

“Finding Stillness”, Week 3 of “Finding Simple” Series

**Presented by Rev. Kristen Lowe on 01-08-2017 at
Crossroads United Methodist Church, Waunakee, WI.**

Jesus' ministry is in full swing. He's traveling and preaching and healing... crowds push in on him and his disciples. They are exhausted. Jesus has just learned of the death of his dear cousin, John the Baptist. Even though he is 100% God, Jesus is also 100% human. He knows that it's important, if he is to continue his ministry, to be still and rest in God's presence. Not only does he model this important detail for his disciples, he also practices it himself.

Mark 6:30 – 32

³⁰The apostles gathered around Jesus, and told him all that they had done and taught. ³¹He said to them, “Come away to a deserted place all by yourselves and rest a while.” For many were coming and going, and they had no leisure even to eat. ³²And they went away in the boat to a deserted place by themselves.”

The Psalms also have great words of wisdom. We learn that our source of help and strength come from God. If we are to endure and even thrive, we must be still in God's presence.

Psalm 46

- ¹God is our refuge and strength,
a very present help in trouble.
- ²Therefore we will not fear, though the earth should change,
though the mountains shake in the heart of the sea;
- ³though its waters roar and foam,
though the mountains tremble with its tumult.
- ⁴There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God,
the holy habitation of the Most High.
- ⁵God is in the midst of the city; it shall not be moved;
God will help it when the morning dawns.
- ⁶The nations are in an uproar, the kingdoms totter;
he utters his voice, the earth melts.
- ⁷The Lord of hosts is with us;
the God of Jacob is our refuge.
- ⁸Come, behold the works of the Lord;
see what desolations he has brought on the earth.
- ⁹He makes wars cease to the end of the earth;
he breaks the bow, and shatters the spear;
he burns the shields with fire.
- ¹⁰“Be still, and know that I am God!

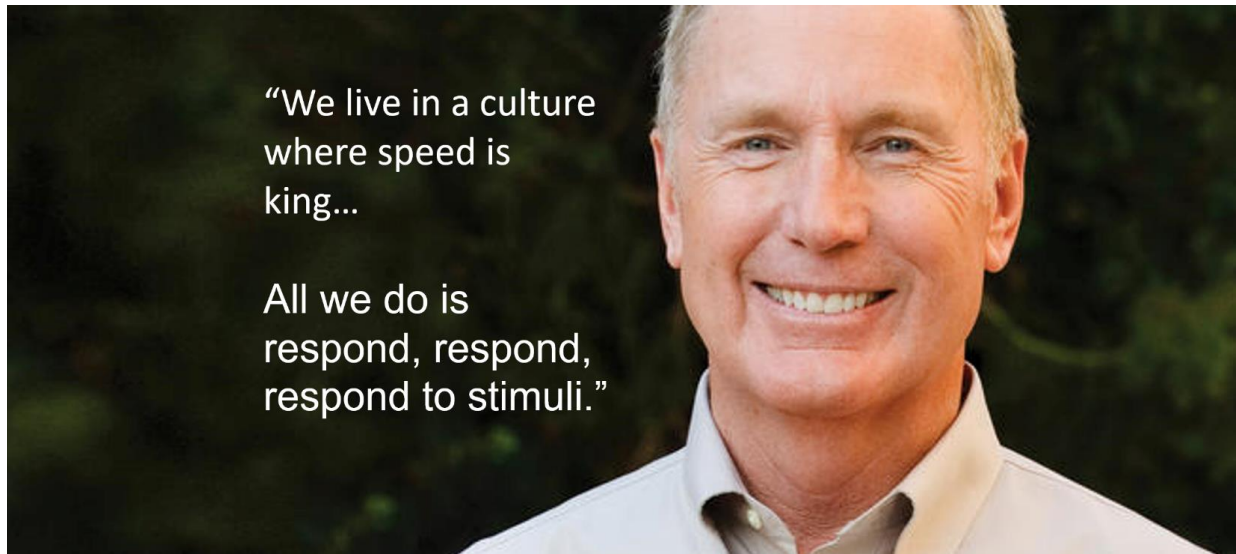
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I am exalted among the nations,
I am exalted in the earth.”

