



**Thawing
“Busyness”
January 15, 2017
Courage Church, Detroit, MI**

I am going to say this one thing before we get into the scripture reading this morning.

Please please, pay attention... stay alert. This subject is absolutely one that so many people have grown so numb to in our world. I am 100% guilty of it, am preaching to myself,

and know that God is going to speak to all of you today.

It may be one of the most important things we cover all year, and that is “busyness.”

Listen closely to me:

Busyness is the subtle killer of wonder in our lives.

It is what causes us to go through days, having never lived them. Doing things, but never experiencing them.

It causes us to believe that we are fruitful, but then when we go back out, to harvest what we have planted, we realize that the seeds that we planted, we merely dropped onto the sidewalk instead of planting them in the soil. So they have now come to nothing.

It causes us to give the *least*, to the people AND the things that mean *the most*... while convincing ourselves of the importance of our tasks. And our works. So busyness can very easily become an anti-gospel. It becomes ALL ABOUT ACHIEVEMENT.

It is rooted in pride, which CS Lewis calls “The Great Sin” - because according to Lewis, pride leads to every other vice that puts someone in opposition to the Christian walk that they are meant to be living.

if we are ever going to get a to a place where we can be all that we are meant to be in our world for Jesus, we need to thaw of our busyness, and create space for Jesus.

Lets get right into it, by looking at Mark 4:2-20

“And he was teaching them many things in parables, and in his teaching he said to them: “Listen! Behold, a sower went out to sow. And as he sowed, some seed fell along the path, and the birds came and devoured it. Other seed fell on rocky ground, where it did not have much soil, and immediately it sprang up, since it had no depth of soil. And when the sun rose, it was scorched, and since it had no root, it withered away. Other seed fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up and choked it, and it yielded no grain. And other seeds fell into good soil and produced grain, growing up and increasing and yielding thirtyfold and sixtyfold and a hundredfold.” And he said, “He who has ears to hear, let him hear.”

The Purpose of the Parables

And when he was alone, those around him with the twelve asked him about the parables. And he said to them, “To you has been given the secret of the kingdom of God, but for those outside everything is in parables, so that

“ ‘they may indeed see but not perceive,
and may indeed hear but not understand,
lest they should turn and be forgiven.’ ”

And he said to them, “Do you not understand this parable? How then will you understand all the parables? ¹⁴ The sower sows the word. ¹⁵ And these are the ones along the path, where the word is sown: when they hear, Satan immediately comes and takes away the word that is sown in them. ¹⁶ And these are the ones sown on rocky ground: the ones who, when they hear the word, immediately receive it with joy. ¹⁷ And they have no root in themselves, but endure for a while; then, when tribulation or persecution

arises on account of the word, immediately they fall away. ¹⁸ And others are the ones sown among thorns. They are those who hear the word, ¹⁹ but the cares of the world and the deceitfulness of riches and the desires for other things enter in and choke the word, and it proves unfruitful. ²⁰ But those that were sown on the good soil are the ones who hear the word and accept it and bear fruit, thirtyfold and sixtyfold and a hundredfold.”

Let's Pray.

"We are least aware of what is *most constant* in our lives."
-Andy Stanley.

This week, I found this to be one of the most eye opening, profound things that I have ever heard.

It is the things that *are most routine to us*, that we are the most blinded by.

When something becomes like a second nature to us, suddenly we aren't thinking about that thing anymore when we do it, we just do it.

Most of us don't think about putting our seat belt on when we get into a car.

Most of us don't think about washing our hands after we use the restroom.
(hopefully)

Most of us now don't think about it before we get our phones out and check facebook when there is a moment to spare.

But could it be... that in all of the franticness of life, we have made the wrong things, the most constant things?

And we spend all of this time working, working, working... and because we are always off in one direction always trying to stay active and *busy*, the constant in our lives becomes *what we do*, rather than what Jesus did for us... rather than the people God gave to us to be shepherds of...

getting *more* takes first place over delighting in what is yours... and in delighting in where you are.

If the constant is always you striving... then what you will become least aware of in your life is JUST WHAT THE STRIVING costs you.

