



**the ruthless
elimination of
*HURRY***

Sermon Series Devotional

April 14 - May 18

Hinckley First United Methodist Church

Series Overview

How are you doing? "Good but busy!" That seems to be a common response I get from a lot of people I talk to... friends, colleagues, church folks. We all seem to be busy. Some view busy-ness as a badge of productivity, others view it as a mark of their worth, and for others it is an inescapable reality. But have you ever stopped to consider the negative impact your frantic pace of life is having on you? In this series, based on the book by John Mark Comer, we will address one of the greatest threats to our spiritual lives: hurry. Instead of allowing our calendars and screens to control our lives, Jesus offers us a new rhythm of life, overflowing with grace, peace, and beauty.

Why a Devotional?

A vibrant and authentic faith is not grown merely in one hour on Sunday morning. This devotional will give you the opportunity to engage with God's word on a regular basis as you seek to become more like Christ each day. There is a daily Bible reading plan, as well as reflection questions that are linked with each week of the sermon series. You can use this devotional individually or in a formal or informal small group.

Daily Action Plan

This series, rather than prescribe a daily Bible reading plan for you to follow, I want to encourage you to put the message of this series into action in the way that is most beneficial to your soul. Throughout this series we will be considering essential practices to un-hurry our life. Practices like: Silence, Solitude, Sabbath, Simplicity. There are a wealth of spiritual practices that you can practice depending on the needs of your soul.

I invite you to explore and practice things like:

- Breath Prayer
- Lectio Divina
- Retreat
- Sabbath
- Digital Fasting
- Uncluttering your House
- Budgeting
- Schedule/Calendar Purging
- Journaling

John Mark Comer has produced a helpful companion workbook outlining all of these practices and more entitled "How to Un-hurry." You can access the workbook on our church website at <https://www.hinckleyfirstumc.org/sermons/hurry> or by scanning the QR code below.



Week 1

Our Greatest Enemy

"Hurry is the great enemy of spiritual life in our day. You must ruthlessly eliminate hurry from your life."

- Dallas Willard

- In his book *The Ruthless Elimination of Hurry*, John Mark Comer points out that some of the highest values in Christ's economy are love, joy, and peace. These are values that are completely incompatible with hurry. Think about love... love is time-consuming, intentional, deliberate. Think about peace... do you ever feel peace when you're in a rush somewhere? In what ways have you experienced hurry to be incompatible with the way and the values of Jesus?

- If you're wondering if you're suffering some degree of hurry sickness, consider the following possible symptoms. Which one do you identify with most and why?

- 1) Frequent Irritability. Do you find yourself easily agitated, frustrated or angry?
- 2) Emotional Numbness. Do you feel unmoved by things that used to matter to you?
- 3) Disordered Priorities. Do you feel busier than ever, but still feel like you don't have time for the things that really matter?
- 4) Escapist Behaviors. Do you find yourself trying to escape reality through TV, food, social media, alcohol, etc.?
- 5) Spiritual Apathy. Do the things you know sustain you spiritually consistently get put to the side?

Week 2

Slowing & Stopping

"Turn off the belief switch that says you are what you do. Substitute for it the truth that your worth comes from who you are... Turn off the belief switch that says committed living demands your exhaustion. Put in its place an understanding that you can live a life of commitment to family, vocation, and society without inflicting violence on yourself. Turn off the belief switch that says you don't deserve rest until you are ready to drop. Begin to believe that rest is a gift from God to be regularly observed in order to prevent us from ever getting to the point of breakdown."

- Kirk Byron Jones in *Addicted to Hurry*

- What is your reaction to the quote above? Do you need to "turn off" any of those belief switches in your mind?

- When was the last time you deliberately chose to slow down? When you drove the speed limit, or chose the long line at the grocery store, or deliberately walked slowly? How do you typically respond to "slow-ness?" Does it set you on edge or annoy you? Why?

- Why does it take effort to enter into rest? Is it difficult for you? What is the reason behind it?

- God set aside one day out of seven to be a Sabbath to the Lord. How do you understand the idea of Sabbath? Is it a command or an invitation? Is it a day, an experience, or a discipline? What might Sabbath look like for you?

Week 3

Silencing

"Music and silence - how I detest them both! How thankful we should be that ever since Our Father entered Hell... no square inch of infernal space and no moment of infernal time has been surrendered to either of those abominable forces, but all has been occupied by Noise... We will make the whole universe a noise in the end... The melodies and silences of Heaven will be shouted down in the end."

- The demon Screwtape to Wormwood in *The Screwtape Letters*

- Take an inventory of all the Noise that is around you on a daily basis.

- How does silence make you feel?

- Consider the two dimensions of silence - external and internal. External is when we get away from all the people and noise and stimuli and let our body come to quiet. Internal is when we calm and center our mind and come to mental and emotional rest or peace. Identify the areas where you need an increased sense of silence in your life.

- Reflect on this William Barclay quote, "It may well be that the whole trouble in our lives is that we give God no opportunity to speak to us, because we do not know how to be still and to listen; we give God no time to recharge us with spiritual energy and strength, because there is no time when we wait upon him. [Because of this...] How can we shoulder life's burdens...?"

Week 4

Simplifying

"Simplicity is an inward reality that can be seen in an outward lifestyle."

- Richard Foster in *Freedom of Simplicity*

"Simplicity is choosing to leverage time, money, talents, and possessions toward what matters most."

- Mark Scandrette in *Free*

- In the Sermon on the Mount Jesus said, "Where your treasure is, there your heart is" (Matthew 6:21). To paraphrase that: where you put your resources is where your heart is. Consider your calendar, your bank statements, and your possessions... What do they tell you about how you prioritize your time and money? What would they tell someone else about how you allocate your resources and the state of your heart?

- Simplifying might mean different things for different people. For some it might mean cleaning out the clutter and letting go of things by recognizing the emotional attachment those personal possessions hold over us. For others it might mean saying "no" to new commitments to create space and margin in your calendar. For still others it might mean resisting the urge for MORE and learning to live more content. What would it look like for you to practice simplicity?

- Jesus simplified everything to one tenet: Love. What do you love? Does your lifestyle clearly reveal what you love most?

Week 5

Savoring

"The way to develop the habit of savoring is to pause when something is beautiful and good and catches our attention - the sound of rain, the look of the night sky - the glow in a child's eyes, or when we witness some kindness. Pause... then totally immerse in the experience of savoring it."

- Tara Brach

- Multitudes of research studies reveal that average human attention spans are declining precipitously. What do you think is behind this? How have you experienced this to be true in your life?

- Hand in hand with the decline in attention spans is a corresponding rise in distractions and multitasking. What are the affects of this on your family life and your spiritual life?

- What would it look like for you to truly "savor" moments in your life? What would you need to change in order to more fully savor your experiences?

- Psalm 34:8 says, "Taste and see that the Lord is good." Do you think it is possible to taste the goodness of God if we approach our spiritual life like a fast food restaurant? Do you think it is possible to see the goodness of God if we approach our spiritual life like a 5 second Tik Tok reel?

- What spiritual practices could you begin/continue to learn anew the art of savoring the goodness of God?