

EPISTLE SCRIPTURE – 2 CORINTHIANS 6:1-13

As Christ's coworkers we beg you not to receive the grace of God in vain...

²For God says through Isaiah,

"At the acceptable time I heard you, and on the day of salvation I helped you."

Now is the acceptable time! Now is the day of salvation!

³We take pains to avoid giving offense to anyone, for we don't want our ministry to be blamed.

⁴Instead, in all that we do we try to present ourselves as ministers of God, acting with patient endurance amid trials...⁶We conduct ourselves with innocence, knowledge, patience and kindness in the Holy Spirit, in sincere love,

⁷with the message of truth and the power of God, wielding the strength of justice with both right hand and left—

⁸regardless whether we are honored or dishonored, spoken of favorably or unfavorably.

We are called impostors, yet we are truthful; ⁹we are called unknowns, yet we are famous; we are said to be dying, yet we are alive; punished, but not put to death; ¹⁰sorrowful, though we are always rejoicing; poor, yet we enrich many.

We seem to have nothing, yet we possess everything!

¹¹We have spoken frankly to you, Corinthians; we've opened our hearts wide to you.

¹²We're not holding anything back;

you, on the other hand, are holding back your affection from us.

¹³It would be a fair exchange—I speak as to my children— if you'd open your hearts as widely to us as we do to you.

*GOSPEL MARK 4:35-41

With the coming of evening that same day, Jesus said to the disciples,

"Let's cross over to the other shore."

³⁶Leaving the crowd behind, they took Jesus in the boat in which he was sitting. There were other boats with them.

³⁷Then a fierce gale arose, and the waves were breaking into the boat so much that it was almost swamped.

³⁸But Jesus was in the stern through it all, sound asleep on a cushion. They woke him and said,

"Teacher, doesn't it matter to you that we're going to drown?"

³⁹Jesus awoke, rebuked the wind and said to the sea,

"Peace, be still!"

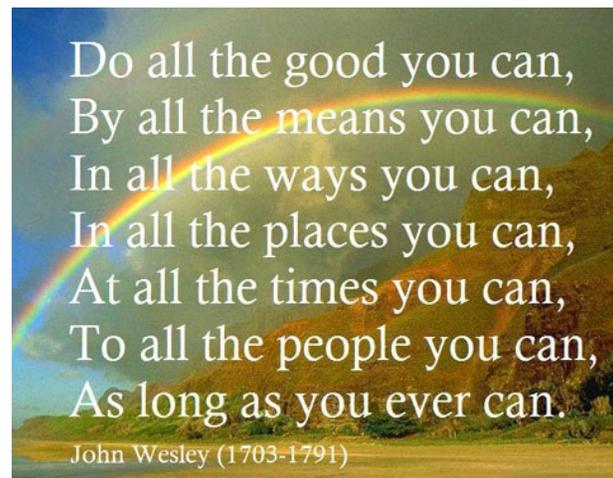
And the wind stopped and everything was perfectly calm.

⁴⁰Jesus then said to the disciples,

"Why were you so frightened? Where is your faith?"

⁴¹But they became filled with fear and said to one another,

"Who is this, whom even the wind and sea obey?"



**Your
"doing"
includes
your
"Being"**

FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

2723 N. 50th St. Lincoln, NE 68504

402 466-1906

Rev. Larry Moffet, Pastor

John Wesley never wrote this phrase in a sermon. It was just his simple, easy-to-remember way to encourage people to do what matters.

Two weeks ago, when we explored Wesley's 3 General Rules, (Do no harm, Do good, Stay in love with God), I made this statement:
**when we do good, we are not just doing something "nice,"
we are a part of God's energies. We
are a Channel of God's peace.**

Let's go a little deeper today. What about when we are tired, and can't do all the things we want to do? Are we letting God down? Do we have to be "doing" something to be a part of God's energy? No!

Sometimes we don't need to "do" something. We also need time to "be." Six years ago a group of college students took this hymn as their motto:

**Come and find the quiet center in the crowded life we lead,
find the room for hope to enter,
find the frame where we are freed.**

**Clear the chatter and the clutter, clear our eyes that we can see
all the things that really matter, be at peace, and simply be.**

¹ Link to research cited in sermon-

http://www.wcfia.harvard.edu/sites/default/files/833_about_orw_cong-report.html#section%20IV

Must we always “do?” Or shall we take time to simply “be?” A catch phrase (it’s a cliché now) goes, “*Be a human being, not a human doing.*” It is important to take time to reflect, to meditate, to rest. Please, though, do not make a false separation between doing and being. It’s easy to set up dichotomies. Most either/or statements don’t reflect reality. Thinking of “doing” and “being” as polar opposites is a false dichotomy. **The truth is “Being is part of our Doing.”** Getting the rest we need, for body and soul is a part of our “doing.” It is as active a way to be in tune with God as feeding the hungry or freeing the oppressed.

