

Come Away

Introduction

Something Different

- A. Today is going to be a little different, obviously. It's already quite out of the ordinary for us. We're out here in the woods, under the sunshine. I love it.
- B. When we pull away from our normal rhythms and places, it always seems good to me to draft on that energy and do something different with a sermon as well.
 - 1. So I'm going to share a bit from [Mark 6:30-32](#).
 - 2. And then I'm actually going to have Joseph and Manzheng share a bit on some things that'll make sense when we get there.
 - a. So, for me, Lord willing, it's going to be much shorter than normal. You're welcome.

The Text

³⁰The apostles returned to Jesus and told him all that they had done and taught. ³¹And he said to them, "Come away by yourselves to a desolate place and rest a while." For many were coming and going, and they had no leisure even to eat. ³²And they went away in the boat to a desolate place by themselves. (Mark 6:30–32)

- A. Now, the apostles had been busy.
 - 1. Back up in [Mark 6:7](#), we read that Jesus had sent them out two by two to go minister to the various villages in and around Israel.
 - 2. They were to preach the good news of the kingdom and call people to repentance. He gave them power to cast out demons and heal the sick.
 - 3. It seems to have been a magnificent of ministry with much success to speak of. That's why we read there in [v. 30](#) that "[t]he apostles returned to Jesus and told him all that they had done and taught." It was a good time. They had a lot to talk about. How exciting. How wonderful.
- B. But then here's how Jesus responds, perhaps quite surprisingly to us: "And he said to them, 'Come away by yourselves to a desolate place and rest a while'" ([v. 31](#)).
 - 1. We don't hear of him celebrating all that much with them at this point.
 - 2. We don't hear him say: "If it was so successful out there, what are you doing back here? Some of you are fishermen aren't you? No one pulls up the lines when the fish are still biting. Strike while the iron's hot. Get back to work!" No he doesn't say that.
 - 3. Instead he says: "[Come away by yourselves to a desolate place and rest a while.](#)"

- a. “Come Away”—that’s the title of this sermon and it’s the banner I’d really want to hang over this weekend if I could.
- C. So I’m going to ask four quick questions regarding this: (1) What Is It?; (2) Why Do We Need It?; (3) How Do We Do It?; and (4) Where Do We Go Next?

(1) What Is It?

“A Desolate Place”

- A. With this I just want to quickly make sure we’re clear on what he’s calling us to here. I want to focus in on this idea of a “desolate place” because I think it’s really a rich theme in the Scriptures.
- B. The word translated “desolate” here is really the adjective use of the word elsewhere translated in Mark’s gospel as “wilderness” or “desert”.
 - 1. In other words: Christ is calling his disciples here to come away with him into a “wilderness-like place”.
 - a. Now, Mount Madonna isn’t a desert but it could pass as a wilderness, couldn’t it? Did anyone else hear some unsettling noises last night? Strange creatures roaming free? Or maybe that was just Donl with his telescope ;)
- C. But this intriguing to me, because in the Scriptures we’re really given this paradoxical picture of the wilderness.
 - 1. On the one hand, the wilderness is a place of trial ([Deut 8:2](#)); a place of temptation ([Mark 1:12-13](#)); a place of deficiency ([Mark 6:35](#)); a place of demons ([Luke 8:29](#)); a place of danger ([2 Cor 11:26](#)).
 - 2. But, on the other hand, intriguingly, it is also a place of revival and intimacy with God ([Hos 2:14-15](#)); a place of fullness and provision ([Mark 6:42](#)); a place of vision and clarity ([Luke 4:42-43](#)); and (as we see in our text this morning) a place of rest and refreshment ([Mark 6:31](#)).
 - a. And, of course, if you’ve been a Christian for any time at all, what you soon realize is that often both sides come together at one and the same time, don’t they? The wilderness is hard and barren but it’s also sweet and fruitful. Because God meets with us there.
- D. At the bottom: the “desolate place” is a place where we go to grow in our relationship with God, it’s a place to get alone with Jesus. We come away to a desolate place to be with him.
 - 1. So that’s what he’s calling us to here.

(2) Why Do We Need It?