¹¹The Lord of hosts is with us;
the God of Jacob is our refuge.

May you seek refuge in God's holy presence today by being still in Him.

Breathe. In and Out.



Max Lucado writes, “We live in a culture where speed is king. I find myself in a hurry even if there is no reason. We are an uptight generation of compulsive activists. There are ten times more things to do in a day than anyone can do, and so we feel we are always behind and failing to do all that we could. All we do is respond, respond, respond to stimuli. We want peace but it just does not fit into our agenda. Peace calls for doing nothing sometimes, and we can’t handle that. Pascal the great Christian philosopher and scientist said, ‘Most of man’s troubles come from his inability to be still.’”

****Silence****

(Only after 30 seconds)

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(After only 15 more seconds)



Did you find that uncomfortable? Why? It was only 1 minute.

Alex Lickerman M.D. – Wrote a book called, Happiness in this World – “The Art of Silence. In it, he points to the reason why silence is uncomfortable.

Because many people abhor... silence.

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They'll do just about anything to fill the emptiness because too much quiet is unsettling to them.

We feel like when we're home we have to have the TV on or the radio. When we're driving, walking, running...

There's music and all kinds of noise that bombards us everywhere we go.

At department stores ... At Malls ... In Restaurants At the grocery ... Even in elevators

We feel like we have to fill every waking moment with noise.

It's like we can't stand to be around silence. But... that's really not always true.

We only feel comfortable being silent when we're in the presence of someone we're comfortable with. When we're with those people... it's nothing to just sit and be quiet and still.

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Most of us have children, or children in our lives who at one time or another have crawled up into our laps.

Sometimes a child will come and sit there and chatter away. Sometimes the child will ask for things.

Sometimes the child will just talk about something that intrigues them or bothers them. But every once in a while a child will just crawl up into their parent's laps and just sit there. They don't want anything. They don't even want to talk about anything. They just want to be with you. Sit with you. Just be held by you.

Do you remember how it felt to have a child do that? You'd do anything for that child. There's nothing like the feeling of having a child that just wants to be with you. That one action says I LOVE you. I TRUST you. I feel SAFE with you.

There is nothing in this world that compares to that feeling.

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Now when people *pray* – what do they usually do? Talk to God. And there’s nothing wrong with that. Jesus taught us “Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and you shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you”. But, can you imagine what it must be like for God, when one of His children just wants to be with Him. When a child of God just comes to Him and wants nothing more than to silently sit in His “lap”?

But how could you possibly do such a thing?



In our key verse, God is telling us to “Cease striving and know that I am God!” What does He mean, cease striving? It means we struggle with God in so many ways we don’t think about:

- _ When God tells us what to do and we ignore it
- _ When God tells us how to do something and we want to do it our way or modify it a bit
- _ When sin knocks on our hearts door and we answer it and invite it in
- _ When we try to change others in our own power and image
- _ When His will takes a back seat to ours.

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Be still, and know that I am God.

The only way one can be silent around God is if we are comfortable in His presence.

OR if we want to LEARN to be comfortable in His presence.

You see, the way to learn to be truly comfortable around God is start practicing being quiet in His presence.

What I've found interesting is that God knows He needs to remind us to be still... and to wait for Him.



