



Re-Write Your Story

Traditional Worship • September 30

Our Pastors:

- Lead Pastor Andy Payton leadpastor@methodisttemple.church
- Associate Pastor JillAnn Knonenborg associatepastor@methodisttemple.church

Sunday Morning Volunteers:

- Ushers (30): Greg & Linda Stilwell, captains; Chuck Taylor, Jacque Hardin, Nelson & Joyse Rivers
- Ushers (7): Kathy Zelle, captain; Chuck Taylor, Warren Heinsohn, Jack Buttrum, Ed Ancona, Thornton Patberg (balcony), Margo Borre (balcony)
- Greeters (30): Janet Kissel, Wanda Erwin, Mary Lockett
- Greeters (7): Sue Anderson, Patricia Helm, Nancy Hughes

*Ushers & Greeters remain in the Narthex during worship. Please reach out to them with any questions or special needs you may have. They are happy to assist!

Additional Information:

- Prayer Concerns: Praises for the birth of Alexander James Schnapf to parents Audrey & John; the family of Paul Murphy in his passing; the family of Carol Primm in her passing.
- Today's Sanctuary flowers given by the Flower Committee to the glory of God.
- Today's choral selections are provided by the Temple Choir under the direction of Don Travis. Organist: Barbara Waite.

ORDER OF WORSHIP

PRE-SERVICE MUSIC

WELCOME

PRELUDE

"I Heard The Voice Of Jesus Say" by J. Biery

CALL TO WORSHIP

Leader: From the rising to the setting sun,
People: God's love endures forever.
 Leader: As nations rise and fall,
People: God's love endures forever.
 Leader: Do not be afraid.
People: God's love endures forever!

CHORAL INTROIT

"We Sing to You, O God"

*CHIMES & SERVICES OF LIGHT

*FIRST HYMN #421

"Make Me a Captive Lord"

*PASSING OF THE PEACE

Leader: May the peace of Christ be with you.
People: And also with you.
 Leader: Please turn to those around you and pass the peace of Christ.

CALL TO PRAYER

Leader: The Lord be with you.
People: And also with you.
 Leader: Let us listen for God in the silence.

PASTORAL PRAYER

All: Holy God, when we are pulled in every direction, grant us focus. When we are worried, grant us peace. When life is cluttered, grant us clarity. When our minds are racing, slow our pace. And now, O God, hear us as we pray, each in our own hearts and our own ways...

GIVING OFFERING

"Bunessan" by A. Bullard

*DOXOLOGY the congregation stands as the Ushers return the offering to the Altar.

#94 in Hymnal

ANTHEM

"God Will Open a Door" by Pepper Choplin

KIDZ MOMENT

SCRIPTURE READING

Mark 8:31-36

31 He then began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders, the chief priests and the teachers of the law, and that he must be killed and after three days rise again. 32 He spoke plainly about this, and Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. 33 But when Jesus turned and looked at his disciples, he rebuked Peter. "Get behind me, Satan!" he said. "You do not have in mind the concerns of God, but merely human concerns." 34 Then he called the crowd to him along with his disciples and said: "Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. 35 For whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me and for the gospel will save it. 36 What good is it for someone to gain the whole world, yet forfeit their soul?"

SCRIPTURE RESPONSE TFWS #2203

"In His Time"

MESSAGE by Pastor Andy Payton

Consumption/ Simplicity

Well good morning friends. I'm so pleased that we are here together this day as we continue our sermon series, Rewrite Your Story. Last week, we began the sermon series Rewrite Your Story, and Pastor Julian talked about the importance of the stories we tell ourselves. Here's the thing: if you were here last week and you heard that sermon, you know what a remarkable sermon it was. It was fabulous. Here's the other thing. If you were not here last week and you have not heard that sermon, I would suggest you go onto methodisttemple.church and listen to that sermon because it is awesome. That sermon was awesome, but unfortunately here I am, so you have me this week. Today we're continuing our sermon series, and if this sermon series is kind of like writing a book, today is Chapter 1 of the book. Last week was an introduction and today is chapter one. Our Chapter One title is consumption versus simplicity. The way to more is through less. As we get started let's begin with the word of prayer. Oh God help us this da to simplify our lives in such a way that we might be present to you even as you are always present with us. I ask this through Christ. Amen.

