

**Servant Leader:**  
**July 18, 2021**

Over the years of my life... **[1 Barn Door]**  
Like you... I have picked up certain ways of speaking...  
Sayings. Idioms. Colloquialisms.  
And various language whatnots.

Some are nice.  
Some are not so nice.  
But I thought I might share a few this morning.

**From my Texas friends:**

I'm as nervous as a long tail cat...  
In a room full of rocking chairs.

They were all over him...  
Like a buzzard on a a gut wagon.

He's so backwoods he thinks a seven course meal...  
Is a possum and a six-pack of beer.

**From my own family:**

I didn't just fall off the turnip truck.

Your barn door is open.

Or if we ever complained...  
About having too much work to do...  
You wouldn't get sympathy... in my family.

My Grandpa would simply say...  
There's no rest for the wicked.

Just a matter of fact.  
Because we are human...  
There is always more than enough...  
Work to do. More than enough for everyone.

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This morning... I want to talk about Jesus' leadership style. **[2 Sends the 12]**  
From the gospel lesson... it's clear that he was the boss.  
The disciples listened to him.  
And did whatever he asked them to do.

As a matter of fact...  
In this gospel lesson...  
The disciples are reporting back...  
To Jesus.

Remember in Mark Chapter 6 verse 7...  
Jesus sent them... the Twelve Disciples...

Out into the world...  
To preach and teach...  
And have authority...  
Over unclean spirits.

In our story today...  
They come back...  
And give him a report...  
Of everything they have done...  
And everything they have taught.

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But there was a slight problem.  
Many people... lots of people...  
Were coming and going...  
Bustling about.

So that Jesus and the disciples...  
Didn't even have a chance to eat.

They were busy.  
Busier than a one-toothed man...  
In a corn on the cob eating contest.

Busier than a farmer with one hoe...  
And two rattlesnakes.

Busier than a moth in a mitten.

You get the idea.  
They were busy.  
Way. Too. Busy.

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And that's not good.

No matter what anyone tells you...  
No matter what other people demand of you...  
No matter what our culture says...

Suggesting that you are not a good employee...  
Or a good parent...  
Or a good person...  
Unless you are constantly busy...  
Moving and going...  
And producing and accomplishing...  
Every minute of every day.

Sometimes we get our value... as a person...  
From how busy and productive we are.

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Well... Pish posh.

In my opinion...  
Actually in the Bible's opinion...  
We have a choice... about that issue.

We can either meet the expectations of the world...  
Or the expectations of God.  
Occasionally both. BUT...

It's way more important for us...  
To heed the higher expectation.

We who believe in God...  
Are called to LISTEN to God.  
To OBEY God.  
To build our lives... around God.

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And you all remember... **[3 God Rests]**  
That even God... in the course of creation...  
Took a day of rest.

I mean six days... of work...  
Of making this and that...  
Heavens and earth...  
Fish and birds and cattle...  
And humans.

Oy. It was enough.  
Enough even for God.  
So God took a break.

God rested on the seventh day...  
And made it a holy day...  
Of Sabbath.

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And then God...  
Who knows us better...  
Than we even know ourselves...  
Said... you need to honor the Sabbath.  
You need to rest.

Sure... the primary reason...  
Is to take time...  
Out of our busy lives...  
To worship the Lord our God...

And give God the honor...  
And the time...  
And the energy...  
That God deserves.

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This week at Vacation Bible School... **[4 Moses]**  
We learned about the 10 Commandments...  
And Steve Lantz...  
Our bass guitarist...  
Played Moses.

Now... some of you may think...  
That was a stretch...  
You know... a bass player...  
Being Moses.

But I am here to tell you...  
That Steve did a great job.

And he said something...  
That I think was so important...  
For the kids... to hear.

He said... the commandments...  
Were made by God...  
As a way to keep us close to God.

And there is nothing worse than...  
Being far away from God.

And nothing better than...  
Being close to God.

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I liked that. **[5 Sabbath]**  
That's what Sabbath is all about.  
It's about taking time...  
To work on our relationship with God...  
And with each other.

