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**Series: Kicking Buts**

**Sermon: But I Don't Have Enough Time!**

**Luke 10:38-41**

As Jesus and his disciples were on their way, he came to a village where a woman named Martha opened her home to him. She had a sister called Mary, who sat at the Lord's feet listening to what he said. But Martha was distracted by all the preparations that had to be made. She came to him and asked, "Lord, don't you care that my sister has left me to do the work by myself? Tell her to help me!"

"Martha, Martha," the Lord answered, "you are worried and upset about many things, but few things are needed—or indeed only one. Mary has chosen what is better, and it will not be taken away from her."

**Exodus 18:13-14, 17b-23**

The next day Moses took his seat to serve as judge for the people, and they stood around him from morning till evening. When his father-in-law saw all that Moses was doing for the people, he said, "What is this you are doing for the people? Why do you alone sit as judge, while all these people stand around you from morning till evening? . . .What you are doing is not good. You and these people who come to you will only wear yourselves out. The work is too heavy for you; you cannot handle it alone. Listen now to me and I will give you some advice, and may God be with you. You must be the people's representative before God and bring their disputes to him. Teach them his decrees and instructions, and show them the way they are to live and how they are to behave. But select capable men from all the people—men who fear God, trustworthy men who hate dishonest gain—and appoint them as officials over thousands, hundreds, fifties and tens. Have them serve as judges for the people at all times, but have them bring every difficult case to you; the simple cases they can decide themselves. That will make your load lighter, because they will share it with you. If you do this and God so commands, you will be able to stand the strain, and all these people will go home satisfied."

**Ecclesiastes 3:1**

There is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under the heavens:

I wish I could call my mother today, but I just don't have the time. I wish I could go to the gym today, but this came up, and that came up, and I just don't have enough time. I can't seem to get birthday cards out before the person's actual birthday - but I just run out of time. (It's a Benischek miracle when our extended family gets a card from us ahead of time.) In a previous town where we lived, there was a procrastinator's club. A club full of procrastinators. Their meetings were horrible and not well thought out. But I remember a party they threw that celebrated our victory in the War of 1812. Better late than never. But there's never enough time. I wish I could have written a better beginning to this sermon, but I just didn't have the time.

"I don't have enough time." Have you ever said this? I have said this countless times over the years. I have thought it many times more than I've said it. But I have not ever seriously considered that thinking or speaking this way reflected poorly on God. If only God gave us more time. Once I heard it said that busyness is moral laziness. We are busy now, because of bad planning or poor priorities. Busyness is often a statement of our self-importance and our excuse to be inattentive to people. But God has given us just enough time to do what we need to do moment by moment to respond to him. And his grace is there; it is eternally present. Every

moment is a sacrament where time touches eternity and there is exactly enough time to do what God has called us to do. You can't have today again. It is a gift.

We all know busyness. Everyone is busy. And everyone complains about being busy. Busy, busy, busy. Most of us have grown fairly comfortable with busyness. But what I've learned is most busyness is not something that merely happens to us. It is something we choose. As objections begin to rise in our minds, it is helpful to remember what Jesus said to busy Martha: "Mary has chosen the good portion", you know that story, right? Jesus in the house of Mary and Martha, sisters, and Mary takes the time to listen to Jesus' teaching, while Martha is busy doing housework, cooking, cleaning, and probably fuming at Mary for not helping. But Jesus tells Martha, you could have chosen something else.

So why do we choose busyness? Too often we make it a statement of self-importance. We use busyness as a way of telling ourselves and, maybe more importantly, others how essential we are. Busyness is a way of posturing our significance. Ouch. I've done this. But a more serious issue is that we choose busyness as a way to avoid having to make harder choices. Haven't you done this? There is something out there that you don't want to do, you know you have to do it, so you put this chore, or that task ahead of it? We put off the things that we don't want to do because we are self-imposed busy. Busyness can easily be an escape. It provides a convenient way to opt-out of wrestling through ambiguity to make a difficult, complex decision that we will be responsible for. It's much easier to be the victim of circumstances than to be responsible for a mistake. And an overflowing schedule can become a shield protecting us from the unpredictable, inconvenient, time-consuming needs of other people. It's an effective cover. Who can argue with you if you have too many things to do?

Now, of course there is such a thing as being legitimately too time-taxed to take on another need. We really are finite. Even Moses needed Jethro to tell him to get help. Even Jesus had disciples. But that's what makes busyness a moral and faith issue. Stewarding time is simply hard work. There are helpful tools, but there is no formula. Each person and each calling is unique and it requires our prayerful discernment and the humility of receiving counsel.