You will become less aware of the way your absence affects your family... you will become less aware of the way your busyness leaves no room for time with Jesus, or time to mentor someone... or time to do something that you actually enjoy.

And before long, you will get to a place where if I were to ask you "What do you LOVE to do?" you couldn't even answer that question. Because busyness killed your wonder in life.

I got there. I got to a place in my life where I was doing so many things; that I couldn't begin to tell you what I do for fun anymore. Or what I would EVEN WANT TO DO for fun.

We live in a day where we think it is honorable to always be moving. To always be making progress. To always having something on the calendar for every hour of every day.

There is a sense of, almost satisfaction, when someone asks you if you are available and you look at your calendar and you have to say... nope. Not tomorrow... not Tuesday. Not Wednesday... I could do three Friday's from now, from 1-1:30pm, as long as we don't go later any than that because I have this thing at 1:30...

A writer named TIM KREIDER wrote an article for the New York Times and it is called The 'Busy Trap' and in it he says something remarkable... He is talking about how so often, we wear our busyness as a badge...

"Notice it isn't generally people pulling back-to-back shifts in the I.C.U. or commuting by bus to three minimum-wage jobs who tell you how busy they are; what those people are is not busy but *tired. Exhausted. Dead on their feet.* It's almost always people whose lamented busyness is purely self-imposed: work and obligations they've taken on voluntarily, classes

and activities they've "encouraged" their kids to participate in. They're busy because of their own ambition or drive or anxiety, because they're addicted to busyness and dread what they might have to face in its absence."

What would we do? If there was nothing to do?

But the thing that is so fascinating to me that he points out, and it is so true, is you don't see the single mom working three jobs because it is legitimately what it takes for her to feed her three children, you don't see her wearing her busyness as a badge because

1. She would much rather be doing something *else*.
2. It is actually what she has to do to make ends meet.

its the ones who don't *have* to live like that, yet still do, who build themselves up on this idea that they are so important that if they slow down then everything else will...

they use busyness as a trophy and it feeds their pride, which we will get into in a few minutes.

But the problem is, if you are always busy then everything will start to feel inconvenient.

EVERYTHING.

Calling can feel inconvenient when it messes up your schedule.

I honestly believe that we have sort of developed this complex that tells ourselves that we are too busy to do the things that God tells us to do... because we have distracted ourselves with things that take up our time but don't actually do anything for anyone, even ourselves... leaving us no time for the things that actually matter. and we use them *as excuses*, but really it is sabotage.

You have probably heard it said "we form our habits, and then our habits form us" - I don't know who originally said that, I looked it up and found like five different names... but I do know that it is *true*. And I want to show you why this scares me so much... and ask you all this question:

what are the habits most of us are forming?

A few days ago, after dropping the kids off from school, on the way to the office we had to run home so that Dawn could run in and find an ultrasound script that she needed for a doctors appointment that day... So I pull up to the house, she jumps out, and she is not gone for 2 seconds before I have my phone out, scrolling through it mindlessly.

I couldn't wait in the car doing nothing, for even a moment.

Maybe two hours later, we were at the office and I went for an early lunch... I ran to Subway so that I could get food back to Dawn before her appointment, and I realized... I need to leave right away if I am going to get back in time to eat before Dawn's appointment, so I rushed out, and left my phone.

I walked to Subway, and there were two people in line ahead of me... I reached for my phone to kill time, and it wasn't there, and in all seriousness, I felt like I didn't know what to do with myself... waiting in line without something to do.

and as I stood there, and was forced to be still for a moment... forced to rest my intake for a moment, I realized... "I spend almost no time not doing things."

and if that is you in this place, there is no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, but please hear me on this, because I am talking to myself too but I know this is for some of you...

If in your life you are wondering... God, WHY IS EVERYTHING A BATTLE!

and you think about all the tensions in your life, and all the walls you hit, and all the things that you thought would have happened by now but haven't...

but yet your days are spent churning your wheels and going nowhere, and thinking that you heard from God but suddenly you feel like he hasn't

spoken to you in a while... and you live your life moment to moment making sure that every moment is filled with something so that there can be some sort of satisfaction to feed our need to do things... to move forward with the plans that are in our hearts...