To be here.  
Or to be there.  
To praise and worship and sing and hear the Word.  
And to take the time that God has given us...  
And give just a portion... a small portion... of our time and energy and life...  
Back to God...

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But the other reason... we have the Sabbath...  
Is so that we can rest.

We humans are not designed...  
To go non-stop.

We are NOT the Energizer Bunny.  
We can't just keep going and going and going...  
Without have time to refresh.

We are a limited resource.  
We need to rest.  
We need to refresh.  
We need to recharge our batteries...  
In order to do...  
What God has called us to do.

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Anyway... the Twelve Disciples...  
Came back to Jesus.  
And there were so many people...  
They couldn't talk.  
They couldn't eat.  
They couldn't get anything done.

So. Jesus said.  
Let's go somewhere else. A deserted place.  
Where we can be by ourselves.  
Away from the people...  
And rest.

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Last week... **[6 RMNP]**  
We had family...  
Come and visit us...  
From Wisconsin.

We had a great time.  
They ran all over the great state of Colorado..  
And saw so many great things.

On Friday... Janet and I both took the day off...  
And with the help of some friends...  
From Joy Lutheran Church...  
Who loaned us a vehicle large enough...  
To carry seven people....

We ran away...  
To Rocky Mountain National Park.  
What a great place...  
To be surrounded by God's creation.

Which reminds me.  
I have a story within this story.

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While we were hiking...  
Up to Emerald Lake.

A man with two teenage sons...  
Stood looking at the beauty that surrounded us...  
And said out loud...

There aren't many places...  
Where wherever you look...  
You can see the wonder of God's creation.

One of the sons said...  
Well... you get to see mom every day.  
And the dad... looked at his wife...  
And said... yes I do.

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Anyway... back to our family.... in RMNP..

We went to the Alpine Center...  
Which is at the tippy top...  
Of Trail Ridge Road.

And we got out of the car...  
And hiked up to the peak...  
To the sign that said...  
12,000 feet.

Up there... it was 55 degrees...  
The wind was blowing 20 mph.

So we didn't spend long at that height.

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We came back down.  
And were getting into the car...  
When I heard someone yell... ROD!

Now... it's funny...  
My first thought was...  
What are the chances...  
That there would be someone else...  
Named Rod... way up here... right now.

Never occurred to me... that someone was yelling at me.

But I heard it again... ROD!  
I turned around...  
And there were two members...  
A husband and wife...

From Good Shepherd Lutheran Church...  
In Madison Wisconsin.  
Where I was pastor for 10 years...  
Looking at me.

Of course... we hugged each other.  
I heard the story of how...  
They were in Colorado...  
For the funeral of a friend's wife...

Then. They just happened to come to RMNP...  
And the Alpine Center.  
And the parking lot.  
At that exact moment.

Doesn't seem like an accident to me.  
It was an opportunity...  
That God gave us...  
To love and care...  
For each other...  
At the top of the world.

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Running away... Hiding. Resting.

Turning into ourselves. All that.  
Is a great idea.  
And we need to take care of ourselves.

But it doesn't mean...  
That the needs of our world disappear.  
While we rest.

Getting away... and resting...  
Was a great idea...  
When Jesus had it too.

But it didn't work out for him...  
And his twelve disciples.  
Did it?

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The people were so desperate... **[7 Help]**  
For a word of hope... and love...

They were so hungry...  
For a healing touch...  
From the presence of God.  
That they couldn't stop themselves.

The people saw where...  
Jesus and the disciples...  
Were going...

And they ran ahead of them...  
The people got to where they were going...  
Before Jesus and the disciples...  
Got where they were going.

They were waiting for them...  
On the other shore.

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And Jesus. And the disciples...  
Who were absolutely tapped out...  
Completely exhausted...  
Looked at all those people...  
And said...

Go home.  
Get out of here.  
Leave us alone.

Can't you see...  
We are too tired.  
We need to rest.  
We need to eat.  
We need to take care of ourselves.

Sorry we are closed. Move on.

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No. **[8 Compassion]**

Jesus looked at the people.  
And had COMPASSION.

