

Pentecost 11 – August 20, 2006
St. Paul's Lutheran Church, Muskego, Wisconsin

A Balanced Life—Taking Back our Calendars

Psalm 62

1 My soul finds rest in God alone; my salvation comes from him.
2 He alone is my rock and my salvation; he is my fortress, I will never be shaken.
3 How long will you assault a man? Would all of you throw him down—this leaning wall, this tottering fence?
4 They fully intend to topple him from his lofty place; take delight in lies.
With their mouths they bless, but in their hearts they curse. Selah
5 Find rest, O my soul, in God alone; hope comes from him.
6 He alone is my rock and my salvation; is my fortress, I will not be shaken.
7 My salvation and my honor depend on God; he is my mighty rock, my refuge.
8 Trust in him at all times, O people; pour out your hearts to him, for God is our refuge.
Selah
9 Lowborn men are but a breath, highborn are but a lie; if weighed on a balance, they are nothing; they are only a breath.
10 Do not trust in extortion or take pride in stolen goods; though your riches increase, do not set your heart on them.
11 One thing God has spoken, two things have I heard: that you, O God, are strong,
12 and that you, O Lord, are loving. Surely you will reward each person according to what he has done.

In Jesus' name, dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

Have you ever had a conversation where you are comparing your war wounds?

- Our family hasn't had an evening at home together for a week.
- I watched five of my kids' baseball games in the last two days.
- Right after school I had gymnastics, then a birthday party, and then I was up until 10 doing my homework.
- I'm working 80 hours per week and haven't had a vacation for a year.

We may say it with a boastful attitude—Look how busy I am.

We may say it with a whine—I'm trapped and there is nothing I can do about it.

But nearly everyone feels he or she is too busy.

It is with these thoughts in mind that your ministerial team came up with the theme, "Stop the World, I Want to Get Off." Life has just become way too busy for most of us. How can we take back our calendars? How can we make time for the important things in life? King David's Psalm 62 helps us find some answers.

Take Back Your Calendar by Finding Rest in God Alone

David begins the psalm with a confession of faith.

My soul finds rest in God alone; my salvation comes from him.

David begins by reminding us that Christianity is not “do” but “done.”

David confesses, “My salvation comes from him.”

Isn't that true in every sense? Your eternal salvation comes from him. What you couldn't do, God did. You couldn't get yourself to heaven. No matter how you spend your time, you can't make up for all the sins you've committed. But Jesus did it in your place. Because Jesus is God who died for you, he has made up for all your sins. There is nothing more for you to do. You already have eternal salvation. You already have God's favor. That's why David says, “My soul finds rest in God alone.”

If God has given us the big thing—our eternal salvation—then he'll certainly give us everything else that we need too. My salvation, even my success, doesn't all depend me. So relax. Trust that God loves you and will bless you. “My soul finds rest in God alone.”

That's a great confession. But David was struggling to apply this to himself. Listen to verses 3 & 4:

How long will you assault a man? Would all of you throw him down—this leaning wall, this tottering fence?

David felt like a leaning wall and a tottering fence. He saw his enemies and he was filled with fear.

Fear often causes us to pack our calendars with more commitments. It may be fears at work—that we won't succeed, that we'll lose our job. It may be fears within us—my insecurities, my fear that I won't measure up in someone else's eyes.

That very busyness makes us leaning walls and tottering fences. How many Christians have been led away from Christ because of exhaustion. You are tired and try to “medicate” yourself with alcohol, or on-line pornography, or an affair. Or you can use your exhaustion as an excuse—Of course I have a short-temper. Anyone who works as hard as I do would. Or “I don't have time for daily Bible reading. I'd like to go to church, but I'm over booked. Something has to give. God, I promise I'll come and worship you next week.”

Did you notice how verse five is just a little different than verse one? Verse one is confession. “My soul finds rest in God alone.” In verse five, David is talking to himself. He had lost sight of what he believed. We can too. Take back your calendar by telling yourself every day, “Find rest, O my soul, in God alone.”

Silence the fears. God is my salvation. I don't have to be afraid. Give up the excuses. Look away from yourself and look to God. “Find rest, O my soul, in God alone.”

The next section of the psalm invites us, “Trust in him at all times, O people; pour out your hearts to him, for God is our refuge.”

I'm reading a book by Bill Hybels right now called *Just Walk Across the Room*. In this book he wrote of someone who said he never told anyone about his faith. When Bill asked him why, he said, “I don't want to burden anyone else with Christianity.”