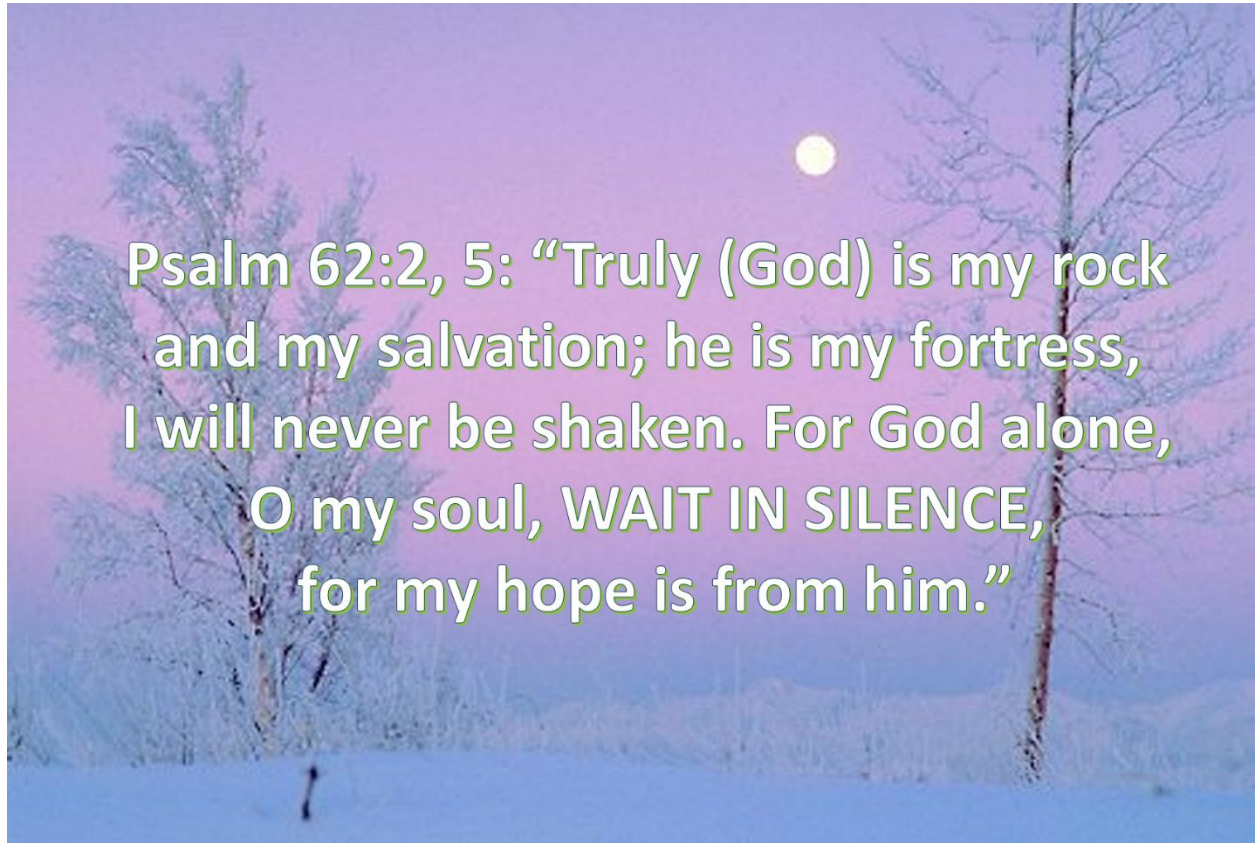
**Psalm 4:4: “...when you are on your beds,
search your hearts **AND BE SILENT.**”**

**Psalm 27:14: “WAIT FOR THE LORD; be
strong and take heart and wait for the LORD.”**

Psalm 4:4 says: “when you are on your beds, search your hearts AND BE SILENT.”

