

## **Take Alone Time**

Take Care: Part 3 “Take Alone Time”

Rev. Cameron D St.Michael – June 13, 2021

3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday After Pentecost

**Readings:** Matthew 14:22-23; Mark 1:35-38; 6:30-32; Luke 5:15-16; 6:12-13

**Reflection:** Psalm 62

**Greeting:** Let your faithful love comfort me Lord. Let your compassion come to me so I can live again. Your word and your instructions are my joy! Your righteousness lasts forever! Praise the Lord!

**Prayer:** God our guardian, you know the worries in our hearts and the troubles that weigh on our minds. Refresh and renew us by your Holy Spirit, and give us a right heart, that we may be strengthened in faith so that we may more fully love and seek the paths you lay before us, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

**Reflection:** Psalm 62

*For God alone my soul waits in silence; from him comes my salvation. He alone is my rock and my salvation, my fortress; I shall never be shaken. How long will you assail a person, will you batter your victim, all of you, as you would a leaning wall, a tottering fence? Their only plan is to bring down a person of prominence. They take pleasure in falsehood; they bless with their mouths, but inwardly they curse. For God alone my soul waits in silence, for my hope is from him. He alone is my rock and my salvation, my fortress; I shall not be shaken. On God rests my deliverance and my honor; my mighty rock, my refuge is in God. Trust in him at all times, O people; pour out your heart before him; God is a refuge for us. Those of low estate are but a breath, those of high estate are a delusion; in the balances they go up; they are together lighter than a breath. Put no confidence in extortion, and set no vain hopes on robbery; if riches increase, do not set your heart on them. Once God has spoken; twice have I heard this: that power belongs to God, and steadfast love belongs to you, O Lord. For you repay to all according to their work. (Psalm 62 NRSV\*)*

We read the words of Psalm 62 and we hear of seeking God in the silence. That God alone is our deliverance and our refuge. Do you put your trust in God that he is there in your time of trouble? How do you seek out God in the silence? How do you wait when it seems like God is far away? Is your hope in God’s steadfast love? How do you share that hope with others?

**Prayer:** O God, help us to seek you as we care for ourselves. Help us to look for you alone so we can speak with you and hear you more clearly. Help us to seek out your love that you may strengthen us in our faith and our hope. Hear our prayers and have mercy on us Lord. May you always guide us and lead us by your righteous hand. Amen.

Now let the words of our mouths, and the meditations of our hearts be acceptable in your sight, O Lord, our Rock and our Redeemer. Amen.

**Sermon:**

Our scripture reading for today comes from the Common English Bible. Our readings are from Matthew, Mark, and Luke.

*Right then, Jesus made the disciples get into the boat and go ahead to the other side of the lake while he dismissed the crowds. When he sent them away, he went up onto a mountain by himself to pray. Evening came and he was alone. (Matthew 14:22-23 CEB+)*

*Early in the morning, well before sunrise, Jesus rose and went to a deserted place where he could be alone in prayer. Simon and those with him tracked him down. When they found him, they told him, "Everyone's looking for you!" He replied, "Let's head in the other direction, to the nearby villages, so that I can preach there too. That's why I've come." (Mark 1:35-38 CEB+)*

*The apostles returned to Jesus and told him everything they had done and taught. Many people were coming and going, so there was no time to eat. He said to the apostles, "Come by yourselves to a secluded place and rest for a while." They departed in a boat by themselves for a deserted place. (Mark 6:30-32 CEB+)*

*News of him spread even more and huge crowds gathered to listen and to be healed from their illnesses. But Jesus would withdraw to deserted places for prayer. (Luke 5:15-16)*

*During that time, Jesus went out to the mountain to pray, and he prayed to God all night long. At daybreak, he called together his disciples. He chose twelve of them whom he called apostles. (Luke 6:12-13)*

This is the word of God for the people of God. Thanks be to God.