It is no wonder that everything in your life feels like a battle...

we.
never.
listen!

We only have so much space.

Where on earth is there space for God to speak to you? Does the bible not say "BE STILL AND KNOW THAT I AM GOD." (Psalm 46:10)

If you never pause. you never fast. you never pray. you never sit silently. You never dive deeply into the word. And I know, I know... WE DO PRAY!
We do read.

but what is most *constant* in your life?

God is speaking. He is always speaking.

That is why we teach here about fasting... that we don't fast so we can get God to move or to speak to us...he is always moving! He is always speaking... we fast so that we can clear out the clutter in our lives so we can actually HEAR HIM!

He is speaking through his spirit, and He is speaking through his word. The word is the NUMBER ONE way that God speaks to your life.

But IF the majority of your life is spent on you DOING, and YOU SPEAKING, and YOU STRIVING, don't be surprised when it feels like God doesn't speak to you, in the 1/1000th fraction of the day that you carve out for him.

We just aren't listening. We aren't leaving him room. Which is going to bring us back to that first parable in just a moment... but first...

Jesus tells us (John 14:26) that the Holy Spirit will bring to our minds the words that Jesus has already spoken to us... but the word that he uses is *remembrance*... he will bring to our remembrance... but if we never take the time to get it *into* us, it will never flow *out* of us.

The bible says to commit the word of the Lord to our hearts. I love this verse in Jeremiah, where God says he will actually write the word on his peoples hearts.

Jeremiah 31:33 says "For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, declares the LORD: I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts. And I will be their God, and they shall be my people."

Hebrews 10:16 echoes it.

and this is the idea... that the things that are natural to us should be the things of God. The bible should be the most natural instinct that we have as followers of Jesus Christ. *It should guide our every step*. It should guide our calendar. It should be the force that leads us everywhere we go... and when the word is IN us, the Holy Spirit will pull it OUT of us, and give us so much more clarity than we could ever have on our own.

Now, I need you to hold on so tightly to what I just shared with you, as we look back at the parable of the seeds.

Jesus begins this parable by talking about seeds.

What is the first thing you think of, when you think of a seed?

It is something that is very, very small... it goes in the ground. It is planted, and later, somewhere down the road of life, it becomes something else.

Something that has life.

but you will never reap that which you do not sow. We are taking a first fruit offering in two weeks for the year... I have asked that you guys be prayerful about what God would have you to give in that offering... and we do that at the beginning of the year, because that is the point of a seed... it is planted before you know what the year may bring, but you plant it in confidence.

When farmers plant seeds, they sow them, not knowing what the harvest is going to be... not knowing if there is going to be a bunch of rain, or if there is going to be a draught....

the one thing that they know, is that if they don't plant anything, there is not going to be any fruit.

So Jesus begins by talking about seeds.

Now, the thing that is so great about this parable in Mark, is that Jesus explains it. He doesn't always do that, but he does it here. So now that we have read the parable, we can focus on those last few verses, because that is when Jesus tells us what it is all about.

Lets look at this a bit closer: (verse 14-17)

“The sower sows the **word**.”

The first thing we read here, is that the sower sows the word... so the seed is the word of God.

“¹⁵ And these are the ones along the path, where the word is sown: when they hear, Satan immediately comes and takes away the word that is sown in them. ¹⁶ And these are the ones sown on rocky ground: the ones who, when they hear the word, immediately receive it with joy. ¹⁷ And they have no root in themselves, but endure for a while; then, when tribulation or persecution arises on account of the word, immediately they fall away.”

The seed is the word, but as soon as it is dropped, Satan immediately comes and takes it away... because the ground is rocky... the soil is horrible.

Next comes these people received the word with Joy, it never took shape in their hearts. So as trials start to come, they endure them... but they don't ever really seem to overcome them... they just sort of get used to the fact that they are there... and then when it gets really difficult, there are persecution or tribulation... they are done.

