

From the Pastor's Desk

Waiting for Our Souls to Catch Up

Two Englishmen were exploring the heart of Africa in the 19th century. So engrossed were they in their adventures that the calendar escaped them until they realized they had a very limited time to get to the port on the nearest coast before a steamer would leave for England. If they missed it, weeks would elapse before the next one would dock.

In haste, they packed up their camp and called their native porters to shoulder the baggage. Off they went at a fast pace. One day passed, two days passed, and they were nearing the coast. But on day three, as the explorers clapped their hands for everyone to set out again, the bearers refused to rise from beneath the trees. Their spokesperson explained, "We have been going too fast. We must stay here and wait for our souls to catch up with us."

We are all at risk of losing our souls somewhere in the jungle as we try to navigate life. Our daily agendas often have little time for an interior life, or it is somewhere toward the bottom of the list. So when life begins to lack meaning we need to stop and let our souls catch up to our bodies. But what does this mean?

I am reading the book "Waiting for Our Souls to Catch Up" by Carol Perry. She has some wonderful suggestions as we seek to nurture our souls. She indicates several little ways we can reclaim this important part of our lives. For example, bless your phone so that the words you say might be good and helpful ones. Say a prayer over the computer for the work you and it will do together. Bless the copy machine before you use it. (I think an exorcism may sometimes be needed for ours!) These simple rituals can be applied to your car keys, kitchen utensils and other appliances. It is a reminder that we are not alone in our activities and inviting God to share the load.

As you snap a leash on your dog say a prayer. The other day I took our puppy Sammy out for a walk to try and coax out a cigar. After ten minutes on the lawn with no luck we returned inside where he promptly deposited one. It was waiting for me in front of the bathroom door as I exited. Sammy was looking up at me with tail wagging, quite pleased with his accomplishment. He knew he was suppose to poop but was confused as to the location. Thankfully he is slowing learning where his bathroom is and I'm more conscious of saying a prayer when I snap on the leash: "Please Lord, Sammy needs your help. I know the enemy is at the gate, help Sammy release it out under the open sky. Amen."

Cast a blessing on the dish washer and the washing machine, the vacuum and the dust cloth. The list can go on and on. By doing so our lives can have added meaning and value as we invite God into every detail. Perry puts it this way: "I like to think of this process as a way of making every day a holy day. Ordinary things become more than plastic and metal and bits of wire. They become invitations to our inner self to look beyond, and they take no time from our over scheduled days."

On our farm dad would leave some land lay fallow. For one year nothing was planted so it could rejuvenate itself. To the untrained eye, it would appear he was wasting land that could be producing crops. But if the land was never left fallow it would exhaust its nutrients and become useless. Our souls need some fallow time where we sit and do nothing but look at a sunset or watch the leaves blowing in the wind. Sit along the River Walk and watch the rushing water and wildlife in the area. This is not wasted time. Its soul nurturing time.

Jesus entered a village where a woman named Martha welcomed him into her home. She had a sister named Mary, who sat at the Lord's feet and listened to what he was saying. But Martha was distracted by her many tasks; so she came to him and asked, 'Lord, do you not care that my sister has left me to do all the work by myself? Tell her then to help me.' But the Lord answered her, 'Martha, Martha, you are worried and distracted by many things; there is need of only one thing. Mary has chosen the better part, which will not be taken away from her.' Luke 10:38-42

The classic definition of prayer is the lifting of the heart and mind to God. This isn't complicated. Get comfortable in your chair, close your eyes and relax. Feel the muscles in your face relaxing, feel the relaxation going around your ears, down your neck, back, arms and into your legs. Notice the sensation of air moving slowly in and out of your nostrils. As you breathe in say to yourself Jes... and as you breathe out say ...sus. Breathe in Jes... and out ...sus. When a thought comes into your mind return your attention to the sensation of air moving in and out of your nostrils and your prayer word Jes.....sus. You may have to return many times to your breathing and prayer word which will bring you back to the present moment, which is where we find God. Strive to do this for 20 or so minutes a day. It's a form of meditation and can bring a great amount of inner peace. Don't get discouraged as distractions come along. We all experience them. When they come let them go by returning to the breathing and prayer word.

"In their fear they cried out. Immediately Jesus spoke to them and said, 'Take heart, it is I; do not be afraid'." Matthew 14:26-27

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