

Boundaries

Crazy Busy Week 2: Psalm 16

August 6, 2017

Welcome/intro/vision

[PBO EDIT: Susan Henson/PD Interview]

This is week 2 of our 3-part series called Crazy Busy—as we see fall starting to emerge on the horizon, for many of us we know that things are about to get a little more Crazy Busy!

So we wanted to take a couple of weeks to help all of us get our heads and hearts straight about our schedules

And for those of us who are Jesus-followers, to ask the deeper questions about how we're stewarding the time that Scriptures tell us is basically on loan to us from a good God

One of the many practical applications of a fully integrated, real-time faith is Rescue from first world, crazy busy malaise.

Purpose, meaning, and focus are all given to us to REPLACE the life of race around, get a lot of stuff, do a lot of stuff, all to what end and what purpose?

And to start with last week we talked about the importance of focus, of naming or identifying our great work in this season of our lives, so that we don't just get caught up in being Crazy Busy all the time

We looked at a guy in the Scriptures named Nehemiah who had a hugely important, God-given task to accomplish, and when a distraction and threat came his way, he uttered this great line:

"I'm doing a great work and I cannot come down" REPEAT WITH ME?

Over the course of the Scriptures, we get essentially **6 Great Life Works** that we're to be about that make for a great life

worship, character, relationships, mission, work, and rest

You do these 6 things with a joyful, faithful excellence, you do these 6 things in ways that match pitch with who God is and what God calls you to do

Then you live a great life, you leave a tremendous legacy, you live a life that is a gift to you and everyone around you

And the problem with Crazy Busy and the reason why you should go to work battling against it is that you can't crazy busy your way into any one of these things with excellence, which means that you can't Crazy Busy your way into a great life!

So we asked the question last week: "What's your great work in this season?"

And I've had all kinds of fun conversations about that this week as people have shared their answers: some were talking about family—little kids or grown kids, one person's is cancer, another's is a character trait they're asking God to develop in them

and for some of us THE GREAT work is ASKING THE QUESTION and then waiting for the answer to become clear, wrestling with it

Last week, we talked about the "YES" of focus, the value of identifying what's most important right now but in order to have a real YES, it's going to require a word that's harder for many of us:

it's going to require an ability to say "NO" and the ability to set boundaries, even to things that are really good

How many of you have ever agreed to do something that you knew when you agreed to do it was not a good idea? Didn't really have time for it, wasn't something that you really felt compelled to do, etc?

How many of you have done that in the past 2 weeks? The past 24 hours? Many of us have this problem!

Now some of you love the word "NO" and you have no trouble saying it, you say it recreationally, it's fun for some of you to just shrug off opportunities or other people's expectations

But for some of you, saying "no" to great opportunities or great people is really difficult. Setting consistent boundaries is hard

And that's part of why it's really hard for you to NOT be Crazy Busy! We're going to drill down into that today

While at the same time, for those of you who LOVE the word No, one important thing to consider is that not every No is a good no

There are selfish No's, aren't there? There proud No's, there are lazy No's, fearful or protective or grasping No's

I'm particularly handicapped in this area! Some days I have a hard time saying no and want to say yes to everything and then OTHER days I find myself saying selfish, proud, lazy no's left and right!

I'm amphibious!

Today we're going to talk about healthy boundaries, healthy "NO's" that genuinely serve God's larger YES in our lives and in our relationships and in God's purposes for our lives

To get our hearts and minds around this, we're going to open up to Psalm 16: Bible/no Bible

Psalm 16:

quick explanation: Davidic kingdom about 1,000 BC/wrote lots of prayers and songs used by Jews and Christians for thousands of years—regularly in trouble or anguish, part of why his prayers and songs have endured for so long!

And this one starts off just this way:

***¹ Keep me safe, my God,
for in you I take refuge.
I say to the Lord, "You are my Lord;
apart from you I have no good thing."***

I remember as a kid a few of those really important life-lessons that my parents instilled in me
And a couple of them I remember vividly where I was when they were delivered to me
and one of them was when I was around kindergarten aged and I was outside with my dad and it started to thunder

And I asked if we should go seek shelter underneath a huge tree that was nearby, to which he wisely replied that a tree was one of the worst places to go in a lightning storm because of the likelihood of a lightning strike

You don't want to be under or around the tallest point around you, because that's where lightning is headed

These are very important life lessons, thanks dad! And over the years, I've learned there's a larger principle here:

not everything that *looks* like good shelter or refuge from a storm is, in fact good shelter or refuge in the storm, is it?