Because when you accept Jesus, and the gospel takes shape in your heart... suddenly you realize, "I am not saved because of what I do... I am saved because of what Jesus did." That has to TAKE ROOT.

and when you believe that... if the gospel has really truly taken a hold of your life, you also realize that your worth, now, is not found in what you do... either. But this first set of people don't have that root. They are still living life like it is about works.

That is what makes busyness such an anti-gospel. The whole gospel is, you are saved *not by works*... yet we spend our whole lives working, and truthfully, finding our value in our work, and in the things that we create.

So this first group, they are fine as long as the water is flowing and it is moving and everyone is happy, but the moment the pipes freeze, they have no idea why, and they have no idea what to do about it... so they leave it entirely. Because there was no root.

But think about what Satan does... he works in lies. He can't do anything that he can't convince you of. So what he does is he fills your head with all of these ideas that undermine the gospel. And it makes you feel like YOU NEED TO DO SOMETHING... and so you are always striving... always constantly working and trying to prove something.

But like I said at the beginning... it is like you are dropping your seeds on the sidewalk. You are doing the same amount of work... maybe MORE work... but it isn't getting you anywhere.

Now... look at the next group, and this is where we are going to park most of the time. Verse 18 and 19:

And others are the ones sown among thorns. They are those who hear the word, but the cares of the world and the deceitfulness of riches and the

desires for other things enter in and **choke the word**, and it proves unfruitful.

I don't want you to miss this.

Because this is really the place that a lot of us fall guilty.

the cares of the world and the deceitfulness of riches and the desires for other things enter in and **choke the word**

It doesn't say that the word was never there... it says that is cut off.

If we consume ourselves with pleasing others... or with making money... or whatever it is FOR YOU... you may GET all of the things that you are working for, but none of it is going to mean anything. You will always be after more. and more. and more.

and the scary thing is, the more and more that you begin to achieve on your own the less and less you will turn to God... the less and less you will turn to the word of God, and the less you will seek God in earnest prayer for your life. It is the natural progression of human nature.

We want to be self sufficient. but IF we find ourselves there, then we have cut off the word of God in our lives and I promise you, it will bleed over into everything that you do, and it will affect everyone that you love. Busyness freezes the pipes. There is so much water, but your heart is so cold that it can't go anywhere.

Kevin Deyoung, who is another pastor in the Lansing area, he wrote this book and its really great, it helped me a lot through this study... it is called "Crazy Busy (a mercifully short book about a really big problem)" and in it he says:

"You may have a reputation for being the nicest person in the world because the operating principle in your heart is to have a reputation for being the nicest person in the world. Not only is that a manifestation of pride and therefore a sin; it also makes our lives miserable (living and dying by the approval of others), and it usually hurts those who are closest to us

(who get what's left over of our time and energy after we try to please everyone else).”

and man, this just hit me between the eyes this week. When I thought about my kids, and about my wife... and how she is pregnant with another child... and about how every day, what I do, is I work, and I meet with people, and I teach people, and I find ways to meet needs for people, and love them, and show them how much Jesus loves them...

I do work, and some of it is really good work... it is fruitful work. It may even be making a difference but then I get home, and I am tired.

My kids need something, but I just want to sit on the couch and rest... I want to do something that seems mindless like look at my phone and see what I missed in the world today... not realizing that it is not mindless. In fact it is a consumer of my mind... A swallower of my mind... It is a constant need to be doing something to distract me from what I really should be doing. And while I look online to see what I missed in the world, I am missing what is right in front of me.

And what ultimately, if I would just engage in, I would find so much more life in doing...

And suddenly the people that matter the most get the least.

and I know that I am not alone because I am reading the very things that I feel, written in a book by someone 90 miles away from us, and he has sold thousands and thousands of copies of this thing to people just like you and me who are struggling with pride so greatly that we can't clear our calendars to make time for the things that matter.

Ultimately, we have a world of people who are missing *everything* because we are so consumed BY EVERYTHING.

We miss the important things... and we never pause to find out what God truly wants to do next... because it is SO EASY TO KEEP GOING!

