



HILLSIDE MONTHLY DISPATCH

Hillside Baptist Church, Pembroke, NH

Volume 19 No. 2

Modeling the Truth of God's Word

February 2020

ESCHEW WORLDLY DISTRACTIONS

From the Pastor's Desk

What is Distracting You?

Luke 10:38-42

Recently I came across an interesting bumper sticker as I was on my taxi runs for the kids. It was a service message put out by the American Automobile Association, better known as AAA, which read "Don't become intoxicated."

The moment I read it I started to laugh because it is so on point with our current culture of today. It is clear that more and more accidents are occurring not from intoxication alone, but from "intoxication" also.

Just recently my son Connor took his driving road test for the state of NH (which he passed). While in the middle of the test, he and the official looked over and saw a person reading or texting on their phone when the light had already turned green. What was even stranger was that there was a police car behind her who did nothing about it.

Our culture as a whole is clearly a distracted culture. As reported in September 2018 by Digitinformationworld.com, the average attention span of any given person is estimated to be 8 seconds, which is sad because it is reported that the average goldfish has an estimated attention span of 9 seconds. What does that say about our culture? It screams to us that we as humans are so easily distracted by big and little things.

What takes your attention away from the important things in life? What removes your focus from what really matters?

What distracts you easily to the point that those around you are left looking at you wondering where your mind went while they were talking to you? Are you a person who cannot focus, who cannot pay close attention to things, who is easily distracted?

Now I admit that not everything in this world is worth your attention and you do not have to be one hundred percent engaged in the latest Sesame Street episode with your kids. You don't have to give your undivided attention to every article you see online. You don't have to apologize for not writing everything down on the list of items you need at the grocery store. The reality is there are a lot of things that are not so dire or important that you have to give your total focus too.

Upcoming Events and Meetings

Feb. 1, 8:00 a.m. – Men's Breakfast

The men share a meal, then engage in a Bible discussion.

Feb. 2, 10:45 a.m. – Lord's Supper

Feb. 4, 6:30 p.m. - Tuesday Night Bible Study Starts

Feb. 14 - Valentine's Day

Weekly:

Sundays at 9:30 a.m. – Sunday School and Bible Discussion

Sundays at 10:45 a.m. – Worship Service

Tuesdays, 6:30 p.m. – Weekly Bible Study

However, there are some occasions where you can't afford to not pay attention, such as when your spouse is talking with you. In such a case, you allow your mind to wander at your own peril.

Another instance is when you are filling out your taxes. You might want to be on high alert for that situation. Or you may want to guzzle some copious amounts of coffee when you are at the next business meeting so as not to miss something that is literally related to your job security. Like anything in life there are times where you can let your guard down and mentally relax and at other times it is paramount that you stay completely alert and attentive to the task at hand.

That brings me to a very important passage found in Luke. In the last part of chapter 10, Luke inserts a very short passage about two sisters, which passage takes up only five verses. In this passage we are introduced to Martha and Mary and an incident in which Jesus has come to Martha's house and is teaching everyone who is around Him. Then Luke tells us that Martha had "a sister called Mary, who was seated at the Lord's feet, listening to His word. But Martha was distracted with all her preparations; and she came up to

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On the web at <http://www.hillside-sbc.org>

Pastor's Desk (from p. 1)

Him and said, "Lord, do You not care that my sister has left me to do all the serving alone? Then tell her to help me." But the Lord answered and said to her, "Martha, Martha, you are worried and bothered about so many things; but *only* one thing is necessary, for Mary has chosen the good part, which shall not be taken away from her."

In our Biblical passage we see that Martha allowed the customary courtesies of the day to drive her to work to the point where she was completely distracted. Here she invited the great teacher to come to her house and with him were many individuals.

Well, under the customary rules of the day, she began to prepare a feast that was to meet the expectations of her visitors. But the more she worked, the more she realized how much work needed to be accomplished. It was at this point that she looked over, a break from her distraction, and she saw her sister Mary just sitting there at Jesus' feet doing nothing.