Eat and Sleep (Physically and Spiritually)

A. But now I want to ask the question: Why do we need it?

1. And for this I'd invite you to consider both the physical and spiritual dimensions that are somewhat intertwined in our text.

a. It's actually the physical that's made more plain on the surface of our text, if you noticed . . .

B. So Mark makes that little note at the end of v. 31, after Jesus' words: "For many were coming and going, and they had no leisure even to eat."

1. They'd been so busy in ministry and work and things that normal bodily needs were being neglected. So Jesus calls them to come away with him to a desolate so that they can eat. Isn't that something?

a. We're humans not machines. We were created for more than just work or ministry or things like this. We were created for God, to know him, to eat with him, to depend on him.

i. Dependence is built into our very biology. If we don't eat, we don't live.

(1) That's true in the physical and in the spiritual, in terms of feasting on God and his word and his love and grace.

C. In Jesus' own words there we see the matter of rest being highlighted. So he says, again: "Come away by yourselves to a desolate place and rest a while" (v. 31). Why come away? So you can "rest".

1. And again, we think of the breakdown of our bodies and the parable that's built into our very biology.

a. We need sleep or we can't do anything. We are needy, dependent creatures. We're not nearly as self-sufficient as we like to think we are. And our incessant need for rest and sleep force us to face this.

i. No amount of caffeine can overcome this fact.

D. I was talking with Joey the other day about buying a bed. I'm waking up stiff and sore. Maybe it's just because I'm 40 now and that's the way it goes. But it also might be because my bed is 14 years old and I was probably supposed to replace it years ago.

1. And Joey gave me the advice his mom had given him when he was looking to buy a bed: if there's one thing you don't go cheap on, you don't skimp on, it's buying a bed.

a. Why? Because we're going to spend 1/3 of our lives in that thing. Do you realize that? (Some of you are spending 2/3 of your life in that thing, that's a different problem, we'll talk later.)

- i. But think about it. 1/3 of our life is spent with you basically in a coma, good for nothing, sawing logs, dream state, just lying there, drooling, snoring, sleep-talking . . . however you role.

E. A lot of people care about getting good sleep.

1. We have apps and things to monitor the quality of it.
2. We do research to try to figure out how to make the most of it. So we talk about the when—should I go to be early or late, rise up early or late? We talk about the how—should I be on my side, my back, my stomach? We talk about the what—should I have this bed with memory foam or that with springs or something else entirely like a hammock?
3. But we rarely think about the why question. Why do we even need this in the first place? Why were we made this way? Why did God make us in such a way that 1/3 of our lives will be spent lying motionless in a bed?
 - a. How ridiculously inefficient! What are we just a part of the pilot program for humans and he's still working out the kinks? The later models will be more efficient—they'll sleep less and accomplish more?
 - b. No! God made us this way on purpose.
 - i. There's a parable in our biology and it speaks to our place in his universe and our dependence on him. It's physical but it's getting at something spiritual, you see?

(1) We can't do things on our own. We need rest before we can work, grace before we can go, the love of God before we can live for God. And when we get that order backwards we short-circuit.

F. It's interesting to note that for the Hebrew people, drawing from the Bible, they measure days differently than us. For them the new day begins at sunset, in the evening.

1. So think of how it's recounted for us in the days of creation: "And there was evening and there was morning, the first day" (Gen. 1:5). "And there was evening and there was morning, the second day" (Gen. 1:8). And so on.

- a. So their day begins, you could say, with rest. And that rest then leads into the work that comes in the morning. They work from a place of rest.

G. For us, it's the opposite. We really see the morning as the start of the new day and it ends with the evening.

1. We work not from rest but so that we can rest. We labor to prove ourselves in the day as it were, and only then have we "earned our rest" at the end of it.

- a. It's quite a different mentality—divorced from grace; divorced from our true dependence on God and the fact of our createdness.
- H. We were designed first to rest in him and be with him, not just to work for him. So Jesus says again: *“Come away by yourselves to a desolate place and rest a while”* (v. 31).