Let me show you something that I think is crazy... but it is SO normal today!

today after service, Dawn and I are going out of town for two days... our district, the Assemblies of God is sponsoring us because we are missionaries in this city, and so they are taking care of a trip for us to just get out of town and go be with other pastors and leaders for a few days at something called REFRESH. It is basically a pastors retreat.

It is just supposed to be a time where you leave your environment, and find yourself in another one... away... to get a little bit of a fresh perspective.

I am so grateful for it... I can't wait to have that time with just me and my wife... and man, I want to leave my phone in the car during that thing...

actually, I want to leave it in Detroit, but my phone is how we map to places...

I want to leave it in the car when we get to the hotel... but what if someone needs to get a hold of us, because they are watching our kids...

And my parents are chipping in, and Mo and Freddie are chipping in, and Jake and Jerushah are helping and Cheryl is helping and so many people are helping us with our kids to make it so we can do this... and getting them to and from school and getting them fed....

and what if someone needs to get ahold of us?

Do you see what I did there?

I just built a case in MY MIND, and to all of you... for why I NEED TO AVAILABLE WHEN I AM ON A RETREAT. The gospel writer Luke tells us that Jesus would often retreat to a *quiet* place. (Luke 5:16) He got away... he created space... Retreating should be normal. Our savior set that bar for us. Even he needed to pause. And to pray.

but, in our world today, what I just did is considered *normal*.

That is not *normal*. That makes no sense. It is plain and simply just pride. It is pride!

The Hebrew word for pride is the word “*gê’âh*” (gay-aw’) and it means “to lift up strength”

It means we lift up ourselves... we rely on our strength and somewhere deep within our hearts, we think, whether we admit it or not... we think that we are the hero of the story, when really Jesus is the hero of the story... and we think that the world will stop spinning, if we aren’t accessible.

The demented human illusion that the whole world will shatter if you stepped away from it for a moment is pure and utter *sin*.

But it is what our world has become! It is all about busyness. It is all about not ever missing anything... never missing a single moment, a single Facebook post, a single news feed...

always being reachable. Always being available.

But at the highest cost.

and that is what Jesus is talking about... people who get so caught up in the desires and the cares and all the things of the world...

and that is where their priorities are...

and he says that it **CHOKES THE WORD!**

what happens when something chokes you? It cuts off the airflow... it cuts off the circulation. It cuts off the life. It means the pipes are frozen. because we are so concerned with everything going on around us all the time, we have no access to God.

We can’t hear what he is trying to speak to us.
Because we aren’t listening.

and it really does come full circle...

Let me explain... my family feels the affects when I live a distracted life...

But the WORD tells me so clearly, that “anyone who doesn’t take care of the members of his household, he has *denied the faith* and is worse than an unbeliever.” (1 Tim 5:8)

The WORD so clearly tells me, that “Whoever brings ruin on their family will inherit only wind.” (Proverbs 11:29) - man I NEVER want that one to be me... But if we, as a society, let our children raise themselves while we distract ourselves, then the next generation is in for ruins.

We need to wake up to this.

The WORD... the WORD THAT is choked out and not even getting through to me when my life is so crazy busy... so clearly tells me, that as a husband, I should LOVE my wife in the same way that Christ loved the church... and was willing to lay down his life for his bride. (Ephesians 5:25)

Jesus was willing to lay down his life...

can I at least lay down my phone?

can I at least lay down my pride?

can we at least all agree that there are things in life THAT MATTER MORE than keeping ourselves consumed with the things of this world that choke the word in our lives and leave us, and everyone around us empty?

see, if the seed planted in my heart is the word... if I am like what Jeremiah describes... and the word is written on my heart... then there is a path that is so clear for me to walk, and when I walk in it, all of my needs are met... All of my families needs are met... and I don’t have to spend my entire existence finding my value in the things that I accomplish on any given day.

I don’t have to find value in always being up to speed, and in always accumulating more and more knowledge... and in always moving further and further forward toward something...

and then suddenly, instead of me being so *proud* and thinking that I am the reason anything is moving forward anyway...

suddenly Jesus has room to work in my heart. and on my family, and in our community.