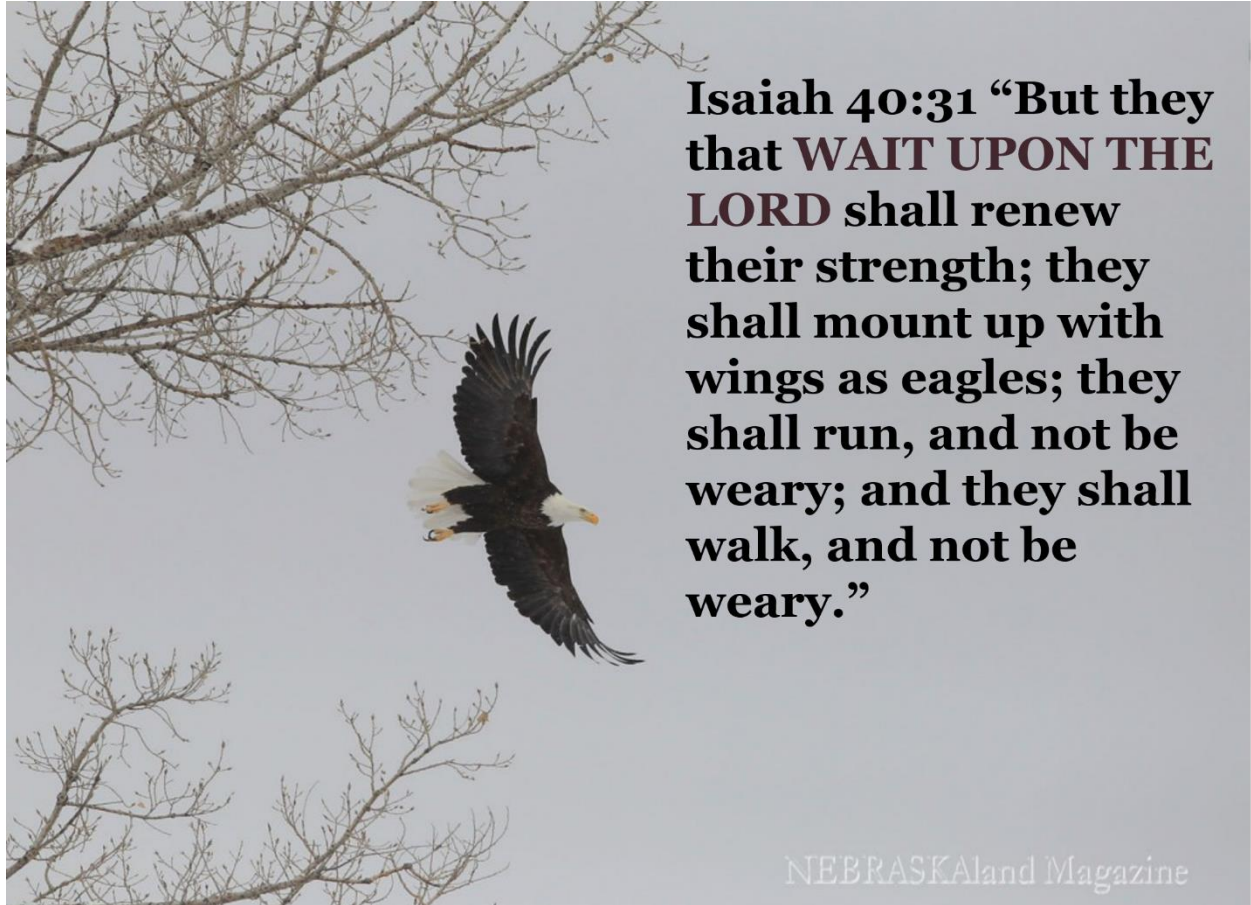
Psalm 27:14 declares: “WAIT FOR THE LORD; be strong and take heart and wait for the LORD.”

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In Psalm 62:2 & 5 David says: "Truly (God) is my rock and my salvation; he is my fortress, I will never be shaken. For God alone, O my soul, WAIT IN SILENCE, for my hope is from him."

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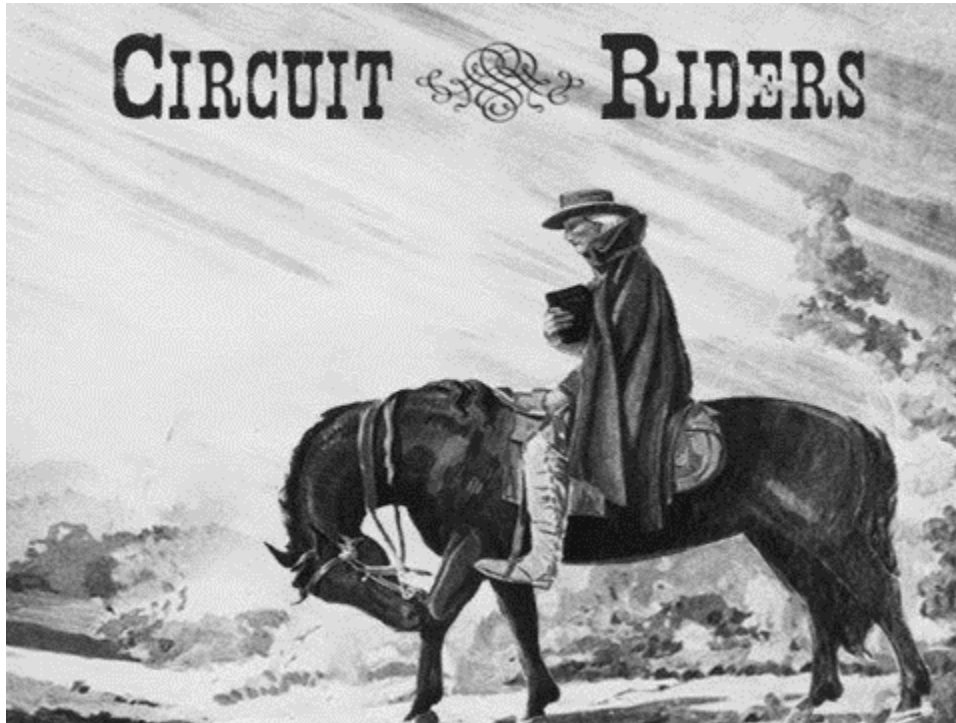