It was at that moment she became frazzled to the point that she demanded from Jesus to command her sister to get up and help her, but Jesus did not respond accordingly. Instead He expounded upon the virtue of Mary's desire to not be distracted by niceties, but instead sit at His feet and learn about the Kingdom of God. To learn from the Great Master Rabbi Himself.

What distractions keep you from learning at the feet of Jesus? Earlier I mentioned all kinds of things that can distract our attention and lead us into some peril, but when it comes to the things of God, how distracted do you become?

As a minister I can attest to the fact that it is easy to allow myself to get caught up in various things throughout the week that steal my attention away from what is most important and pressing. It is imperative that a preacher spend many hours in personal Bible study each week. It is equally imperative that he devote himself to the preparation and delivery of sermons and lessons.

Oh how easy it is to get caught up in the things of this world that so easily distracts us. Too often a Christian gets so busy in the day that when evening comes he or she has no time left for God. Or the amount of chauffeuring the kids each week catches up with you and, when it is done, you have run out of fuel to spend any time with your Creator.

Our world is full of distractions, but which one of them, or how many of them keep you from getting to know your Savior? How many of them keep you from learning at the feet of your Christ? How many keep you from Jesus?

Jesus was clear when He told Martha that Mary chose the better way. So let me encourage you that when things get your attention and you are distracted, remember what Jesus said about Mary's decision: it was better. Though we need things done at the church, don't allow being busy there to substitute the time you should be sitting at the feet of Jesus. Though some things are over your head in regards to deep truths of Scripture, don't allow your focus to be taken away

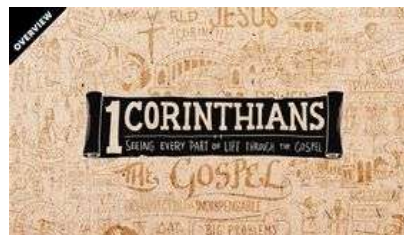
Men's Breakfast

On Saturday Feb. 1, the guys met for breakfast. It was an enjoyable time and the menu included more entrees than usual. We feasted on scrambled eggs, three kinds of breakfast sausage, pancakes, a quiche pie, and coffee. There was even real maple syrup for the pancakes.

Afterward we settled down and read through Mark chapter 9 which includes the transfiguration of Jesus on the mountaintop.

New Bible Study Series

Starting on Tuesday February 4th at 6:30 p.m., Pastor Jim is to be leading the next Tuesday Night Bible Study. This time the topic is to be 1 Corinthians.



Paul had planted the church in the city of Corinth, a rich, important, cosmopolitan, commercial area, whose harbor allowed for trade with Asia and Italy. The city had also become a Roman colony

A few years later, Paul received letters exposing the church's divisions, disorder, and spiritual immorality. Paul wrote this first letter to them to offer answers and instructions to correct their behavior.

Property and Space Patrol

January was a fairly mild month. There was about three inches of snow on the 13th and six inches on the 18th which was over before dawn. On Sunday the 19th, the driveway was clear before Sunday School started.

✠ Pastor Al

Pastor's Message (cont'd.)

by simpler things of this world. Instead work hard, stay focused, and get to know the truths of your faith.

Too often it isn't the things of this world that work hard at jockeying for your attention so much as it is that you allow yourself so easily to become distracted by them. Let me encourage you to take the necessary steps to develop the ability to spend quality time with God. To take the steps to grow in your attention span and spiritually engage your Savior on a daily basis so that you may get to know him more and more.

Don't allow yourself to be distracted by the trappings of this world that try to tether you to it by keeping you from your relationship with Jesus. Instead shed those things that take you mentally captive and commit your attention to the one who has redeemed you and made you His. Give your time and attention to Jesus.

God bless,
✠ Pastor Jim

Sweeping Away Your Offenses

Small technological discoveries change the way we work and live, but their origins are often overshadowed by the big discoveries. Back in the 1980s, I watched a draftsman erasing large sections of a technical drawing done on paper vellum, the modern replacement for the ancient vellum made from animal skin.

The task was intriguing because he used an electric rotary tool which spun a rod of soft vinyl. From then on, I made the switch from the old fashioned rubber erasers to the much more effective vinyl kind.