David here sounds like he's in trouble. We don't know why, we don't know the back story.

But we do know that in the midst of whatever challenges he's facing, he's seeking refuge in a very, very good place:

"In you, God, I take refuge." And, in fact, APART from you, I have NO GOOD THING:
repeat that last part? "*Apart from you, I have no good thing*"

Even stuff that on the outside or at the outset might offer TEMPORARY relief, or TEMPORARY blessing would be a loss if it was outside the bounds of God's presence, God's relief, God's blessing

Some of them look very safe and dry, but are instead the equivalent of seeking shelter underneath a tall tree in the midst of a lightning storm.

And this is hard to say when you're in the midst of the storm, isn't it? Any shelter seems like a relief in the middle of the storms of life

Some of you are in the middle of some sort of storm this morning, or maybe it's been a whole series of storms, and there are so many things that make so many promises and look so very inviting!

But David here is inviting us to lean into our first big NO today, our first and most important boundary

Because what we find is that God has his own boundaries in this world. There are things that outside the purview of God's ways and God's kingdom.

And David is declaring that his OWN boundaries are going to line up with the boundaries around the kingdom of God, God's ways, God's commands and instructions

Because to embrace a shelter OUTSIDE of the boundaries of God and God's kingdom would be a TOTAL LOSS

And even if it generated temporary relief or victory or success. We are MORE vulnerable to the next storm, not less, because we have chosen our refuge poorly no matter how good it feels in the short-term

One of my favorite old dead authors wrote this a couple hundred years ago, going to paraphrase it a bit: "In whatever we do without God we must either fail miserably—or succeed even more miserably"

In the long term, David declares, there is NO GOOD THING apart from God and life in God's kingdom and doing it God's way in the midst of the storm

So he sets a very firm boundary that lines up with God's boundaries around what he will or will not do to find relief from the storms of his life

And he's making THAT choice in the face of any number of OTHER options and other shelters he could seek, just like you and I have choices here

David and his people are surrounded by all kinds of peoples with other gods, just like there's all kinds of gods that we could choose to seek shelter in

David is also surrounded with good food and good drink, the finest in the land, maybe some of the finest in the world that he could seek shelter in, just like many of us could choose to do

David is also surrounded by trusted advisors and friends, wise people and spiritual people and military people who could help him to navigate the storms and he could turn to them,
just like many of us sometimes are quick to turn to other people for help and shelter

David is also just a really smart guy. He's overcome all sorts of challenges and obstacles to this point—he's proven himself to be resilient in the face of lions and bears and political battles and military battles

David COULD HAVE declared he's taking refuge in his own good sense and competence and wisdom, just like many of us attempt to do

But in spite of and in the face of all these options, David intentionally sets those aside and says, "I see those things, some of them are GOOD gifts and GOOD things that I'm grateful for, given to me by God himself for me to appropriately enjoy and enter into

But ultimately I will NOT take refuge in those things. I will find my refuge in the Lord."

Here's the first boundary line we see in a life free from Crazy Busy: Apart from you, I have no good thing

First boundary question for you this morning: ***What needs to change for you to be able to say: "apart from you, I have no good thing?"***

Practically: job you really want—prayer: "want it, but apart from you, I have no good thing"

Gossip: convicted you're seeking refuge in people liking that you share information with them, makes you feel good, wanted, loved, accepted; sheltering in gossip outside boundaries of God and God's kingdom: "apart from you I have no good thing"

Embracing the truth of this statement that apart from God I have no good thing

is one of the first steps to getting less Crazy Busy. Because if we're willing to let God be the one who starts to help us to set our boundaries, it begins to shift the conversation

For me over the years one of the places that I've taken refuge in is just the fact for much of my day I'm busy doing stuff for God and/or stuff that I hope will be beneficial for other people

And so therefore, I can justify just about any amount of Crazy Busyness because it sure looks on the outside like I'm doing good stuff, GOD STUFF! I'm helping people!

Ergo it's okay for me to be Crazy Busy because that's what God wants, right?

But over time I've had to realize that not every good thing is mine to do

This is really important for all you wonderful, earnest, wanting to do the right thing people out there: ***not every good thing that I COULD do is a God-given thing that I SHOULD do.***

And in fact what I've found is that taking refuge in any number of other things

like people's approval or my compulsive desire to look good or not disappoint others or my own accomplishments

is often at the spiritual and psychological core of what often pushes me to be Crazy Busy.

