

How Jesus Handled Crazy Busy

Mark 3:7-19 (01/04/15)

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I borrowed the phrase “Crazy Busy” from Kevin DeYoung’s award winning book by the same title, *Crazy Busy*, a mercifully short book about a really big problem. We may not use the phrase “Crazy Busy,” but at least half the people you ask, “How’s it going?” will reply, “I’m really busy right now,” or “It’s just been crazy lately.” It’s always crazy lately. As I studied the passage before us I thought, “Is anyone really as busy as Jesus was?” He would never complain about being “crazy busy.” And yet people were making demands on His time like crazy, especially at this point of His life. He is halfway through His public ministry and He is riding a huge wave of popularity. Let’s learn from our Lord how He handled “crazy busy.”

He scheduled time to refresh – “Jesus withdrew to the sea.” vv. 7-8

Jesus withdrew to the sea with His disciples; and a great multitude from Galilee followed; and also from Judea, and from Jerusalem, and from Idumea, and beyond the Jordan, and the vicinity of Tyre and Sidon, a great number of people heard of all that He was doing and came to Him.

Jesus has just faced down those self-important, holier than thou, self-righteous religionists in the synagogue. They dared Him to heal a man’s hand on the Sabbath, and when He did, they silently filed out, met with the Herodians, and the ball is rolling up get rid of Him as a blasphemer.

But people from all over Palestine heard about this Miracle Worker and were coming His way. Great multitudes and great numbers had heard and were coming! He was like a huge magnet. Some of them came as far as 100 miles, like from Louisville, Bloomington, and Hopkinsville. How did they hear about Him? No phones, no texting, no radio. There were not even printing presses as in Martin Luther’s day which allowed his 95 theses to fly off the press and spread throughout Germany and Europe “as on angels’ wings.” But somehow here in Jesus’ day, hordes of people heard and headed toward the western shore of the Sea of Galilee. Estimates say tens of thousands of people moved across the land by walking, riding donkeys, horses, camels, whatever! The economy in the area must have skyrocketed as dill pickles, smoked fish, sliced beef and loaves of bread flew off the shelves.

They had heard about all He was doing – mainly, healing people. The masses were coming for their healing. But remember, every miracle was a display of His deity. Remember who He is, the Theanthropic Person in hypostatic union, the God-Man in union as one Person. There was never any human being like Him. He was unique.

How does Jesus handle all this? He withdraws to the sea. There is a time to withdraw from the busyness of life and catch your breath. You need to do the same thing. As they say, you cannot burn a candle at both ends. You parents need some time to refresh. Get a babysitter and go spend some time just together. You have to plan and commit to this. It won’t just happen. I remember my wife giving me the gift of a free afternoon just to read when the kids were keeping us busy – and kids will keep you busy, hopefully not crazy busy. So I took a folding chair and drove over to a nearby small lake, set up the chair, and spent the afternoon reading without any guilt nagging my conscience. Very refreshing. Husbands, your wives would benefit from a similar time of refreshing, a beneficial time. We’re not talking here about hiding out to play Words on your Iphone.

Do you have a place to go and do you schedule it into your life? Many refer to taking a Sabbath, a time of rest and refueling. Call it what you will, there's no reason to live a frayed, crazy busy life. Jesus didn't, and I can guarantee you aren't as busy as Jesus.

He planned for the unexpected – “A boat should stand ready.” vv. 9-10

And He told His disciples that a boat should stand ready for Him because of the crowd, so that they would not crowd Him; for He had healed many, with the result that all those who had afflictions pressed around Him in order to touch Him.

Time-management people talk about living with margin in your life. Don't fill up every single second with busyness. Allow for extra time, and that includes the unexpected. Jesus had these fellows make sure a boat was available in case He had to escape the press of the crowd. That boat represents margin, a place to go when things get too hectic.

In this case, Jesus had a contingency plan if things got too crazy. And they pretty much did. This mass of humanity was pressing against Him, trying to get up close to Him, wanting to touch Him. He had already healed many. They were crowding Him, pressing against Him. The word is that good old word *thlipsis*, to squeeze or press. It was like Black Friday at Walmart when everybody pushes and shoves to get the best buy! In verse 10 they were pressing, literally falling against Him to such an extent it was dangerous!