So I've a confession to make. During the last couple of years I've gone through a sort of revolution of faith. Well I don't know if it were a revolution is the right word. Maybe it's like realization. Anyway my faith has changed in the last couple of years. You might have picked up on some of the things I've said from up here, but I've done a lot of reflecting. I've done a lot of thinking. I've kind of come to that place where I had the courage to ask myself 'What is it that I really believe?' And on the other side of all those questions, what I've found is that my faith has become more complex. My faith has gotten a lot more simplified. Really, here's my faith. God's really close to us, so close to us that God comes to us disguised as our lives. And yet at the same time it is more than our lives. Jesus I think really meant what he said when He said I tell you the kingdom of God is within you. You don't realize how close God really is to you and me. God is so close that He comes to us disguised as our lives. This also means that underneath the clutter of our lives -mental clutter, emotional clutter, physical things- underneath all that clutter of our lives there's a place within our hearts where the presence of God dwells. The way to find that place in our heart to where the presence of God dwells is by simplifying our lives.

And certainly we can see this theme written throughout all the Gospels and especially in Jesus's teaching. Like 16 of his 38 parables were about possessions and simplifying one's life. Even in our text today it says, 'what does it profit a person to gain the whole world?' One translation says forfeit their lives. Another translation says forfeit their souls. I think we get the point. What does it gain us to get all this stuff in the world and yet not have any time for God? He says in some other ways and more pointed ways in some of the other parables of the Gospel that it's easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than a rich man. You get the point that our lives have a tendency to become so cluttered that many times we fail to hear the voice of God speaking to us. The pathway to hearing God speaking to us is through simplicity simplicity and through simplifying our lives.

Think about it this way. A couple of weeks ago I had some extra time on my hands, which doesn't happen very often, but I had some extra time on my hands and I decided to read a book entitled "The Art of Saying No". It was written by Barbara Brown Taylor, who is my estimation probably my favorite preacher. She's one of the best. She is awesome. She wrote this book called "The Art of Saying No" and in that book she invites us to try a practice, and here's her practice. Take a piece of paper. Draw a line down the middle of a piece of paper. On the left side of the piece of paper right: what are all those things that give me the life that I never take time to do? So the left side of the paper says all those things that give me life that I never take time to do. That's the one side. On the other side of the paper, ask what are all my excuses for not doing them? I think that is a wonderful way to think about discernment. If God comes to us disguised as our lives, the way that we hear God speak is by listening to our lives. What better way to listen to our lives than ask ourselves a question what gives us life and what are our excuses for not doing them.

Now as I thought about that question, one of my major excuses has been -or maybe one of your major excuses might be- 'I don't have enough time'. I call this the clutter of the calendar. The clutter of the calendar because we're busy, busy, busy, busy, busy these days. As a young parent were busy, busy, busy going to all sorts of places. What's interesting to me is that I have a lot of retired friends, and you know what my retired friends are saying? They say they're busier now than they were when they used to work. In the clutter of the calendar is something that that sort of haunts us all and in many ways I think as we look at our calendar, what we can find is what's really in our heart. I mean what's really in our heart is what we spend our time doing. Jesus says, 'where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.' I think you could probably maybe paraphrase and change a little bit and say 'where your time is where your heart is also' And so as I thought about that, I thought about my calendar. I thought about my busy schedule.