This story by Patricia Raybon, a writer for Our Daily Bread Devotionals, tells of a discovery in 1770 that changed the way people "swept away" their mistakes. But first read Isaiah 43:25 and Isaiah 44:21-23 to learn of a much older record of the One who sweeps away our offenses.

"When he invented the pencil eraser, British engineer Edward Nairne was reaching instead for a piece of bread. Crustless pieces of bread were used then, in 1770, to erase marks on paper. Picking up a piece of natural rubber by mistake, Nairne found it erased his error, leaving rubberized "crumbs" easily swept away by hand. [The name "rubber" came from the act of rubbing out mistakes.]

"With us too the worst errors of our lives can be swept away. It's the Lord—the Bread of Life—who cleans them with His own life, promising never to remember our sins. "I, even I, am he who blots out your transgressions, for my own sake," says Isaiah 43:25, "and remembers your sins no more."

"This can seem to be a remarkable fix—and not deserved. For many, it's hard to believe our past sins can be swept away by God "like the morning mist." Does God, who knows everything, forget them so easily?

"That's exactly what God does when we accept Jesus as our Savior. Choosing to forgive our sins and to "[remember them] no more," our heavenly Father frees us to move forward. No longer dragged down by past wrongs, we're free of debris and cleaned up to serve, now and forever.

"Yes, consequences may remain. But God sweeps sin itself away, inviting us to return to Him for our clean new life. There's no better way to be swept away."

Godly References in the Federalist Papers

Having recently completed reading an old paperback copy of the Federalist Papers, I noticed in several of the dozens of complex essays on all aspects of federal law and the constitution an obvious willingness to acknowledge the hand of Almighty God in the creation of the American Republic.

One such reference was in The Federalist Number 37, The Dilemma of the Constitutional Convention, by James Madison. In this essay, he wrestled with the difficulties that the convention faced trying to reconcile the competing interests of the large and small states.

"Would it be wonderful if, under the pressure of all these difficulties, the convention should have been forced into some deviations from that artificial structure and regular

symmetry which an abstract view of the subject might lead an ingenious theorist to bestow on a Constitution planned in his closet or in his imagination? The real wonder is that so many difficulties should have been surmounted, and surmounted with a unanimity almost as unprecedented as it must have been unexpected. It is impossible for any man of candor to reflect on this circumstance without partaking of the astonishment. It is impossible for the man of pious reflection not to perceive in it a finger of that Almighty hand which has been so frequently and signally extended to our relief in the critical stages of the revolution."

The next time some smug person tries to label the Founding Fathers as agnostics or non-religious thinkers, remember this quote from James Madison.

Birthdays and Anniversaries



Hillside wishes a happy, happy, happy birthday to anyone who is celebrating another orbit around the Sun.



Hillside also wishes God's blessing on the following people who celebrate a wedding anniversary this month:

2/2 Frank & Nanette Dawson

2/15 Michael & Gail Frascinella

Tune in to Gospel Radio

In the Concord area, get more of God's Word by tuning into New Hampshire Gospel Radio at 99.1 FM or 104.3 FM. For example, on Saturday nights at 6 p.m. the locally produced "Saturday Night Gospel Hour" offers a wide variety of southern and country gospel music. During the week, tune into well known speakers such as Alistair Begg, Chuck Swindoll, Dr. David Jeremiah, and Dr. Jim Daly.

Learn more at <http://www.nhgr.org/>.

Prayer Requests

If you need us to pray for a physical, spiritual, financial, marital, or other need, contact Pastor Jim, Pastor Al, or Michael Frascinella and they will get the word out to the membership. It is our duty and privilege to lift you up in prayer to Jesus Christ our Lord.

Hillside on the Web

Go to the Hillside web site <http://www.hillside-sbc.org/> for more information about our fellowship, including this newsletter in PDF format.

Submissions for Next Issue

Deadline is Feb. 25. Send news items to News Wrangler and Editor, Michael Frascinella, mfrascinella at comcast dot net.



Hillside Baptist Church is a member of the New Hampshire Baptist Association, part of the Southern Baptist Convention.



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