Re-rooting in the Gospel

- A. And so you see, here's why we need it. We need to come away and rest with him like this because when we don't, if Jesus never called us to stop, if we just kept going, inevitably our identity starts to root itself in ourselves and what we do instead of in him and what he's done.
- 1. We lose the gospel and our gospel identity. We become more anxious and judgmental and proud. We puff up with our achievements and deflate with our failures. We go up and down. We lose ourselves in the busyness of the day to day.
- B. And some of us are likely in that place right now. And that's why, if I've got you here, in the wilderness for a little bit, I just want to get you to think about this. How are you doing physically and spiritually, with body and soul before God?
- 1. Are you eating, sleeping, making time for rest and recreation?
 - 2. Are you spending time with Jesus? Are you in his Word and in prayer? Do you take a sabbath?
 - a. Do you give God space to speak to you, to reshape your perspective, to reform your heart, to re-root your identity in him—so that it's not in what you do, or what people think of you, or things like this?
- C. Don't let this weekend pass you by without making space for that and making a plan to engage more of this with Jesus even when you go back down the mountain here in a few hours.

(3) How Do We Do It?

Alone with Jesus Together

- A. But now we have to ask: How do we do it?
- 1. And, of course, there's so much I could say on this. We could talk about daily devotions, time alone with God in the morning, prayer walks, little retreats and things.
 - 2. But there's just one piece I thought was interesting that I wanted to bring out here from our text. And it's perhaps not something you would initially think of . . .
- B. You see, we tend to think of doing this all on our own. It's me and Jesus time. And that's true. And we all need that.
- 1. But that's actually not what's happening here. These guys are getting alone with Jesus together. Did you catch that?

- a. It's clear as day in the Greek. All the pronouns and verb forms and things, they're in the second person plural. "You all . . ." It's not just one person coming away with Jesus here. It's all of them together.

- C. And so I would just bring out the fact that one of the ways we pursue this is by doing it together, as we are here.
 - 1. This is really the heart behind the Sunday Services that we have too. It's a rhythm built into your week where we come away to be with Jesus together. I'm sure you have things to do, lots going on. But we need his grace. We need rest in him before we work for him. And so we come away together on Sundays.
 - 2. And I hope you're a part of a Home Group and other things. It's the same idea.

- D. Even around us here with this Redwood forest is a picture of the very thing I'm talking about.
 - 1. We see the height of the Redwoods and we think oh, to keep these things sturdy and strong, they must have deep, deep roots.
 - 2. But they don't. Their roots don't extend much deeper than three feet into the soil beneath us here. But that doesn't mean they're weak.
 - a. They get their strength actually from sending their roots out not deep but wide (some extend over fifty feet horizontally in every direction!) and they intertwine with each other. That's where the strength comes from. They're together.

- E. And you know we want to be like that. Where we need community.
 - 1. Sure we need alone time with Jesus.
 - 2. But we also need to get alone with him together. We need to hold each other accountable to that. We need the encouragement and the stability that comes from it. We pray for each other. We share Scripture with one another. We use our gifts to edify and bless.
 - a. We feast, we rest, we come away with him together.

(4) Where Do We Go Next?

For "a While"

- A. But now here's what we have to see, we come away like this not forever but for a time, it's a rhythm for us but it's not all we do. We feast and rest with Jesus, but then we get back to work.

- B. Notice that at the end of v. 31 that I've just been reading and re-reading: "Come away by yourselves to a desolate place and rest a while."
 - 1. It's for "while." Not forever.
 - a. Rest is for work.
 - b. Grace is for going.

- c. His love is for life.
 - C. We still have things to do, but now we do it all differently—not to earn our rest, but from rest; not to gain his approval, but from his approval; not for his love, but from it. You get the idea.
 - 1. We go back to work, we do our tasks, we go down the mountain and get on with our lives, but we go about the same things with a different heart.
 - a. And that’s what I pray happens for us here this weekend.
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Joseph and Manzhon:

How has Jesus ministered to you personally in your times alone (in the desolate place) with him lately? In particular, identify one text that he’s used to really encourage you. What verse(s) have you been holding onto?

What words from Scripture have kept you grounded in him as you go about your day-to-day? Read the text. Help us understand what the text means in general. Then tell us what it’s meant to you personally. Then, finally, show us how it might apply to us as well.