

What Would Jesus Do: Creating Space for God  
Matthew 14:13-23  
April 10, 2011

**Life is busy.** Retired members of the church tell me they stay so busy now, they don't know how they got around to taking care of their yards and homes when they were working a full-time job.

**Life is busy.**

Parents of especially more than one child have to coordinate getting kids from school to sports practice to band practice to dental appointments.

**Life is busy.**

People are replacing a cup of coffee to help them get started in the morning with high octane caffeine drinks like Red Bull and Monster.

**Life is busy.**

School officials are reporting problems with students experiencing fatigue because kids are staying up late on cell phones and missing out on quality sleep.

To celebrate Easter is to celebrate Jesus was given new life. To celebrate Jesus was given new life is to experience God is real and present with us. But because life is busy like the title of the song just sung, God misses spending time with us.

What would Jesus do if he was living with the abilities of instant messaging, texting, video web cams on computers so we can have face to face conversation with people miles away, 24 hours news, sports and shopping channels, let alone the fact of stores like Walmart that are open around the clock. Jesus would do just what he did in the following words we hear from Matthew 14:13-23.

**Reading of scripture: Matthew 14:13-23**

**He took time to create space for God regardless of the**

### **circumstances. Vs. 13 & 23**

So in those verses of scripture we hear both the lows and highs of things that happen to Jesus. I know that passage started out with the words, “Now when Jesus heard this he withdrew from there in a boat to a deserted place.” I hope you were thinking, “heard what?” What did Jesus hear that caused him to get alone by himself? What he heard was that John the Baptist had been murdered. John the Baptist was the cousin of Jesus. John was in the womb of his mother Elizabeth and leaped and kicked inside of her when Mary the mother of Jesus came to tell Elizabeth that she too was pregnant. John was the one who preached that Jesus was the messiah, the very special person God was sending to free God’s people. John baptized Jesus. So in a time of shock and grief when Jesus heard John the Baptist had been murdered, Jesus got alone and its fair to say got alone with God to pray to find strength and comfort.

That space Jesus created to spend time with God didn’t last long. The Bible tells us crowds sought him out and then Jesus miraculously fed 5,000 people. Life’s busy. Jesus was intending for some solitary time with God. But the crowd was hungry and he fed them. This miracle story is the only one mentioned in all four gospels. All four writers of the gospels definitely passed along that victorious ministry event.

We love to remember great successes in the church like when a church pulls off a big Christmas or Easter play, or like I saw on “Youtube” where a Methodist church was celebrating the paying off of their debt on their building. They gathered together and placed the loan paper in some type of dish. I suppose they were either in the fellowship hall they built or might have been the sanctuary. The pastor lit the loan document on with match and loan papers burned up in a flash of flames and smoke. The congregation applauded. And the pastor said, “don’t you wish we

could have raised the money that quick.” It was their moment of victory. But even after the great ministry accomplishment, Jesus got alone again to pray.

This story teaches us Jesus took the action to create space to spend time with God **regardless of circumstances**. Many times we seek God during the trials, the hardships and the crisis. But look closely at this scene and in the victory he didn't hesitate to have an opportunity to spend time with God.

Is your life busy? So how are you doing in carving out time where it is just you and the Lord? So often I have people tell me about circumstances that keep them from spending time with God in prayer, or reading scripture with time just time to think on what the Bible is trying to teach. Life is busy, life is a lot of things but Jesus would create space to spend time with God whether he was experiencing sorrow or success.

**He created space regardless of the relationships vs.13, & 22** Were probably thinking, that is easier said than done. It's hard to do. It may be the hardest when things are going well because we just assume when things are going well we're in tune with God. Listen again to verse 13 and 22. Verse 13 said, **“he withdrew to a deserted place.”** Verse 22 said he **“made his disciples get in the boat”** and **“...he dismissed the crowds.”** Whether it was the crowds who needed him or the his inner circle of friends, Jesus took charge of the next opportunity he had to get alone with God. He basically told the disciples and the crowds, “you don't have to go home but you can't stay here.”

As we get closer to Easter this simple story reminds us there is a time to say no to certain duties in order to say yes to God.

There is a time to say no to more opportunities in order to create space for God.

There is a time to even say no to our closest relationships, the

church, to the pastor or others church leaders in order to say yes to creating space for God. There is to be no greater relationship in our lives than our relationship with God. If we spend time with God will spend the best time in all other matters.