Today we take a look at the importance of taking time alone. And this is part of our self-care series. For today, I did something a little different with our readings. I used what I might call a medley of readings from the three Synoptic Gospels. And the reason for this is that there wasn't one particular place that laid out exactly what it was I was wanting to convey. Instead, I noticed a pattern of what Jesus would do whenever he needed a moment to get things in order. And it's that we see Jesus going out and taking time alone. And not just in dire times. There are times when he's so troubled that he needs some alone time to figure it out, but our examples today are something else. The times we get in today's reading are all times that Jesus just decided that he needed a break. So, he stepped away to be alone in prayer. This is important because it's not over something major. It isn't a giant matter that he needs time to sort out and be clear on. It is just a moment to step back and be alone, time to be alone in

prayer with God to try to keep everything in perspective. A chance just to step away and be in prayer alone for a while. Not over anything earth shattering. But just to take time apart from the crowds.

Often, we may tell ourselves that we will only take those times if we have something major to think over. If I need time to think, then it has to be over something big. What we get from Jesus though is that it's always important to take time alone. Especially alone time in prayer. For Jesus, it's just part of his normal routine. He decides he needs time alone, away from the crowds, away from the questions of the disciples, away from his followers. It isn't over anything major, just part of his self-care routine. He isn't waiting until a breaking point, he's taking time alone with God in prayer whenever he gets the chance, and he makes those times a priority. And sometimes it's not even figuring anything out. It's just taking time to recover. It is taking that time away from the crowds that are closing in. When there's a lot going on, we see Jesus just step back. That crowds get to be too big so he decides that they should go to a secluded place. Too many people come to see him, so he withdraws to a deserted place to pray. He needs time alone, so he sends the disciples on ahead, and he goes up a mountain to pray by himself. Even when everyone's looking for him, he takes time to be alone.

I think it highlights the importance of that kind of alone time for our own mental health and spiritual health, because those two things are tied together. No matter how much we might want to think they are separate things, we cannot help but know that our physical, mental, and spiritual health are all linked together. And I think the reason that this specific practice of Christ struck me so much is that it's not something that Jesus did once. It's not a parable that pops up in just one place. It isn't a meeting that happens once and then it is over. It isn't a lesson that we get as one particular story in Christ's ministry. It's something that was part of how he made sure that he could keep going. He took time to be alone in prayer. Just time to be alone. Even his closest friends didn't need to be there when he needed some space to be alone with God. And I think that's big because sometimes we get it into our heads that there's certain people that we can't shoo away, or that being completely alone is bad. And yes, there are times where being alone is not the best thing for us. But at the same time, there are times where we need to be able to find that peace and that serenity. Those times that we seek out God where we have a one-on-one talk. Even if that talk consists of nothing but being present. Because we often need that kind of time to be able to focus and to be able to get ourselves where we need to be. And it becomes even more important that we note that this was something that Jesus did on a regular basis. Because, if Jesus did it on a regular basis, not for any special reason but because it was a good thing to do, then we should too.

What's the point of us claiming that we can't, or that we shouldn't take time for ourselves? Maybe it's time that you spend in prayer. Maybe it's time that you just sit, and you think in the quiet. Maybe it's time that you take to be by yourself, just so that you can enjoy the silence that surrounds you, that God has given you. Those are all perfectly okay reasons to take that time. Though we often see Christ surrounded by people, and it's to be expected that

we would see him surrounded by people, at the same time, we have to take notice of the fact that Jesus needed space. Even if it was just a space where he could go and not feel the pressures of the world. To avoid the crowds. To not have the questions of the disciples. That he could go and just be. And we need to be able to find that for ourselves. We need to be able to head out and say that we are willing to take time alone. We need to be able to accept it for ourselves and support others when they need it. Because it's an important thing for anyone to be able to take and do.