Lord knows, I need to break the very bad habit of saying I don't have enough time. When I say this, I'm not only blaming my own moral laziness on my circumstances, I'm actually blaming God. I'm essentially saying that God is either insufficient or he's stingy. In reflecting on this I've become more aware of my lack of faith for God's provision of time. I tend to have more faith that God will supply for our financial needs than he will for our time needs. But I love how Ecclesiastes puts it. There is a time for everything, and everything on earth has its special season. There is a time for everything - but its up to you to figure out how to use that time.

We get 24 hours in a day. Every single one of us. Doesn't matter if you're rich or poor, single or married, boy or girl, young or old. We are given the same gift every day. That's 1,440 minutes. 86,400 seconds. Count yourself lucky! Millions of years ago, 600 million years ago, a day was only 21 hours long. Dinosaurs had a shorter day to do dino things. Try doing what you're doing with several less hours than before. But in 600 million years from now, we'll have around 27-28 hours in a day. The moon's gravity is slowing us down a bit. And yet, and yet with 24 hours, it is sufficient. Theoretically, we have enough time to sleep. We have enough time to work. We have enough time to play.

Yes, some of us have kids and babies and time is precious. Some of us have two or three jobs and time is precious. But we are given 24 hours - and we get to choose how they are spent. And it is sufficient. I've been told if I can't get my stuff done in 24 hours, another 10 ain't going to help. I need to remember what Ecclesiastes says, and maybe you can help me out. It'll be up on the screen, and if the men can do one line, and

the ladies the next, we'll work thru it like that: So men, read with me:

There is a time to be born and a time to die.  
There is a time to plant and a time to pluck what was planted.  
There is a time to kill and a time to heal.  
There is a time to destroy and a time to build.  
There is a time to cry and a time to laugh.  
There is a time to be sad and a time to dance.  
There is a time to throw away stones and a time to gather them.  
There is a time to hug and a time not to hug.  
There is a time to look for something and a time to stop looking.  
There is a time to keep things and a time to throw things away.  
There is a time to tear apart, and a time to sew together.  
There is a time to be silent and a time to speak.  
There is a time to love and a time to hate.  
There is a time for war and a time for peace.

What does it say after that? Listen to this: And this is from the Message version: "But in the end, does it really make a difference what anyone does? I've had a good look at what God has given us to do—busywork, mostly. True, God made everything beautiful in itself and in its time—but he's left us in the dark, so we can never know what God is up to, whether he's coming or going. I've decided that there's nothing better to do than go ahead and have a good time and get the most we can out of life. That's it—eat, drink, and make the most of your job. It's God's gift. I've also concluded that whatever God does, that's the way it's going to be, always. No addition, no subtraction. God's done it and that's it. That's so we'll quit asking questions and simply worship in holy fear. Whatever was, is. Whatever will be, is. That's how it always is with God.

But here's my message today: God has given us just enough time to do what we need to do. There is a time for everything. But we have to make the time. How you spend your time tells us your priorities. Yes, work can take away from family time - but you have to work. Yes, family time will take you away from working 24-7 - but you have to relax. Some of us work way too much. Some of us are relaxing way too much. It's a balance. And I feel guilty when my kid asks to play outside, but the game is on. And I should feel guilty. Daddy, can you read to me tonight? No dear, I have to jump on Facebook and see what the guy I knew in second grade is doing. It's a balance.

When I became a pastor, I took an oath to uphold certain rules, doctrine, and lifestyle. Here is one of those rules, that my family can use against me at any time, but it's good advice for us as well (These really are the rules): Paragraph 331 in our Discipline: "Be diligent. Never be unemployed. Never be triflingly employed. Never trifle away time, neither spend any more time at any one place than is strictly necessary. Be punctual. Do everything exactly at the time. And do not mend our rules, but keep them; not for wrath, but for conscience' sake."

Time is a choice. It shows our priorities. Change your priorities, and you change your time. Let us kick out the "But I don't have enough time" sentence out of our vocabulary. God has given us just enough time to do what we need to do moment by moment to respond to him. And his grace is there; it is eternally present. Let us remember that this moment and every moment is a sacred gift from God. God's sufficient grace is here, right now, where time touches eternity. As we prayerfully trust him, he will give us just enough time to do what we need to do moment by moment to respond to him.

Look at that. The sermon ended, just on time. And the family of God said, AMEN.