Do we even leave room for Jesus to move?

Do we leave room for Jesus in our lives *at all*?

I have one last scripture that I want to look at this morning. And I hope that this blesses you and brings you some clarity on the passage. We briefly talked about it last week, and it is the words of Jesus found in John 7:37-39

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“On the last day of the feast, the great day, Jesus stood up and cried out, “If anyone thirsts, let him come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, ‘Out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.’ ”

Look at the first line... On the last day of the feast, which was known as the great day... Jesus stood up and cried out.

John starts this passage by giving us the context, he says “On the last day of the feast, the great day” -

The feast referenced is “the feast of booths”, or also known as The feast of tabernacles... it is specifically referenced a few verses earlier in the passage... it was a celebration of the provision that God has provided to the Jewish people... that he provided them with land to work, and that he provided them with a harvest. It was a reminder that for the 40 years before entering the promised land, yes, they wandered, but God provided for their every need.

It was also a time when everyone prayed for rain to come, so that there would be a continuous flow of water when things often seemed like they were drying up.

We don't have time to get into all of the details of the celebration today, but I want to show you what it developed into by Jesus' day.

now, bible scholars for years have debated on whether or not "the great day" is the 7th day, which I will describe to you in a moment, or the 8th day, which they celebrated only once every seven years. The 8th day was like a sabbath, a day that the celebration ended, and everyone paused... reflected, prayed, and the scriptures were read.

Jesus' words on either day would have had a similar affect and there would be an incredible narrative that could be written for either...

And truthfully, there is no way to know for certain which of these two days Jesus spoke on, but the language that John uses here seems to point to the 7th day.

The word "cried out" is the Greek word *krazō* (krat-so) -

In Matthew's gospel alone the word *krazō* (krat-so) is used 11 times... 9 times it is used by people crying out to Jesus to save them, because they were blind, or they were fearful, or they were repentant and they knew that Jesus was the only hope for their broken lives...

1 time it is used to describe the way that the rumbling crowd *demand*ed that Jesus be crucified, and the only time it is used in Matthew, coming out of Jesus mouth is when he is on the cross and he cries out with a loud voice, and yields up his spirit. It is last thing we read, before Jesus dies, and the bible says that the veil is torn in two, from the top to the bottom. (Matthew 27:50-51)

The literal for *krazō* (krat-so) means "to croak" or "the cry of a raven" - which echoes in empty spaces, and has the ability to cry utter shrilling, ear piercing sounds. It almost could be considered *brash*. Which is very uncharacteristic of the rabbi Jesus that we read about throughout the majority of his ministry.

The question is, when Jesus is giving us something so crucial in this moment, why did he give it in such an out of character way?

This is what would happen during the feast of tabernacles... Now again, it was a time where the people would pray for rain and, and this is also a reminder and a celebration of the provision of God... which came full circle for Israel when they entered the promised land... you all know that story, how the Israelites marched around Jericho for six days, and on the seventh day they marched 7 times... and on the 7th time they blew trumpets and shouted...

In the feast of tabernacles, they would do what was called “a water parade” for six days... the priest would take water from the pool and put it into a golden pitcher, and with the priest leading the way everyone would parade to the altar, and the priest would pour the water out on the altar.

As the priest would approach the water gate, a shofar would blow, and everyone would start singing Psalms of Thanksgiving, and Isaiah 12:3 which says “With joy you will draw water from the wells of salvation.” On the last day, the seventh day, in the same way that Israel circled Jericho.. they did the parade, and they circled the altar seven times before pouring the water on it.

It is absolutely triumphant. Shofars are blowing, people are singing these Psalms... people are singing from Isaiah... everyone has joy, and anticipation and thankfulness and they are praying and believing for rain.

So if Jesus were to get up on and speak on that day, he would have had to done it in an way that was uncharacteristically LOUD. It would have been the only way that people would have heard him.

It as in the middle of a party!

Now, understanding *that*... look again at what He says.