When we're looking for shelter or refuge or identity in something other than God, one of the most popular consequences is a Crazy Busy life

What steps would you need to take to say along with David: "apart from you, I have no good thing?"

Later in this same Psalm, David comes back to this theme of boundaries and God's sufficient goodness as he strikes this same kind of note in verse 5:

***Lord, you alone are my portion and my cup;
you make my lot secure.***

***⁶The boundary lines have fallen for me in pleasant places;
surely I have a delightful inheritance.***

Last week after the message I had someone come up to me and say that he was a proud Indy, someone who's living in Chatham County who delights to be left alone to do his own thing—there's a bunch of you here and you're not quite so Crazy Busy as the rest of us

And he said his wife says that he isn't greedy, he just always wants the next plot of land directly next to his in perpetuity!

In ancient Israel, with no county GIS system, boundary markers were usually stones and having clarity around where your land started and ended helped to make great neighbors.

David here declares that the boundary lines have fallen for him in pleasant places.

He is glad for the lot that God has given to him—this is a very physical and tangible thing, he's glad for the land he's acquired and he's okay with where it ends, made peace with what he's received

And it has implications for something much larger than merely the size of David's garden. God has boundary markers for each of us

things that are in our sphere of influence and things that are NOT in our sphere of influence

And some of us struggle to be willing to embrace those boundaries

On the other hand, some of us actually draw the boundary line much sooner and smaller than God would have us to.

God's boundary line for you is WAY OUT THERE, but your boundary line for you is right here where it's safe and comfortable

Some of us need to be less protective and more willing to be stretched, to grow, to take risks, to push outside of YOUR own self-imposed and often safe boundaries

to make sure that you're bumping up all the way out to the boundary line that God actually has for you, which for some of us is bigger than what we'd be comfortable with ourselves.

But for those of us for whom "no" is a hard word for us to say, we need to embrace and recognize that God has boundaries for each of us, and that we need to be willing to embrace them.

And to embrace that we have the power and the responsibility to set boundaries, make decisions, to take ownership over where this resource of the time you've been allotted has been given

So here's something that might be a bit revolutionary for some of you, and it might be hard for some of you to believe or agree with, it's a little bit controversial

but I want you to give it just a beat to consider if it might be true before you reject it entirely

Here it is: "***I am ridiculously in charge of my schedule.***" [Repeat that with me?]

In our country, with the economy relatively healthy, you and I are ridiculously in charge of our schedules

Now there are a couple caveats to this, a few of you to whom this does not actually apply:

if you have a newborn baby, THEY are ridiculously in charge of your schedule, especially when it comes to sleep!

And some of you are working multiple jobs just to pay the bills and get by and I have a tremendous amount of respect for the work you're putting in and how difficult it is for some of you, thank you for being here, you honor us with your presence

And for almost all of us, there are short bursts, short periods of time, when the type of work we do or the season of life that we're in has additional demands or challenges—work in retail, Christmas is Crazy Busy, if you're a teacher back to school is Crazy Busy

But for the vast majority of us for the vast majority of the time, we are ridiculously in charge of our schedules

And so WE are responsible to the Lord and to those we are in relationships with for the decisions that we get made and for how they affect us and the people around us

This is sobering, and perhaps it's just for me because when I get Crazy Busy I like pretending that I'm a *victim* of my crazy busy rather than the *source* of my crazy busy!

Right now, in this season of my life, my favorite target to blame my crazy busy is on kids activities—right mom and dad?

For those of us who are in the season of life where it's consumed with soccer or gymnastics or piano or lego robotics or scouts or kickboxing

It's easy to think that this is what my kids need in order to be healthy, well-adjusted, well-adapted human beings—everyone else is doing it, right? And look how GREAT everyone else's kids are turning out! Gotta keep up with everything and everyone

But do you know what's on the rise, precipitously on the rise in teen culture in our country? Anxiety disorders. All types of them. Sky-rocketing.

Way more pervasive than during the Great Depression, worse than during World War 2, worse than the Cold War

at times when our world and our country was way more volatile and insecure than it is now they didn't have nearly the rates of teen anxiety issues

And some of them are more chemical or hard-wired rather than induced by circumstances

but I would suggest to you that Crazy Busy might just be a contributing factor to this epidemic, at the very least, it's not helping things very much.

