

Soul Business – Simplicity

Introduction:

I once met a nun who was part of what is called a Benedictine order. She told me that when she began her service, she was required to practice what she called simplicity of possessions. She had a small trunk that contained all she owned. Every 6 months her mother superior and her would go through its contents and anything she hadn't used would be sold and donated to the poor. The purpose of such a drastic exercise was to invite her to a life of prayer in which she could discover that Jesus was all she needed.

Sometimes the accessories of our complicated lives, all the stuff and busyness of life, can be a barrier to a more fully alive relationship with God. When we can sort through and eliminate some of the complexities of life, we often find out what is truly important. In my youth ministry days, I would annually take students to the boundary waters canoe area in Northern, MN. Life was simple on the trail. No cell phones, no technology, just some basic clothes, gear, and simple food to live off for a week. Some of the most significant moments of faith formation happened in those moments when the distractions were removed, and we could hear God's word and seek His love more clearly.

In our stuff-filled, noise-filled, busy, and complicated lives what does it look like to practice simplicity? For some, it might mean selling some of the possessions that possess you. For others, it may look like learning to say "no" to unimportant commitments and creating space to pray and worship in your calendar. Whatever it is, the goal, is to come to the realization that Jesus, the Good Shepherd, is the one who provides all we need.

Read Your Bible

- Psalm 23: 1-6
- Matthew 6:30-33

Apply God's Word to Your Life:

1. What are some of the things that complicate our lives?
2. How do those things become a distraction from our faith?
3. What would you say simplicity is and how would you practice it?
4. What part of Psalm 23 speaks to you and why?
5. What do you think Jesus means in Matthew 6?
6. What does it practically look like to “seek first his kingdom and his righteousness”?
7. What complicated things need to change in your life and what is stopping you?

Reflecting on the text:

1. What have you learned about God?
2. What have you learned about the world?
3. What have you learned about yourself?

Pray

Lord, we praise you for loving us and providing all we need. Help us to not be misled and distracted by the complexity and anxieties of our lives. Show us what to say no to, what to let go of, so that we can know that you fully have us in your hands. Teach us to depend on you. In Jesus name. Amen.