

Liturgy of the Little Things

Matthew 6:25-34

“Living the Life of a Noticer”

We need to pay attention to what is going on around us, living our lives with our eyes wide open. We need to be good at noticing things - to be able to find beauty in everything. We may, at times, find ourselves in a place where we'd better *know* how to find beauty - know what to look for - to extract beauty out of a given situation - to *notice* things, even like the changing of the seasons, or the beauty of sunshine after a time of grey clouds and rain.

We should be “noticers” - pay attention - see *past* the moment to what is behind it. Bill Loveless said, “*We need to see people in 3-D*”, and we also need to see the *world* in 3-D. As followers of Christ, that view becomes enhanced in our lives, and we begin to notice the kingdom of God around us. As we begin to read and learn of a whole other realm of things going on - called the spiritual realm in Scripture - we learn to “see the unseen”.

We just spent six months discussing the Person, Presence, and Power of the Holy Spirit, and everything from here on builds upon that foundation, where the Holy Spirit helps us to see what others maybe *don't* see and notice.

This lesson is titled, “Liturgy of the Little Things”, which means living the life of a noticer - beginning to co-operate and co-labor with the Person, Presence, and Power of the Holy Spirit - beginning to see life in 3-D, and noticing what's beyond the obvious. We'll find when we do that, it will so enlighten, expand, and amplify our lives, because we'll begin to find beauty wherever we are.

What it means to notice

It means the act of observing or paying attention to something - to be aware of - to perceive - in cooperation and co-laboring with the Person of the Holy Spirit - to let him help us to see what we didn't notice before, and how to pay attention.

What it means to be a noticer

It means to live life with our eyes wide open - to look for the extraordinary among the ordinary - to pay attention to our surroundings, allowing the beauty we find to remind us of God's Presence and his everyday Grace. Even those who are not followers of Christ, by learning, noticing, and paying attention - living with their eyes wide open - they can give glory to God inadvertently - naturally - because the Imago Dei - the Image of God - is in their life. They were created in his image - created to worship and to notice - be noticers of the grandeur of Creation - the mountain peaks pointing up to heaven - to God - Creation crying out - pointing to the Father.

A moment of holiness is there, and the grandeur of it - the Elohim element in it (Elohim - word for God - refers to the creative nature of God, Creator of heaven and earth). It can be in anything and everything - music - art - where we are in the Imago Dei - the Image of God in that moment, as we participate in that Elohim element at work in our life. When we become noticers, and we're seeing things - there's something in Creation that calls out to us. Even the smallest tree, with extremely bright yellow leaves, can stand out among all the larger green and red ones - and we notice it.

Devotional by Pastor Jimmy

Liturgy of the Little Things - i.e. the "dailies", the hundred little ordinary things we do and experience that remind us of God's nearness and here-ness. "God With Us" - the name given to the One who would never leave us nor forsake us. A liturgy is a practice, habit, ritual or routine that reflects one's heartfelt devotion and commitment to God.

You, more than likely, have a daily liturgy - in other words, a quiet time, devotional reading, daily prayer, and reading of Scripture. Liturgy of the Little Things is more about living aware, and noticing the seemingly insignificant, non-descript things around your daily routine that point you to the presence of God in the "dailies". The "devil" is not in the details - God is in the details - he is in the dailies:

- Laughter from across the room, reminding you that all of life is not doom and gloom. In that moment, something lifts from off of your life.*
- An encouraging text from a friend that lifts your spirit in the moment.*
- A glimpse of nature on your drive that you never noticed before, that causes you to involuntarily utter, "Thank you, God for the beauty in this world!"*

- *Pausing to savor a bite at dinner that takes you back to a special moment around the dinner table with friends and family.*
- *A song on your playlist that causes you to smile and sing along without even thinking about it.*
- *A smile from a stranger that is completely random and a reminder of the beauty of the human spirit. Smiles are in short supply these days. Why don't you be the one who starts the ball rolling - let the "Christ in you" out of you - leak out the Life that's in you - crack a smile.*
- *A Bible verse that takes you back to your early days as a follower of Jesus.*
- *The joy of being greeted at the door by your puppy after a long and tiring day. Pets make our lives a little bit better - there's a great deal of joy that comes out of that.*
- *A long-awaited answer arrives after much prayer, and you know it's only because the Holy Spirit gave it to you.*

We notice these things - pay attention to these things - because they add depth and meaning for our lives. They really are the "spice of life". This list could go on, but these are simply reminders of God's presence in the dailies. Today, ask the Holy Spirit to help you notice and experience his presence in the liturgy of the little things. Aware. Present. All there.

