**Busyness 8 Dec 2019**

**Intro**

I am very aware it is December and we are in advent and I’ve thought to myself that I should be speaking to you about something to do with Christ coming to earth, his birth, something related to Christmas.

It is the second week of December after all!

However, I have had no inclination to do that and these past 2 weeks, I have found myself speaking about knowing God.

This week, I thought there may be more God wanted to say to us about the importance of protecting and investing in our relationship with Him but through the week I had no idea what really.

Last night, I was tired and not really feeling it but as I finished listening to Spurs win against Burnley, I clearly heard God say….

BE STILL AND KNOW THAT I AM GOD.

It was a command ‘BE STILL AND KNOW THAT I AM GOD.’

Let me ask you some questions as I like to do ……

**Q1 = Do you want to grow spiritually?**

Hopefully the fact that we’re here this morning, indicates our desire to grow spiritually

**Q2 = What is your plan for growing spiritually?**

Let me let you into a secret, if you haven’t got a plan, it is very unlikely to happen.

**Q3 = What gets in the way of you developing your relationship with God / getting to know God better?**

In a survey of Christians, aged 25-88 in over 100 countries across the world …..

the number 1 obstacle to them developing their relationship with God was……….

1. **Busyness !**

**83% of Christians said that busyness was the main thing that stopped them getting to know God more**

1. Lack of discipline 74%
2. Interruptions 47%

**How does busyness affect a Christians life?**

i.e. What happens when we get caught up in the busyness of life?

I have been very deliberate in not asking people to do a load of church stuff because I have seen Christians sucked into church stuff leaving them no time, nor relationships with folk outside

But as we go into this second stage in the life of the church here, we will be developing more opportunities for ‘ministry’, so we need to aware now and apply this question to that stuff too.

**…… Q = What happens when we get caught up in the busyness of life and ministry?**

1. the first thing that gets squeezed, is a believers personal time with God

- it gets neglected

- Because there’s just too much good stuff to do,

 & people have needs

1. the second danger = we maintain a devotional life that really isn’t life giving

i.e. we spend time with God because that what we’re supposed to do but there isn’t any life in it.

We all know that life is not going to slow down. Technology advancements mean that life is just going to gets faster

& enticements to keep up,

* get the new thing in order to keep up,
* connect through social media in order to keep up
* are going to come at us thicker and faster

It’s not going to stop, we live in a culture of busyness.

e.g. we invented fast food restaurants and guess what? - they’re not fast enough, so we have drive throughs

- Our mobiles can do more than computers could do 10 years ago.

Are mobiles bad? No.

Is the internet bad? No.

Is social media bad? Possibly!

None of these things are inherently bad in themselves, but what they do is point to our culturally induced need and desire for quickness

**The Q is….how do we live in our culture but not let it negatively impact us?**

I think it is helpful to learn what happens when we are too busy / when doing becomes more important than being

1. **we become spiritual impoverished**

In Matthew 16 it says **‘**What good will it be for someone to gain the whole world, yet forfeit their soul?’

What does Jesus say ?

**28**“Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. **29**Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. **30**For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.”

(Matthew 11:28)

1. **the life flow out of which ministry comes gets constricted**

Proverbs 4:23, a proverb about wisdom warns

“Above all else, guard your heart, for from it flows the wellspring of life”

**Our personal needs**

1. significance

It’s not just our culture which we have to overcome!

If you have ever set aside time just to sit and be with God,

* maybe you’ve gone on a retreat,
* or you’ve just been determined to take some time out, be quiet and concentrate on God

Let me tell you…..you will soon experience the wrestling of your own humanness

1st thought I have = “I could be doing something important now!”

All the important things I could be doing, will flood into my mind!

When we’re busy we feel important, and we like feeling important so we stay busy

When people ask us how we are and we say “I’m really busy’, it’s like a badge of honour and implies “don’t ask anything of me because I’m really busy”

One Christian writer put it like this:

“I live in a society in which crowded schedules and harassed conditions are evidence of importance. So I develop a crowded schedule and harassed conditions, when others notice, they acknowledge my significance and my vanity is fed.”

…..So we may not like the busyness but there is a part of us that gets something out of it

1. Often we’re just uncomfortable with not doing anything

– it makes us uncomfortable / anxious

For some of us the thought of being alone and quiet with God for any length of time = terrifying because we just don’t know what might come up!

1. Not being busy is seen as being lazy and we don’t want to be seen as being lazy

The culture we are in, feeds us the lie that unless

* we are connected 24/7,
* got a full schedule

….. we are not living a fulfilled life

The Bible says “The Lord is my shepherd, I shall be totally fulfilled”

Psalm 23

He makes me lie down in green pastures

He leads me besides still waters

He restores my soul

Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me!

All the days of my life

And I will **dwell** in the house of the Lord forever.

**Conclusion**

I felt very strongly last night that our loving, heavenly Father was firmly instructing us to :

Be still and know Him

How each one of us endeavours to do that will be different but let me finish with some helps in how we establish a new pattern in our lives

To establish new priorities, a new way of doing things

* **it needs to be doable**

look at your life, your diary, what space could you create to make some more time to be with God?

I’m an introvert, I like being on my own, Steve is an extrovert, he won’t go to the shop without dragging one of the kids along just to keep him company. So if I look at my week, I may have time I can find to be alone but if Steve is home too, it won’t happen because he’ll want to know what I’m doing, would I like a cup of tea, can he join me etc. So I thought, my space with God can be when Steve is in council, the kids are in school then too, perfect.

* **It needs to be sustainable**

It’s got to work for you over time, so don’t decide to go on a 4 hour retreat, it’ll drive you crazy! Start small and build from there – 15 minutes this next week?

Think, if I start with 15 mins this week, what might that look like 2 years from now?

* **It needs to be profitable**

Is it working?

I was brought up to have a ‘quiet time’ with God every day and I’m very grateful to my parents for instilling that in me. But when I got to my 20s, it became a chore, I did it out of duty and it wasn’t life giving for me anymore.

I made the decision some years ago that I would spend time with God when I wanted to. Now when I do, God knows that I desperately want to be with him.

* **Be flexible**

Life still happens. Interruptions happen. If something really important comes up during that time you had marked out, don’t beat yourself up, that’s ok

* But at the same time, guard your time. Your mind will be flooded with all the important things you ‘could’ be doing, ask yourself are they really more important than having 15 minutes of quite time waiting on God or reading a psalm and asking God to speak to you?
* Be really brave and turn your phone off for 15 minutes!!

**It needs to be personal –** it needs to work for you.

Don’t compare yourself with others.

I have a husband who works, kids are in school, I don’t work a 9-5 and I have a quite front room.

What space I can create for God will look very different to someone who works 9-5, is a single mum or has pre-school age kids.

* Ask God to show you what space you can use – the beach, a catholic church, your lunch hour

The goal = being still and getting to know God