

“WHEN YOU THINK THINGS ARE COMING APART”

TEXT: Mark 6:31

INTRO: A. Vance Havner, preacher of years past said: “Come apart and rest awhile or you will come apart.” Our Savior told his work-weary disciples: “Come ye yourselves apart into a desert place, and rest a while...” Notice the additional statement in the text: “for there were many coming and going, and they had no leisure so much as to eat.” Things were hectic, they needed some rest, they had to “come apart” or they would soon come apart.

B. With our hectic whirlwind lifestyles the divorce rate is up (even among Christians), families are falling apart, there is little stability, everything runs faster, our schedules demand more; we not only have abandoned “snail mail” for e-mail, we now carry our telephones with us...even to church! (Please don’t!) We not only can’t find time for devotions or a “quiet time” we are even too busy on our vacations – we have to be doing something or going somewhere all the time! It takes several days after we arrive on vacation to settle into a slower pace! But even believers are to “come apart”...

I. SABBATH-REST: Ex. 20:8-11

A. Principle: Rest Time

NOTE: The word “Sabbath” means “to desist from exertion...to pause...to celebrate...intermission.”

1. Yes, I know the Sabbath was for Israel, but the principle of needed rest is established for mankind.
2. Everything needs time out or time off!

ILLUS: Not only did man and his animals get time off under God’s direction, but even the land had a Sabbath or rest time.

Leviticus 25:1-5

And the LORD spake unto Moses in mount Sinai, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, When ye come into the land which I give you, then shall the land keep a sabbath unto the LORD. Six years thou shalt sow thy field, and six years thou shalt prune thy vineyard, and gather in the fruit thereof; But in the seventh year shall be a sabbath of rest unto the land, a sabbath for the LORD: thou shalt neither sow thy field, nor prune thy vineyard. That which groweth of its own accord of thy harvest thou shalt not reap, neither gather the grapes of thy vine undressed: for it is a year of rest unto the land.

3. The penalty for not observing the Sabbath was death!

Exodus 31:14-15

Ye shall keep the sabbath therefore; for it is holy unto you: every one that defileth it shall surely be put to death: for whosoever doeth any work therein, that soul shall be cut off from among his people. Six days may work be done; but in the seventh is the sabbath of rest, holy to the LORD: whosoever doeth any work in the sabbath day, he shall surely be put to death. S.A. Num.15:32-36

ILLUS: Today we don't stone people for working on the Lord's Day (which is NOT the Sabbath), but the penalty for not resting is still death. Stress is the #1 killer in our society and it produces heart attacks, strokes, ulcers, and possibly even cancer. The failure to observe the "REST TIME" principle is still severe.

I learned this the hard way. In my former ministry in Glen Burnie, Md., I was under an unusual amount of stress, and then when one of the men in the church passed away suddenly. I was his friend and I took it unusually hard. On a Wed. night I literally collapsed in the pulpit and had to be carried out. An unsaved Dr. began to question me about my 7 day, non-stop, 16-18 hr. day schedule and "preached" to me about the fact that "even God rested on the 7th day" and did I think I was stronger than God? I began trying to take off 1 day each week to do something other than the ministry. Finally my family had me back.

II. STILLNESS:

A. Principle: Refreshment Time

1. In our opening text the disciples came to Jesus all excited about what they had been doing to promote His message. V.30
2. He would use this to teach them a valuable lesson. V.31
 - a. They were so busy and mobbed by the crowds they didn't even have time to stop and eat. (Ever been there?)
 - b. They needed refreshment...not just physical...they needed to STOP and BE STILL!

ILLUS: The Scriptures admonish us to "BE STILL and KNOW THAT I AM GOD!" Ps. 46:10a There is no record in the Bible that Jesus ever "ran" anywhere or that God is ever in a hurry. In fact we are taught that God is longsuffering, patient and that we need to emulate Him. (This is not an excuse for laziness, which God condemns and despises and even demands excommunication from the local church for lazy people.)

But the God Who made us knows that we need some "down-time" to refresh ourselves so we can attack our work time with even more vigor.

3. The "come apart" principle is the opposite of being restless.
4. We need to "come apart" for rest and reflection. (text)

ILLUS: After the episode of Moses losing his ticket to the Holy Land due to his impatience with the people of God (Num. 20:8-11), he nonetheless retreated to the mountaintop to be alone with God and reflect and to calm his ruffled spirit.

Our Savior often slipped away even from His disciples so He could reflect and be refreshed. As a man He too became weary and knew fatigue. He knew the secret to refreshment was in getting alone with God! It will work for you too. Do you have a daily “quiet time” when it is just you and Him?

III. SOLITUDE:

A. Principle: Rejuvenation Time

Isaiah 30:15

For thus saith the Lord GOD, the Holy One of Israel; In returning and rest shall ye be saved; in quietness and in confidence shall be your strength: and ye would not.

ILLUS: New Zealand has their own “Yellowstone Park” where they have geysers which erupt every so often. When it doesn’t respond on time to entertain visitors, the guide throws some detergent into the large hole in the ground. Soon a gurgling sound is heard and the geyser erupts. This is what often happens when a believer doesn’t “come apart and rest a while.” The slightest thing will set him or her off and he will blow!

1. Vacations and down time are not luxuries, they are necessities.
2. Working non-stop not only has physical ramifications, but family repercussions, promotes discontent, worry, oppression, criticism of others, etc.

ILLUS: Even Paul, like Moses, had an flash point. He too was just flesh. (see Acts 23:1-5) It is nearly impossible that Paul would not recognize the High Priest, but after “losing it” he quickly recovered and quoted Scripture to show he was wrong. This was toward the end of a very difficult ministry with trials, persecution (esp. by religious Jews), testings, beatings, imprisonment, etc. Besides all that he had the “care of all the churches” weighing on him daily. No wonder he erupted!

3. The Lord said: “In quietness and confidence shall be your strength...” and that is an excellent remedy for an irritable and unhappy saint.
4. Sometimes solitude, just getting alone and quiet can be like a healing balm; getting alone with the Lord has definite healthful qualities.
5. We need to regularly “come apart” before we come apart!
 - a. We need daily “down time” when we just get alone with the Lord.
 - b. We need weekly “change of pace” time when we do something other than our daily grind.
 - c. We need “Sabbaths” like holidays, family get-togethers, etc. throughout the year.
 - d. We need a complete change of venue or change of scenery annually, like vacations, to recharge and rejuvenate.

ILLUS: Any motor or piece of equipment that runs without stopping is heading for a breakdown. That includes the human body, even the body of the believer. We don’t need to feel guilty about it, in fact, we need to feel guilty if we don’t “come apart.”

CONCL: When you feel like things are “coming apart” CLAIM THIS PROMISE and “COME APART...AND REST A WHILE.”