Moms and dads, take a minute to share a moment here and ask patience for those of you without kids

I want us together to say something that I need to remind myself of from time to time. Sometimes I have to say it out loud because I'm tempted to forget it but when I can remember it, it's life-changing and revolutionary

You ready? Earth-shattering: ***"I am the parent."*** Isn't that crazy? Say it with me: "I am the parent"

My job is to be the parent and to ***parent my kids into the 6 great life works*** that we talked about last week: ***worship, character, relationships, mission, work and rest***

And when I forget that I'm the parent and I allow the kids to dictate our lives and our schedules, you know what happens? Crazy Busy chaos is what happens

Mom and dad, if you let your 9-year-old have full authority over the shopping list and meal planning each week. What kinds of foods would you eat all day every day? Junk!

We'd eat hot dogs and chocolate chip waffles all day every day at the Kirk house!

Part of our jobs as parents is to make wise food choices for our whole family to hopefully set our kids up for a lifetime of wise food choices

If we allow the 9-year-old or 13-year-old to make the decisions, we're going to get 9-year-old and 13-year-old decisions. And if we don't parent them into making wise decisions, some of them will never grow OUT OF making 9-year-old decisions

And most of us know people who have never gotten past making decisions at a 9 year-old or 13-year old level

Part of our jobs as parents is to parent our kids into making good and wise decisions regarding time, which means saying no from time to time, even to good things

Your excuse for being crazy busy might not be the kids, you likely have OTHER things that you perhaps like to blame your Crazy Busy on!

But for most of us, for most of our times, we are ridiculously in charge of our schedules

And the sooner that we can take ownership of that and make decisions in light of that, in keeping with the

Wildly Important Take-Homes:

We've been asking the important question: **What is your great work in this season?**

This is the YES work that we're all called to do

Today, we're asking the necessary follow-up question: **What boundaries do you need to set in order to accomplish that great work?**

For some of you, no comes more easily and maybe you're actually over-protective, too quick to say no

And for some of you, the boundaries ***need to be stretched*** beyond where they currently are in order to do the great work God has for you in this season

But for others of us who have no boundaries or whose lives currently really are all over the place and Crazy Busy

We need to set up some good boundaries, reign things in a bit, ***this is the NO that serves that greater yes.***

In the pages of the Jesus stories, we see Jesus doing this all the time.

At one point early in his ministry Jesus does a whole bunch of healings and the next morning he gets up early and spends time with his Father, praying

And his disciples wake up and they freak out, they can't find him, and a huge crowd has gathered to see Jesus again

And when the disciples finally do find Jesus, they're like "Jesus, what are you doing out here in the desert praying? There's a ton of people waiting for you, let's go meet them."

And Jesus says, "I gotta leave, go to other towns and villages. That crowd back there is good work, but not every good work that I could do is good work that I need to do.

I'm not here to please a crowd but to do the work that the Father wants for me to do.

So I'm going to leave this good work here, say no to it, and follow the promptings of God my Father, because apart from him, I have no good thing"

And then a couple of years later on the night he was betrayed, Jesus gathers around a table with his closest followers and he invites them into a meal that we're going to celebrate this morning

He took bread and said this is my body, broken for you, eat this in remembrance of me. Then he took a cup and said this is my blood shed for you for the forgiveness of sins, drink this in remembrance of me

And the disciples had no idea what he was talking about, but this was Jesus's great work. It's what he came to do

And when the Romans came to arrest him, one of his followers pulled out a sword and cut off an ear of one of the servants, but Jesus healed him right then and there

And he said to Peter, NO—put the sword away. My great work requires a NO to the sword that serves the larger YES of reconciling the entire world to the God of the universe

He went to the cross, shed his blood, became a curse for us, became a ransom for us, absorbed every single sin for all time on himself

every impure thought you and I have had this past week, every lie we've told, every person we've snubbed, any proud or jealous thoughts/words/deeds? None of that now blocks us from access to God

Three days later, Jesus rose from the grave, conquering sin and death forever and ever. His Great Work was finished, and it only came about because he knew how to say No to all sorts of distractions and other options and other opportunities over and over again.

And today we celebrate his sacrifice with communion. If you're a Jesus-follower, this meal is for you. If you're not yet a Jesus-follower, we ask that you take this time to pause, consider, pray, reflect

And after the service, there will be prayer ministers available for you in the prayer room. If you decide this morning that you're ready to make a decision to receive the gift of grace offered to you in this meal, they would love to pray with you

Going to move to time of worship now, stations, cup is grape juice and the bread is gluten free so everyone's invited

Whenever ready: go to the tables, take a moment there to pray, pause, consider, maybe confess sin before the Lord, and then go ahead and eat and drink there

PRAY

WOODS BENEDICTION:

Shower in PBO, Prayer room, guests, chairs