I set down and I thought to myself, I'm going to ask myself some questions in order to simplify my calendar. The first question I began asked myself as I looked at the events of my calendars this: 'Is what I'm doing useful? Is it useful?' I mean, I don't want to go to the doctor but sometimes it's kind of useful. There's a lot of the things I'm doing that's really not all that useful. 'Second question, does it bring me joy? Does it make me happy? Does it make other people happy?' Third question, 'does it align with my deepest beliefs and values? Does it reflect deep down the person that I know that I'm called to be?' As I begin to ask myself those three questions, my calendar got simplified. It seemed like I started to say yes more and more to the person and that God honestly is calling me to be. At the same time I started asking myself I wonder what happened if the church started asking those questions too. Honestly, is what we were doing useful as we think about what we put on our calendar? Does it bring us joy? Do we even like doing it? I mean a lot of the times it seems like sometimes we're miserable to be a Christian. We're doing a bunch of things we don't even want to do. It doesn't even give us joy, but we just do it. Here's why: That's the way we've always done it. And probably at the heart, the real question we need to be asking is 'is what we are putting on our calendar, is what we are doing, does it reflect our deepest beliefs and values?'

We share at Methodist Temple our deepest beliefs and values at least as we've defined them recently are to be a safe and non-judgemental people. How does it reflect that? Because in the end, what does it profit a person to have a calendar full of events and yet never live the life that deep down they feel called to live? What does it profit a church to have a great big old place and not be a community that reflects the values of Jesus Christ? So sit down and ask yourself, 'what are the things that give me life that I never take time to do? What are my excuses for not doing them?' As I thought about that question, the second thing that came through my mind is because I'm always busy taking care of my stuff. Stuff gets in the way a lot of the time. I heard a saying once where it said that that rich people have a lot of things, poor people have a lot of time. And I saw this when I went to Guatemala on a mission trip. I went to Guatemala to help build a school. I came back home and people asked me, 'well what did you learn when you were Guatemala Andy?' And I said, 'I learned about my poverty. I've got a whole lot of stuff. I've got a fenced in back yard. I've got a closet full of clothes. I've got a garage full of stuff. But I don't even know my neighbor.' The people in Guatemala know each other. They've got one other. They have relationship.

Here's an interesting statistic. In the year 1950 the average square footage of a home was around 1000. By 1970 the average square footage of a home was around 1500. Today 2500 average square footage of a home. Not only that. We have more personal storage units than McDonald's restaurants in our society today. Isn't that astonishing? I don't know. I saw that statistic, and I was shocked. I had some of the values of McDonald's. I know it's horrible for me, but I like it. Anyhow, there's more storage units than all the McDonald's, and there's McDonald's everywhere. All the while, here's the real haunting study I heard. We have all this stuff, but all the while, over 50 percent of our society says no one really knows me. No one really knows me. And they feel isolated and alone. And what was even more haunting about that study was that this feeling is especially true for young people. That's crazy.

I read a story a couple of months ago. It's a book called "The More of Less". It's written by a guy by the name of Josh Becker. Josh Bakker tells a story about in 2008- and so was Memorial Day weekend- and he and his wife decided they were going to spend time doing the things they really love to do. And so they were going to go shopping. They were going to run errands. And the big project was that they're going to do was clean out their garage. That's how they're going to spend Memorial Day weekend. And so Memorial Day weekend rolls around. Saturday morning rolls around. Josh Becker gets up, wakes his 5 year old son up, cooks him breakfast, and he has this big plan. They are going to go into the garage and clean out the garage together. I mean because what else would a five year old have to do but clean out the garage on a Saturday morning, right? Come on. And so they go into the garage or clean out the garage. And within like 30 seconds, little 5 year old Salem finds a box of toys that he had forgotten about and begins to play with the toys. A couple minutes later little Salem noticed his dad, he said Dad can I go out in the backyard play with my toys? He thinks to himself, I might as well let him because he's not going to want help. So he says sure. And so the little boy starts heading now the garage, and this is to me the clincher of the whole story. Little boy looks at Dad and says, Dad will you go play with me. Here's what Dad says, I can't. I've got to clean out my garage.