Jesus stood up and cried out, “If anyone thirsts, let him come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, ‘Out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.’ ”

These people were so caught up in the ritual, and the routine of their celebration week, and all the things they obligated themselves to do... and something that, truthfully, was LIFE to them every year... and Jesus gets up and tells them that **the thing that you are celebrating, you are actually ignoring**. Because I am the provision. I am the source of the living water that will flow out of your heart for the rest of time... and yet here you are, thanking God for provision, and yet you are praying for rain!

Jesus tells them, “you guys are so thirsty, and instead of just drinking from the one who will give you living water... with which you would never thirst again, instead you are *busying* yourselves praying for a water that will never truly fill you, and will always leave you thirsting again.

Its not a bad thing... but *in that moment*... it is not the RIGHT THING.

He is telling them, “You are making all of this noise... and yet you are missing what is right in front of you.”

And I think that is the most accurate depiction of our world, I could POSSIBLY think of, as we are starting this new year.

We are busying ourselves with things that aren't necessary bad but they are distracting us from our purpose.

When we think of water, as Jesus speaks of it, we think of droughts...

we think of the woman at the well who keeps coming again and again and again and constantly leaving knowing she will be thirsty again soon, before Jesus came in and gave her LIVING WATER. We think of Elijah in 1 Kings 17 who says “there will be no rain for the next few years... and then he relies on the ravens to feed him during the troubled times, and the woman at Zarephath to feed him and give him something to drink... ”

But in our lives today, we don't know what it feels like to be without water... all most of us have ever experienced is EXCESS.

but in a world where it feels like the supply will never run out...

we aren't looking for ways to get more water, we are trying to figure out what to do with the water we have!

and that is what is so scary to me about how we consume our lives with everything that the world puts before us. Because We live in a day where, if we are honest with ourselves, it is easy to conclude that we don't actually NEED Jesus for anything anymore. And though most of us wouldn't dare ever say that, we certainly live that way.

and maybe you are like me... and the story I told you last week... about my pipes.

You go up to the sink and you turn it on, and NOTHING comes out.

and you think, "I paid my water bill..." I know there is water in there.

What is wrong?

It is not a lack of water, the water is there. But it is frozen!

but It is not flowing OUT of our hearts.

And the answer is right there in the way that Jesus described the parable we read at the beginning.

The things of this world... the structures, the routines, the paces... the ambition to get more... "the busy trap" that we all fall into thinking that by it we will find what we are looking for... it has choked the word out and rendered it useless in our lives. It has choked out the power that we have been given.

What a distraction.

The last thing Jesus says in the parable in Mark, the last seed he describes like this (Mark 2:8):

other seeds fell into good soil and produced grain, growing up and increasing and yielding thirtyfold and sixtyfold and a hundredfold."

Then he explains it a few verses later, in verse 20:

“But those that were sown on the good soil are the ones who hear the word and accept it and bear fruit, thirtyfold and sixtyfold and a hundredfold.”

and that is my desire for our church, and for all of you this year. That we bear fruit thirtyfold, sixtyfold and even a hundredfold this year.

But we will never reap what we don't sow. If your whole life is filled with clutter, then all you will reap is more clutter. More things to take away your time but never actually bear fruit. Busyness is a silent killer. It kills relationships. It kills the gospel. It distracts us from our purposes.

because busyness feeds you but it never actually fills you.

Kevin Deyoung in the book that I told you about earlier, says this in it, and it is really hopeful:

What is wrong - and heartbreakingly foolish and *wonderfully avoidable* - is to live a life with more craziness than we want because we have less Jesus than we need.

But its true. It is wonderfully avoidable.

Jesus explains it so clearly. Hear the word. Accept the word. Bear the fruit of the word. Live the word.

Lay aside the distractions of our cluttered world and set your eyes upon Jesus.

Who died so that you wouldn't have to work yourself to death.

That is the gospel!

(Mark 8:36) what does it profit a man to gain the whole world only to lose his soul?

Nothing.

Life is only found in one place... And His name is Jesus.

and his yoke is easy, and his burden is light. (Matthew 11:30)