You ***pay attention*** to the conductor,

you ***prepare*** for the time when you play or sing once again!

Is any of this starting to sound ***helpful or hopeful?***

***Jesus took time to observe the rests.***

In one of the accounts of a storm at sea,  
it says that **Jesus was asleep** in the boat, and the disciples were a little peeved.  
Smart guy. He knew the power of **physical rest not just mental!**

Do we?

Jesus took time to **get away and get recharged** through his solitary time with God.  
He **paid attention** to the Master Conductor, our Heavenly Father!

Listen again to **Isaiah 40:28-31**

<sup>28</sup> *Have you not known? Have you not heard?*

*The Lord is the everlasting God,  
the Creator of the ends of the earth.*

*He does not faint or grow weary;  
his understanding is unsearchable.*

<sup>29</sup> *He gives power to the faint,  
and strengthens the powerless.*

<sup>30</sup> *Even youths will faint and be weary,  
and the young will fall exhausted;*

<sup>31</sup> *but those who wait for the Lord shall renew their strength,  
they shall mount up with wings like eagles,  
they shall run and not be weary,  
they shall walk and not faint.*

Those are some of the most beautiful and powerful words ever written, aren't they?  
And what are they telling us to do?

**Rest.**

**Wait.**

**Hope.**

**Take time**, like Jesus himself did, and spend it with God.

Because **what happens** when we do?

Well, after Jesus took time alone to pray,  
he went 'immediately' to his next ministry assignment.  
He had **renewed strength, and power.**

What if taking that time out of a busy schedule,  
is the **very thing that enables us to continue?**

What if taking time away, alone with God, is the very thing  
that helps us set **real priorities**, so we don't end up stressed out, or sick?

I believe Jesus had a solution to our crazy, busy lives,

and that *solution was more time alone with God.*

Time to get *plugged into the real power* source in this universe—  
Our Living, Loving God.

We need to get plugged into the power of the *living Lord Jesus*, who is right here  
in this room because two or more of us are gathered in his name!

We *need his strength and power!*

And we *can't get all that we need* by just worship or fellowship or study.

We also need time *alone* with Him.

We need to *wait* on Him.

*To hope* in Him.

It's *not always easy* to wait on God.

Sometimes you make that time to be alone in prayer,  
and your mind is full of a million different things,  
or reasons that you shouldn't be taking time away!  
But that's ok.

It's *worthwhile to keep trying*,

to just keep coming back to the reason you are there.

It's your *source of power, your source of Life.*

It's the thing that can help you *keep going*, and *go even better* than before!

*but those who wait for the Lord shall renew their strength,*

*they shall mount up with wings like eagles,*

*they shall run and not be weary,*

*they shall walk and not faint.*

Who doesn't want that *Good News?*

We need to *hold each other accountable* for this rest, this waiting on God.

We recently had staff reviews,

And I asked the Session and Personnel to encourage me to do this,

*now I encourage you* to do the same.

And when you do, reach out and let me know!

*Let's pray for each other* to take time away with God!

and then we will *rejoice*,

when our *strength is renewed and we can soar like eagles!* Amen.