



“Addicted to Busy”

Biblical Text: Exodus 18:13-22

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(* denotes frame change on screens)

Let me just say it up front. If you have ever been running on empty (*like the Jackson Browne song,*) been living on overload, or felt your life was spinning out of control - or been so tired that you feel like you've nothing more to give – then welcome to the club, ***I have found my people!***

This sermon series is for us, and people like us. Which of course is to say it is for all of us, because nearly everyone has felt that way sometime. But let me also be clear - this sermon series won't change your life. Sermons, even good ones, don't change our lives. *It's the same for books, even good ones like this one.¹

Words on a page, or in a message, can't talk us out of our addicted, busy lives. But God's Holy Spirit can grant us a **“revelation,”** the ability to see our life in a new way, if we will allow it to happen. But let me say it clearly. It won't be easy.

Revelation is not for the faint of heart. But Anne Lamott says, **“...if we are reminded to pay attention, we can find sources of hidden water...”** That's what this series is about – pointing us to the sources that can restore us from the **parched wasteland** that passes for our living.² **But we have some work to do first.**

Like admitting our problem before it's too late. Unless we are willing to do so, we often become our own personal version of ***dead man walking, *dead woman walking, *dead pastor walking.** And as s Wayne Muller says, **“At the end of days, weeks, months, years, we collapse, or burn out, and can't see where it happened.”**

³ I know it's true. It has happened to me.

The first time, I was a rising young pastor, growing every Church I served. Year after year, I worked long hours, driving myself, and others, harder and harder. I nearly messed up my marriage, ministry, health, and relationship with my kids.

But people knew. Ann did. She's always known. She stuck with me when I was my most overloaded and burned out. God love her. I do. And there were others.

A pastor, a close friend, told me at lunch, when I was complaining about my kids, not to expect much from them if I never made time for them. I wanted to hit him.

¹ Brady Boyd, *Addicted to Busy: Recovery for the Rushed Soul*. Copyright © 2014, David C. Cook Publishing.

² Anne Lamott, *Help, Thanks, Wow: The Three Essential Prayers*. Copyright © 2012, New York: Riverhead Books, Pg. 52-53.

³ Wayne Muller, *Sabbath: Restoring the Sacred Rhythm of Rest*, Copyright © 1999, Bantam Press.

But he was right. And I had a Lay Leader who said to me one day, *“Those things called vacations – you are supposed to take them!”* **Those people saved my life.**

More recently, about six years ago, so did my life coach, who said, **“I don’t give a hang about the Church. I do care about whether you survive or not.”* You don’t get much of that from upper management, in the Church, or in the wider culture.

I am one of the fortunate ones who made it. But many don’t. Marriages fail, people burn out, flake out, relationships implode. Sometimes we just dry up inside. It happens to people of all ages, those who are working for pay, stay at home parents, students, retired folks, married, single, pastors, church staff, laity.

Sometimes we ignore the warnings and our health is affected. Wayne Muller says, **“If we do not allow for a rhythm of rest in our busy lives, then illness becomes our Sabbath.* Our pneumonia, heart attack, our car accidents, create Sabbath for us.”⁴

It’s not that we woke up one day and said, *“I think I’ll start being so overwhelmed and overcommitted that I’ll wreck my entire life.”* *We just get in too deep. We say yes to more than we can handle. Or in desperation we say no, but to all the things that will really help us. Like time for self, being together with family instead of rushing to some activity, friendships, or making time for worship and for God.

*That’s what happened to Moses in our text this morning. Turn to Exodus 18 with me. Before our text, we find that Moses’s father-in-law, Jethro, is visiting - *that’s not always good!* And his father-in-law, also goes to work with him!

Anyway, in verse 13, we find Moses doing his job. As he explains it to Jethro, he is dispensing wisdom, sharing the Word of God, settling disputes, helping people, doing the work of God. And he’s working morning to night. Talk about long days.

And an amazing thing happens. Jethro does an intervention. He coaches Moses. His wisdom is in verses 17 and 18. **“Moses’ father-in-law said to him, **“What you are doing is not good.”** ***“You will surely wear yourself out, both you and these people with you.”** ***“For the task is too heavy for you; you cannot do it alone.”**”*⁵

None of us can! The good news is, with the help of God, we don’t have to! And then Jethro laid out a plan of recovery for Moses, so he could reclaim his life.

In verse 23, he promises: ****“If you do this, and God so commands you, then you will be able to endure...”*** And notice the most amazing thing happens - verse 24: ****“So Moses listened to his father-in-law and he did all that he had said.”**”*⁶

Moses **listened**. And he **did** things differently. **Sometimes it is the simple things.**

⁴ Ibid. Wayne Muller, *Sabbath: Restoring the Sacred Rhythm of Rest*.

⁵ Exodus 18:17-18. New Revised Standard Version Bible, Copyright © 1989. Used by permission, all rights reserved.

⁶ Ibid. Exodus 18:23-24. New Revised Standard Version Bible.

I want to thank you for listening so far - I am bold enough to believe that God has something in mind that you need to hear, we all need to hear - if we will listen.

*But I also want to ask you to do some things differently. Instead of *Breaking Bad*, I want to invite you to start *Breaking Busy* – I want to ask you to do three things.

We're going to return to this list every week, and expand on it, but here they are...

***1) UNPLUG, 2) GET FILLED, 3) GIVE YOUR BEST AWAY**

*The first one is incredibly hard. **UNPLUG**. Brady Boyd made this observation after watching people for a week: * ***“Our noses are glued to technology’s latest thing. We’re alive, but you’d hardly know it. We’re dying before we’re dead.”***⁷

I don't know what you need to unplug from so you can live more. Maybe like me, it's your mobile phone. I know my poison. I am online 24-7, literally. I need to cut that out. Maybe for you it's your iPad or Computer, or your Television. **Shut it off.**

*The second thing is much simpler to say than do. **GET FILLED**. I'm not talking about eating out or cruising the bars - though some of us need to get out more. But whatever fills your tank, or charges your batteries - **do more of that.**

But unless we are also filling your life with God and his Word, at least once a week, which we often sacrifice when our lives become stressed or busy, **whatever else we do will leave us empty.** *The Jewish Sabbath ritual is a reminder of this truth. They pour the Kiddush Cup till it runs over into the Saucer that is always part of the set – **it's a reminder that only God can fill our lives to overflowing!**

*The third thing is dependent on the other two. **GIVE YOUR BEST AWAY**. The goal of breaking the cycle of addiction to business and chaos, of healthy, principled, balanced living is not that we have more for ourselves or for our families, although surely will happen. It is so we have something of ourselves left to give away, to serve others, and to bless the world.

In the words of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.: ****“The ultimate measure of a man (or woman) is not where they stand in times of comfort and convenience, *but where they stand in seasons of challenge and times of discouragement.”***

The world desperately needs people not dead from the neck down, whose hearts overflow with the love of God, and who reclaim our lives with the help of God, so that we have something left to give away.

That's the life I want to live. And I hope you do too. Let us pray.

⁷ Brady Boyd, *Addicted to Busy: Recovery for the Rushed Soul*. Copyright © 2014, David C. Cook Publishing.