



A Note from the Pastor's Corner

Another Summer. In May I heard some folks saying how their calendar was already jammed full: road trips, visiting with relatives, camping, fishing, weddings, etc. You may even be one such person. Isn't it funny how that works? We look forward to Summer as a time of winding down a bit, taking a break from the grind, and enjoying that fact that we're alive.

By the time Labor Day is over, we scratch our heads and wonder where it all went. The Summer is a blur in our memory and we face the wound-up schedule of "normalcy", vowing that *next* Summer will be different! Fat chance of that happening.

The challenge is not just who is really in charge of your calendar – you or everyone else – but if it is you, then how will you invest your time? From what I have picked up over the years of being in the workplace – back when I had a "real" social life that consisted of relating with people who didn't feel the need to "clean up their act" whenever I was around – most people are afraid of having spare time. Not afraid as in having a morbid fear, but of seeming to have "nothing to do". And if having nothing to do means being alone it can be unnerving.

I think it comes down to this. As long as people are being stimulated – by entertainment, travel, socializing, and the like – they don't have the danger of being confronted with who they are as a person and how they fit within God's created order. Questions like, "I know I'm not who I pretend to be. So, who am I, really?" and "Who is God, really?" can be avoided and shoved to our C list of things to do. You know, that list we never get to.

The attitude of a typical church person seems to be that as long as they busy their self with being in a church sanctuary on a somewhat regular basis their obligation has been met. Someday down the road, when they're not so busy, they'll dust off their Bible and *really* read it. It's not that they haven't tried to do it in the past. Most church folk I know have. The problem is making sense out of what they read. Mostly, they resign themselves to clinging to what they've been taught and trying to make it fit with what they read.

It's no wonder reading the Bible is so confusing and frustrating for us.

I suggest this Summer be different for you. And if you've already over-committed your time this year, promise yourself that the Summer of 2011 will be different. Set aside time for you and God. Alone. Just the two of you – you and God. By all means, if you can, get out of your house. Find a quiet corner in a public park. Go to a relative's cabin. And if you can arrange things, be gone for a day or two or three.

Take what you need for food and drink so you don't interrupt your God-time with trips to a restaurant or store. Take some good walking shoes so you can spend time immersed in God's creation instead of man's creation. Allow all your senses to take in the goodness of what God has provided.

And along with your Bible, borrow a few books from our church library. There are many new titles and new authors represented there. And take along a publication or two from our reading rack above the coffee pot in Fellowship Hall. I challenge you to read something different from what you are accustomed to reading. If you are open to growing spiritually, which is what Jesus expects us to be about, that certainly won't happen if all you do is stick with things that reinforce what you already think you know in your head.

This is a time to have your heart and mind open – not closed. A mind and heart that is closed to new thoughts and closed to experiences of inspiration that don't fit within one's own personal construct of what's possible with God and what's not, is also closed to the working of the Holy Spirit. This is what leads to the stagnation and stiff-necked nature that is so prevalent within the Church in America. Actually accept as true the claim that "with God, all things are possible." People like to sing about it but have a hard time believing it. Doing so would mean that some things you have refused to accept really are possible with God. It would be helpful in this endeavor for you to consult Isaiah 55:8-9.

Make this a Summer that will truly change your life. Allow yourself to have a personal encounter with God. And if you want to know what I'm talking about, keep in mind that, in the biblical story, whenever God showed up, people were told to not be afraid. Why? Not because God was going to make them comfortable and leave them feeling all warm and fuzzy because they were on his team. It was because there was a lot to fear – the greatest of which was having their concept of the world and of God torn down and be completely reconstructed

And fear not.

Grace and peace, Pastor Bud