I know we've talked about this before.  
But the word compassion...  
Is a really important word...  
For people who follow Christ.

It means... to suffer with.

He looked at the people...  
And not only did he feel...  
A sense of obligation.

But He actually loved them.  
He suffered with them.  
He looked at them...  
And was moved...  
To the depth of his soul.  
Actually the word means...  
To the depth of his bowels...

You know.  
Deep in your guts.  
It hurts your heart.  
It makes you upset.  
Maybe even a little nauseated.  
Because you identify with the people.

You know...  
What it feels like...  
To be lost.  
To be without hope.  
To be hungry.  
To be in such deep spiritual need.

That you just need someone...  
Anyone to listen to you.  
To give you...  
An ounce of hope.

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To Jesus.  
The people looked lost.  
Like sheep without a shepherd.

No one to care for them.  
So. He. Did.

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Let's get back to Jesus' leadership style.  
We already established...  
That he was the boss...



He had the plan...  
Given to him...  
Directly from his boss.  
God the Father.

This was the plan....  
From the beginning of time.  
That he would come...  
Break into human history...  
And restore us...  
To the glory of God.

So. Jesus was and still is... Our leader...

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However.  
He was also a Servant.  
Jesus was a Servant Leader. **[9 Servant Leadership]**

Can you remember this concept?  
I'm afraid the world has forgotten.

A Servant Leader... is the idea that someone...  
Would take a position of leadership...  
Not for their own glory...  
Not for the accumulation of power.  
Not for the benefits of the position for them...

But remember when people...  
Would take a position...  
Go to work...  
Do a job...  
For the sake of other people.  
For the good of the community.  
To meet the needs...  
Of the world.

There have been people...  
Who have chosen to...  
Give their lives...  
For the common good.

And Jesus...  
Is the model...  
Of servant leadership.

When he saw... the people...  
Who were lost and in need...  
He could not...  
Out of good conscience...  
Out of a sense of what is right and good and holy.

He could not turn his back...  
On those people.

So even though...  
He and his disciple...  
Needed rest.

He gave his life for those people in need.

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AND thank God... he did the same thing for us. **[10 Empty]**

In the book of Philippians...  
It says... that Jesus poured out his life...  
Emptied himself... for us.

I know... it's hard to understand.  
That someone would love us so much.  
That someone would have so much compassion...

That they would actually empty themselves... for us.  
But he did.

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So how is that supposed to make us feel?  
I mean... thankful... that he loved us that much?  
Obligated to him... for everything that he has done?  
How about committed to living a life...  
That emulates him and honors his life...

That picks up... the cross.  
That is willing to serve other people...  
Over and above our own wants and desires.

Living a life...  
That empties itself.  
In humility.  
In hope.  
In the promise.  
That God will not leave us...  
An empty. A dry old husk.  
A void shell.

But in fact.  
If we give our lives...  
In the love and hope of God.

Then God will raise us up.  
Strengthen us in times of need.  
Give us eyes to see...  
The people around us...  
With compassion.

And a willingness...  
To give up...  
Some of our comfort.  
Some of our rest.

Some of resources.  
Some of our heart.  
For the sake of the people...  
Of this world.  
Whom Jesus loves.

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So. Don't get me wrong. It's BOTH AND.  
Rest is good and holy.  
Completely necessary.  
And commanded by God.

AND at the same time...

We are called to be like Jesus.  
To be SERVANT LEADERS...  
To empty ourselves...  
For the sake of others.

To see those who are lost or afraid or in need...  
And have compassion...  
To suffer with them...  
Deep down in our guts.

And then... to do something about it.  
Even when we are weary...

Still... to do something good... in his name.

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And yes. The world will look at us...  
Like we are complete idiots...

Fools... who are wasting their lives...  
And time...  
And resources...  
On other people...  
Who will never appreciate it.

Then so be it.  
Brothers and sister in Christ.

Let us be idiots.  
Let us be fools.  
Let us be servants.  
Let us be leaders.

Let us be people...  
Who choose...  
To respond...  
To the world..  
The same way Jesus did.  
With compassion and love.

Thanks be to God.  
Amen!