What does it profit a person to have a garage full of stuff, so full of stuff you can't put cars in it but you don't have time to play with your son or your grandson because of it? As I look at my life and I look at all my stuff I think, is it useful? Well some of it is. Does it give me joy? Some of it does. Does it reflect my deepest values and belief? Some of it does, but some of it doesn't. Some of it doesn't. And the part that doesn't, why don't we just get rid of it? I mean that would simplify things and sure free up to invest in those things that we really deeply love. I use the 90/90/90 rule. The 90/ 90/ 90 rule is: have I use that in the past 90 days or can I see myself using it in the next 90 days? If I can't, get rid of it. I mean within reason. I would advise keeping your tax documents and things like that. Right? But within reason, we probably don't need it. I mean hammers. You don't need six hammers; you can ride one at a time. So on and so forth.

So take on a piece of paper and ask yourself, what gives me the most life and what are my excuses for not doing it? As I asked myself that question, the third thing I came up with is: if I was really honest with myself one of the major reasons I don't do some of the things that deep down I feel called to do or I desire to do or I feel like God is leading me to do is because I've been told not to do them. Because someone said so. So far I've been talking about external clutter. Clutter on the calendar. Clutter of our stuff. But there's no internal clutter too that puts limitations upon our lives. I've been told throughout my life once that I couldn't play the guitar. Well I can play G C and D now, so take that. I've been told that I couldn't be a pastor and think the things that I think and believe the things I believe, but I'm a pastor. So take that. I remember a time twenty years ago, a guy told me that I'd be nothing just a junkie, an addict. I decided I didn't want to listen to that. So I became a father and a Christian.

We all have agreements we've made with ourselves that keep us from becoming what deep down we know we're called to become. Friends, quite frankly I think maybe that's the most dangerous clutter of it all. There's a story told by the Desert Fathers. I think the guy's name is Abba Isaac. Again if your name is Abba Isaac, you're cool. All right. Holy cow, you're like Jedi Cool if your name is Isaac. So there's a story though that the desert fathers were a group of Christians wait long time ago who who left society because they felt like society was shipwrecked. They left and they went off to the desert. They went to solitary place where they felt like they could live out the gospel. One day though, Isaac did the worship service for the monks and at the end of the worship service, he was standing there. He was going to give the benediction and the benediction of course is the send off like the blessing. Isaac looks and all the monks and he says, "Now monks run. Flee," he said. At which point one of the monks said 'Flee from what? We've left our jobs. We've left our homes. We've left everything. Flee from what?' Abba Isaac puts his hand over his mouth and he says, 'Flee from this.'

Now when I heard that story I thought I don't get it. Flee from this. I mean aren't there some times that we should speak? The answer to that question is yes. There are some times that victims need to come forward, and there's other times that we as Christians need to speak up. I think what he's saying is this: we need to be careful about what sort of language we get ourselves tangled up in so that when we do speak it has power. I mean we live in a world today that's chatter, chatter, chatter, chatter, chatter. And the more we chatter, chatter, chatter, chatter, the less our words have power.

Do you know what the average screen time is for a person? Screen time. I've got a screen on my hand here. I've got a screen in my pocket. We've got screens over here. I've got screens back there. How much time do we spend with the screen? On average 10 hours a day. And as we spend time with those screens, you know what those screens are telling us? They're telling us about what we can and can't do. And here's the question we should probably be asking ourself: is all this screen time and are all of these words useful? Do they give us joy? Are they empowering us to become the people that deep down we know and believe we should become? I mean because after all, what does it profit a person to have a world full of screens and a head full of words and never live the life that God called them to live? After all, the way to God- it's not more- it's less Amen.

*LAST HYMN UMH #568

"Christ For the World We Sing"

*CHIMES & SERVICE OF LIGHT

BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE

"Sortie In B-flat" L. Boellmann