Let’s look to Jesus. Today’s Gospel says he was resting. He was asleep. In a storm. What a great message for us in this frantic, short attention-span world we live in. Peace in the storm. I need a little of that, don’t you? Every day brings its own storm, big or small.

So, I put myself in “time out” at least once a day—it may be a retreat to my basement for 40 minutes. Or a trip to the yogurt shop. Or a little walk.

I need time to “BE.” Some persons are not able to take a break, because they are constantly giving care to loved ones. For me in my most crowded days, I try to remember just a quick conversation with someone, or a smile, or a handshake is a moment of “being.”

What I find is this: when take time to “be” I am a little more turned in, a little more open to people around me.

But what about all that I leave undone? Do I ignore reality if I take time to meditate, to rest, to be? Again, look to Jesus. He rested in a storm.

Part of the beauty of this passage is it reminds us God is with us in the storms of life. Also it reminds us Jesus does rest. In the midst of a storm.

As for all around us that needs doing, let me put your mind “at rest.” Solid research, thanks to Hartford Institute for Religious Research shows us we are doing far more than we realize. People in congregations are doing good at an amazing rate – 86% of mainline churches have a significant number of volunteers “doing good” on a daily basis.¹

Notice when others—and when you yourself are “doing good.” Don’t minimize what is happening. When we do good, we are a channel of Divine energies. We are participants in God’s nature.

Then, look for ways your DOING and BEING feed each other. They are not opposites. They strengthen each other.

Jesus’ rest in the midst of the storm came between moments when crowds were pressing in on him from every side with real needs. What a metaphor for our own lives. With so many ways to “Do Good,” Jesus makes it clear that taking rest itself was a valid way of “doing good.” “Being is included in our “doing.” To be sure, the disciples have a real point when they wake him. Storms are terrifying. “We’re about to die here, how can you sleep, Jesus?”

Jesus says “**Where is your faith?**” I don’t hear that as a challenge, I hear it as an invitation: Let your faith guide you. It will.

After we come through a storm – a big storm, a little storm—don’t we always say, a day later, or if it is an emotional storm, “Wow, we came through that pretty well”?

I want that kind of faith that lets me live trusting God in the moment, not just in retrospect.

If you saw the movie *The Best Exotic Marigold Hotel*, you heard a great phrase. An energetic, visionary young man is trying to make a run-down hotel in India meet the needs of a diverse group of British retirees whose investment incomes faded and are in India in because living costs there are cheaper. The young man speaks a phrase that is part of India’s culture:

**“In the end things will be all right.
If things aren’t all right, it is not the end!”**

That is Peace in the midst of the storms of life. We can trust God this very moment, as well as when we look back after the storm is over.

Listen to what Paul tells the Corinth—whether we are DOING or BEING:

Now is the acceptable time! Now is the day of salvation!
[let's] conduct ourselves with innocence, knowledge, patience and kindness
in the Holy Spirit, in sincere love...

Others around us may not understand us. Paul addresses that too:
We are called impostors, yet we are truthful; ⁹we are called unknowns,
yet we are famous;
... ¹⁰sorrowful, though we are always rejoicing; poor, yet we enrich many.
We seem to have nothing, yet we possess everything!

Hear Paul's warmth as he challenges the unruly church folk at
Corinth:
...¹²We're not holding anything back... you, on the other hand, are holding
back your affection from us. ¹³It would be a fair exchange—I speak as to
my children—if you'd open your hearts as widely to us as we do to you.

Opening our hearts to the way God is with us in the midst of our
storms is a way to “be.” Lots of things were on my mind last night.
Somehow I was able to set them all aside and sit on my front porch.
Hundreds of fireflies were flickering all over my neighborhood. As I
watched I heard the sound of cicadas singing from the trees. Peace
in the midst of the storms of life!

I think even Mr. Wesley would have agreed that “being” with the
fireflies and the cicadas was as important as anything I was trying to
be “doing.”

In fact I'll go a step further. I know seeing twinkling fireflies helps
me clear my crowded mind so I can better see where your lives are
shining. Listening to cicadas helps tune in to the voices of others
who are not yet here with us.

You are “doing.” That is because the Spirit of Jesus Christ is at work
in you.

Your “doing” includes your “being.” God is in love with all of you.
It's all One, isn't it: DOING *and* BEING!

Your Doing includes your Being.

Now, let this be an invitation to let your “doing” and your “being” be
one, as we listen to John Wesley's phrase one more time

***Do all the Good you can [and Be all the Good you can be] –
By all the means you can – In all the ways you can –
In all the places you can – At all the times you can –
For all the people you can – As long as ever you can.***

In the words of beloved St. Francis: “Be a channel of God's Peace!”