Is your faith a burden that fills your calendar, or is it a source of relief? Others may see the time you spend in Bible reading and worship, in service and prayer. They may see it as a burden. But what about you?

If we reclaim everyday this truth, “My salvation comes from him,” then it isn’t a burden. It is a source of relief. It doesn’t depend on me! The relief that we find, we want to share with us. That’s what our *40 Days of Preparation* small group study this fall is all about—helping others find the rest that we have. “Trust in him at all times, pour out your hearts to him.”

David then issues two warnings that can lead us to overbook our calendars.

Lowborn men are but a breath, the highborn are but a lie.

The wrong question is, “What will other people think about the way I use my time?” They are just a breath anyway. Why worry about what others think? The right question, “What does God think about my calendar?”

Though your riches increase, do not set your heart on them.

The wrong calendar goal: More money. More power. They can never give rest. If money and power is what life is all about, you’ll never have enough.

The last thing David wants us to remember is this:

One thing God has spoken, two things have I heard; that you, O God, are strong, and that you, O Lord, are loving. Surely you will reward each person according to what he has done.

God is strong. Because that’s the case, there is no reason for fear.

God is loving. Because that’s the case, there is no favoritism. There is no one in the whole world that God loves more than you. He doesn’t love the workaholic more than you. He doesn’t love the track star more than you. He doesn’t love any more than you. Rest secure in that love!

So practically, how does this affect your calendar? Our only question is really, “How does this God who is strong and loving tell me to use my time?” He wants us to enjoy our lives, so he encourages us to focus on our relationships.

1. The first relationship is with God. Love the Lord your God. If we are going to take back our calendars, we have to be confident of who we are and how God feels about us. Take back your calendar by putting time for him first. Read the Bible everyday. A new *Meditations* is starting soon. Join me in reading the lessons at the bottom every day. You’ll read through God’s book in a year.
2. If you are married the second is “Love your spouse.” Are you spending enough time with your spouse to say, “After God, you are number 1”? If in doubt, ask your spouse. Put time for him or her on your calendar.
3. If you have children, they come third. How can our children know that God the Father has time for them if we don’t make time for them? Look at your schedule. Do your children know how precious they are to you?

If God has blessed you with being single, then you have other relationships that God has given you that you have a responsibility to nurture—relationships with your family or close friends that become a “family” to you.

Certainly at other times in life, our family focus changes from little children to adult parents who need our care. These close personal family/friend relationships deserve our time because here we are being faithful to our God who commands us to love our family members.

4. Next comes your job because you have that job to serve the Lord, your spouse and your family. But remember your job is servant to your God and your family. If work is demanding more of you than you can give without harming your family, then ask God to help you see how change can be made.
5. The next one is the government. Because before you even get your paycheck, the government is served by the taxes that you pay.
6. Sixth comes your community. I base this on Jesus’ comment, “It is not the healthy who need a doctor but the sick.” Remember he took the time to rub shoulders with tax collectors and sinners. He came to save the lost. If we are going to share the rest that we have in Christ, we’ll have to leave the comfort zone of our churches and rub shoulders with the people in our community.
7. Then comes the church. Serve God with all your heart and soul and mind. But don’t serve the church that way. That may sound like I’m saying, “Don’t give generously of your time and your offerings.” Actually, I’m reminding you that you have been freed to serve. Don’t serve because of what others may think. Don’t serve because you are afraid, “If I don’t do it, it won’t get done.” Make it a team effort with your family—where can we find a proper balance so that our family life remains strong and we find joy in doing meaningful work for the Lord here at church.
8. Eighth comes your extended family. Paul wrote, “If anyone who does not provide for his relatives, and especially for his immediate family, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever” (1 Timothy 5:8). Your extended family needs your love and care as well.
9. Finally comes yourself. Care for yourself. And the key to caring for yourself is constantly reminding yourself, “Find rest, O my soul, in God alone.” Go back to priority number one—spend time strengthening your relationship with your Father in heaven.

“Surely he will reward each person according to what he has done.” If we keep these priorities straight because we are confident of God’s love and strength, we are going to disappoint some people. But our goal is not to have other people pat us on the back. Our goal is to please the God who is strong and loving. Others may despise us, but God will reward us. We will have the strength to take control of our calendars when we hold on to this truth: “My salvation and my honor depend on God.” Amen.