### **Why do we avoid or resist? V.15**

But what makes us resist creating prayer and reflection time to hear God as well as just tell God what is on our hearts? Why don't we hunger for it like we plan to watch the championship basketball game that was on this past Monday or plan to watch the Masters golf tournament, American Idol, get out in the yard and the garden working or be at the lake ready to fish?

Perhaps we feel guilty for carving out that time.

Perhaps we trust in our own abilities that were coping okay.

Perhaps we distrust and doubt God.

Maybe we are bored with God.

Maybe we don't know what to do when get that time alone with God.

Maybe we're afraid of what will happen if we do get alone with God.

Verse 15 describes how the disciples wanted to send the crowds away to find on their own the food they needed. They didn't think to ask Jesus first. Perhaps we miss time with God is because were like the disciples, we think someone else or something else has what we need.

### **The reason we need time alone with God v.20**

Jesus had his reason for creating space to get alone with God; but a fair question is why. What is going to happen?

I was reading a little from a book being used in one of our adult Sunday school classes entitled "Crazy Love." There was a quote

that was talking about prayer and being alone with God and it said, Prayer puts us in touch with the majesty of God - Men are never duly touched and impressed with a conviction of their insignificance, until they have contrasted themselves with the majesty of God. (p26, Crazy Love, R.C. Sproul)

Creating space isn't about having something ready to say to God; its about getting ourselves within God's presence.

Verse 20 in this story tells us that after Jesus multiplied the loaves of bread there was enough for everyone and there were even 12 baskets of extra bread. In the days of Jesus the poor people usually on had enough bread for one day. Jesus gave them enough for that day and then extra for their journey back to their homes. The reason we get alone with God is so in different ways God gives us what we need and more.

- Genesis 22 tells us God called Abraham and Isaac alone up on a mountain side. It was that time when Abraham thought he would have to offer his son Isaac as a sacrifice to God. Instead God provided a ram caught in the bushes for Abraham to use as a sacrifice to remind Abraham, trust God and he will provide. Someone once said based on that story where and whatever God calls you to do there is always a ram in the bushes, meaning God will provide. Create space for God to meet with you and he will show you how he is providing.
- Exodus 3 tells of where Moses was drawn by God into a sacred space and place to see God's power revealed in the burning bush. Spend time with God and discover His power to face fears, pursue dreams, and live life on His terms.
- Mark 9, describes how Jesus would take his inner circle of disciples on a mountain to be transformed before them and they would see in greater ways the power of God and see Jesus for

who he was, God's son. Get alone with God and see him in new ways so you won't just see him as judge but a father who forgives or you won't just experience forgiveness but also how he wants you to live more purely.

- Luke 22, reminds us that the upper room was a sacred space and place where Jesus would reveal he would be willing to be sacrificed. Spend time with Jesus and he is going to call us to make sacrifices so his will can be done through us.

When we get into the presence of God by getting away from other concerns and issues then we can tap into his power. When we tap into his power then it puts the issues of life that have us running scared or soaring high or anywhere in between into true perspective. Time with God helps change how we look at ourselves and life.

One preacher said, "We all get deceived! Peter was deceived by his own vision of what he expected Messiah to do. Jesus rebuked him, "Get behind me Satan!" Years later, Peter was blind to his actions, and Paul had to correct his self-absorbed old ways (Gal 2:11-14). Yet I find that most Christian leaders rarely consider the thought, "I, too, may be self-deceived, spiritually blind in some area!" The thought rarely crosses our minds.

And lest you think I'm being judgmental, let me just say—I'm absolutely convinced that I have spiritual blind spots. I would tell you what they are...but I don't know! Sometimes, my wife tries to point out my blind spots to me, but she's always wrong about them—so I'm still not sure! Sometimes, my closest staff tries to hint at what's wrong, but they never fully understand! (You get the point?) (John Burke, [churcleader.com](http://churcleader.com)) Spending time with God gives us God's perspective.

## **Conclusion**

Getting alone with God didn't bring John the Baptist back from death and it didn't prevent Jesus from feeling sorrow; but Jesus could cope and press forward. Getting alone with God after a great ministry victory like feeding the 5,000 kept Jesus aware of his calling and his power source was God.

One New testament scholar said creating space to get alone with God reminds us that, "our circumstances are not the measure of God's love for us...we focus on intimacy with Jesus instead of circumstances." (Wilkins, NIV Commentary, pp 528-529)

Life is real busy. Some people are already thinking there are just 258 shopping days before Christmas. Spring is here and a variety of sports and recreation are off and running. Gardens and flower beds are ready for action. What would Jesus do during this time? I know this, God never had to tell Jesus he missed spending time with him. Jesus would create space to spend time with God.