- Pastor Jimmy

*"Wherever you are, be all there." - quote by missionary Jim Elliott. It's easy sometimes to be "somewhere else" when you're *right here*, but a noticer takes the moment to be *present* - to be present in this moment - to *enjoy* the moment. Be aware - stay present - stay aware.*

Psalm 105:4 NIV

"Look to the LORD and his strength; seek his face always."

1 Chronicles 16:11 NIV

"Look to the LORD and his strength; seek his face always."

Micah 7:7 NIV

"But as for me, I watch in hope for the LORD, I wait for God my Savior; my God will hear me."

2 Corinthians 4:18 NIV

"So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen, since what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal."

Psalm 27:13 NIV

"I remain confident of this: I will see the goodness of the LORD in the land of the living."

Psalm 121:1-2 NIV

"I lift up my eyes to the mountains— where does my help come from? My help comes from the LORD, the Maker of heaven and earth." [again, lifting my eyes - looking - seeing - and letting creation call out to me to remind me that God is my Help.]

Matthew 6:25-34 NIV

"Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothes? Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they? Can any one of you by worrying add a single hour to your life? "And why do you worry about clothes? See how the flowers of the field grow. They do not labor or spin. Yet I tell you that not even Solomon in all his splendor was dressed like one of these. If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today and tomorrow is thrown into the fire, will he not much more clothe you - you of little faith? So do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own."

Jesus was a noticer - *"But seek first..."* Jesus calls us back to pay attention again. Seek - to see - to go after - to chase after - to look for - to attend to - to fix your gaze upon.

John 4:35 NIV

"Don't you have a saying, 'It's still four months until harvest'? I tell you, open your eyes and look at the fields! They are ripe for harvest."

"Open your eyes and look..." Jesus was saying there are people all around us that, if we are not careful, we will not notice them - that they're in pain - that they're suffering in silence (and *not* calling out for help, keeping it inside until it's too late). If we're not careful, they will go without being noticed. Jesus was a noticer. He knew - because he was keenly aware of his environment, and he took time - he paid attention to people - he watched - he saw creation - *"Look at the birds of the air..."* Jesus saw everything that was around him - *"a city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden...nor do they light a lamp and put it under a basket..."*

Jesus took the things that were around him and he noticed them - and by noticing them, he was able to teach the principles of his kingdom. He noticed people too. And as we head into this holiday season, we need to notice - be aware - *pay attention* to one another. The rates of suicide are higher than they've ever been, especially in the younger generation. This *should be* a time of celebration and joy - the most wonderful time of the year - *and it can be* - but *we have to pay attention*.

Another devotional by Pastor Jimmy

The Liturgy of the Noticer - Jesus was a noticer. He lived with his eyes wide open. He saw what others missed - an unassuming bird, a poor widow giving all she had, a lost lamb, a city on a hill, lilies in a field, the hidden humanity in a leper. With eyes wide open, he noticed the value in the ordinary. Liturgy of the Noticer is more about living aware, and noticing the seemingly insignificant, nondescript things around you that remind you of the nearness and here-ness of God in the dailies.

As we enter this holiday season, pause, sit with and observe your surroundings. Look for beauty in the intentional design of things you see on a daily basis. As we turn the corner and head into the holidays, be focused and become noticers of those around us - those who are hurting: who is quieter than normal - who is sullen or detached - who is not texting you anymore - not calling anymore - not posting anymore. Notice what's going on around you.

- Pastor Jimmy

Prayer

Heavenly Father, we're asking for an impartation of Your Grace. As we're being formed into His image - growing into Christ-likeness, help us pause a little longer in our conversations - to listen a little more intently - to not just let somebody say "they're fine" - but to see into what You are seeing. Holy Spirit, we invite You to help us become noticers - that we would begin to practice the Liturgy of Noticing - the Liturgy of the Little Things - so that we would catch the nuances of a life - that we may be aware - that we may help one another through seasons that are difficult. We trust You in this, Holy Spirit. We welcome You into this space to help us. In Jesus' name. Amen

Resources

The Noticer: Sometimes, all a person needs is a little perspective - an amazing book by Andy Andrews.

WeTree - an app for helping one another in and through what should be and *can* be the most wonderful time of the year

Pastor Jimmy Pruitt's daily devotionals on Facebook

Bill Loveless - Christislifeministries.com

The Journals of Jim Elliot - book - Jim Elliot was part of a team of young missionaries murdered in Ecuador in 1956 by the Auca Indians to whom they were witnessing.