So, one of the points for today is just to note that, yes, Jesus was there and he was in the crowds and he was teaching. But he was also taking time on his own for his own sake. If Christ can take a break, so can we. If Christ can find time to be alone, so can we. And if he thought it was important enough to do it on a regular basis, then shouldn't we put some sort of value on our own private time? I'm not saying go and become a hermit. I'm not saying that you ignore everything that you have to do. What I am saying is this. Don't simply let alone times be something that catches you off guard by surprise, because you're so used to not being alone. Make them part of your spiritual practice time where it's just you and God, where you can ask the questions you keep between you and God. Even if you have time alone, make sure you set aside times to be alone with God in mind. So you can ponder the things that you can only ponder when there's no one else to pull you away. Take time just to be present with God, without distractions. Without phone calls. Without opening letters. Without checking bills. Without cable news. Without the radio. Without all the distractions that we insert into our lives. Without all the things that cause us to not be alone even when we are alone, but that we take time to be truly by ourselves so that we may be able to more greatly appreciate those around us. That we may be able to more greatly appreciate the times that we have with other. But also, so that we find that center. That in the midst of it all, amongst the chaos and the hustle and bustle, we find God.

So, make those moments. Seek them out. Let it be part of the way that you spend your time with Christ, so that you can be even more present when you're in the company of others. So that you can appreciate the company of those around you that much more. That you have time to reflect upon your life in God's presence alone. And because of that, you may grow more closely to God in your heart. So, take alone time. Let there be times that are between you and God and let it be good for your soul. So that you may find peace and love in the solitude of the Father, the Son, the Holy Spirit. Amen.

**Prayer of Confession and Pardon:** Have Mercy upon us, O God, according to your loving kindness. According to the multitude of your tender mercies, blot out our transgressions. Wash us thoroughly from our iniquities, and cleanse us from our sins. For we acknowledge our transgressions, and our sin is ever before us. Create in us clean hearts, O God, and renew a right spirit within us; through Jesus Christ our Lord. May the almighty and merciful Lord grant us remission of all our sins, true repentance, amendment of life, and the grace and consolation of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

**Offering:** If you are so moved to make an offering, you may send it to the church treasurer, or you may send it to the PO Box listed below. We are still the church, and the church still needs your support to keep doing all the important work that we do.

### **Lord's Prayer**

**Dismissal with Blessing:** May we go forth reflecting God's love in our lives as we go forth in the peace of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Amen.

## **Our Current Series – Take Care**

Our series is *Take Care* and each week we will look at different aspects of self-care and the ways God helps us to take care of ourselves.

May 30th – *Take a Step Back* - 1 Kings 19:1-16

June 6th – *Take Responsibility* – Acts 22:3-21

June 13th – *Take Alone Time* – Matthew 14:22-23; Mark 1:35-38; 6:30-32; Luke 5:15-16; 6:12-13

June 20th – *Take Advice* – Exodus 18:13-26

June 27th – *Take a Friend* – Genesis 2:4b-22; Ecclesiastes 4:7-12

## **Prayer List**

Rev Charliam Renner	Bishop Frank Beard	Our Conference	Our Healthcare Workers
Patti Corder and the Greenup Ambulance Crew		Angie Veach	Eric Veach
Cathy Devall	Brock McMorris	Ed & Verna Titus	Henry Catey
Jake Kiser	Cindy Cisney	Nancy Hoke	Don Wells
Tricia Adkins	Don Stewart	Michael & Makenzie Reynolds	Ronnie Winstead
Annie McMorris	Dwight Parsons	Trinity Powers	Lauren Stewart
Charlie Henderson	Rosalee Chancellor	Phyllis Gable	Sage Martin
Dalton McFarland	Terri Kemper	Darrell Quick	Shelley Murphy
Jeff Davidson	Richard Durham	Kathy Hanks	Nora Werner & Family
Wayne Carrell	Gary & Mary Winterrowd	Leo Smith	Bonnie Hite
Donna Graham	Kevin Drum	Greg Williams	Eloise Buffenmeyer
Martha Roberts	Charlie & Charlotte Baxter	Paul Schulte	Kim Hennes
Ruth Ann Finley			

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