Isaiah 40:31 “But they that WAIT UPON THE LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint.”

We need to be still. We need to be still in God’s presence. Doing this, according to scripture offers us strength, it offers us hope, it promises God’s peace.

We know, that to thrive, we must be still in God’s presence.

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Back in the early Methodist Church, the church had Circuit riders. Circuit Riders were preachers back in the 1700s and 1800s who would ride from church to church and hold services. There were more churches than preachers in that day and a Circuit Rider would travel from congregation to congregation. It's still kind of that way, but pastors don't need to ride horses any more.

One Circuit Rider was out riding one afternoon and came upon a man out working in his field. Thinking to start a conversation and invite the man to church, the preacher called out: "Fine day isn't it?"

"It's fine for you", the man replied, "All you have to do is ride around on that horse thinking about God all day long, while I have to sweat here in this field and then walk home afterward. I don't think it's right you should have things so easy while I have to work so hard."

The preacher responded: "You're right. You do work hard in the fields and I admire that, the kind of work I do is a work of different kind."

"Yeah, sure", the man answered. "All you do is ride around thinking about God all the time. That's not hard."

"Oh, but it's harder than you think", the minister answered: "I tell you what. Just to prove to you how difficult it can be to 'think about God' - if you can think about God and nothing else for 1 minute... I'll give you my horse."

"You're on", said the man and immediately he sat down in silence.

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Ten seconds went by... then 20 seconds... then 25 seconds.

About then, the farmer looked up at the minister, and said, “Does that include the saddle?”

In our society we’ve been trained to think that if we are not actively doing something, we are being idle. Or, if we’re not multitasking, we’re not being efficient. We equate our value with how much we produce. And that isn’t what God intends.

#	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
9	29	1 Event Color by Calendar (Green) 6:00am God Time	2	3 10:00 Event by Current User	4 09:00 Are you an entrepreneur? 09:00 First Friday in Every Month	5	6
10	7	8	9 Event Color by Calendar (Purple) 15:00 Are you an entrepreneur?	10	11	12	13 09:30 Sunday Morning Worship
11	14	15	16	17	18 09:00 Are you an entrepreneur?	19	20 09:30 Sunday Morning Worship
12	21	22	23 Event Color by Calendar (Purple)	24	25	26	27 09:30 Sunday Morning Worship
13	28	29	30	31	1 09:00 Are you an entrepreneur? 09:00 First Friday in Every Month	2	3 09:30 Sunday Morning Worship 10:00 Event by Current User

This week, what I want us to do during the next 3 or 4 minutes, while the music plays, is open your calendar or planner (maybe on your phone) and schedule in 5 minutes this next week to meet with God. I’m making it a small commitment, because this is different than praying. This is simply sitting in God’s presence and not thinking of anything else.

Next week we’ll actually focus in on some strategies to practice this spiritual discipline that God calls us to.

When we are thirsty, we drink. When we are hungry, we eat. When we are tired, we sleep. When we are spiritually hungry, we need to take time to be still in God’s presence. Amen.