Why did Jesus allow this to happen? Why did He allow these crowds of people to gather and press against Him? He is the great Healer! All those afflictions, whatever they were, of every category, are the effect of this fallen world and He came as the Messiah who can heal all diseases and maladies. We are plagued with all kinds of afflictions today. You can't get in to see the doctor for three weeks or maybe three months! Have you ever tried to get a parking space at the hospital! Nurses are in huge demand. I just heard what the average nurse earns per hour; definitely a career you want to consider. So these poor hordes of afflicted people are pushing and shoving their way to Him. He was the center of attraction in the entire Palestinian region.

If CNN could set up an interview with Jesus (which if He was here today doing this, they would definitely be on it because the world is impressed by miracle workers), they'd be interested until He started into the Sermon on the Mount and the great truths of heaven and hell and why He really came. Then the screen would go blank with “technical difficulties” and that would be the end of the interview. Sadly, the multitudes in Jesus day also turned their ears against Him only a few months later and joined the Pharisees screaming for His blood!

But Jesus planned for the unexpected with that boat out there. You need a boat in your life. You need margin. How many parents today are running their children here and there, falling over themselves as they come and go, feeling totally drained with no time for the Word, no time for prayer, and then complaining about how crazy busy they are? When you let the children run the family, you will be crazy busy.

He removed obstacles to His priorities – “He earnestly warned them.” vv. 11-12

Whenever the unclean spirits saw Him, they would fall down before Him and shout, “You are the Son of God!” And He earnestly warned them not to tell who He was.

Charles E. Hummel years ago wrote the little booklet, *Tyranny of the Urgent*. He quotes a cotton gin manager warning, “Your greatest danger is letting the urgent things crowd out the important.” This may be a stretch here, but Jesus wasn't going to allow demons to crowd out His work for Him. He rebuked them and, as we know, sent them hiking. Jesus knew what He was doing and how He was doing it, and these demons were getting in His way. He removed them. Their screaming out “You are the Son of God” was an effort to mess up Jesus mission and God's timing. It was a way of getting power over Jesus in the eyes of the multitudes, and Jesus would have none of it. He didn't need or want vile blabbermouth demons preaching for Him. They were obstacles to be silenced, which is what He did.

What are God's priorities for your life? And what obstacles in your life keep you so crazy busy you can't do the most important things? That's the question. God's will never contradicts itself. If God's will is for you to feed on His Word every day, you can't say you're too busy to do it. How often do we tell ourselves we are too busy to pray? What are you doing that is so important that you don't have time to spend with God? "We're too busy right now to read the Bible or a good Bible story book with our kids. As soon as we get more time, we'll do it." Don't be deceived into this kind of thinking. You'll hear people complaining about being crazy busy, but then see them blowing all kinds of time on silly, piddly activities. Choose the important things.

He chose and trained others to serve – "He appointed twelve." vv. 13-19

And He went up on the mountain and summoned those whom He Himself wanted, and they came to Him. And He appointed twelve, so that they would be with Him and that He could send them out to preach, and to have authority to cast out the demons. And He appointed the twelve: Simon (to whom He gave the name Peter), and James, the son of Zebedee, and John the brother of James (to them He gave the name Boanerges, which means, "Sons of Thunder"); and Andrew, and Philip, and Bartholomew, and Matthew, and Thomas, and James the son of Alphaeus, and Thaddaeus, and Simon the Zealot; and Judas Iscariot, who betrayed Him.

Now Jesus handles the crazy busyness by forming a corp of men to assist Him and eventually take the gospel to the ends of the earth. These are His unique apostles, His representatives for the first century to lay the foundation of the church. He goes up on a mountain and Luke says He prayed all night before selecting these men. He doesn't open this to volunteers. He summoned these men; He chose them. In John 15 He said flat out, "You haven't chosen Me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, to go and bear fruit."

That's the way God works, even in salvation. If you have come to Christ, you will sooner or later realize that you didn't first choose Christ; He chose you! Don't you love that? You aren't a Christian because God was so impressed with your credentials. He chose you before the foundation of the world and set His love on you – that's foreknowledge. He didn't just know ahead of time that you'd choose Christ, but God set His love on you way back in eternity past.

What qualified them for this calling? How many Ph.D.'s were in this group? None. They weren't the brightest and best that Israel could produce. If we were choosing men to represent us for the next 50 years, we'd be looking for highly skilled, brilliant, socially perceptive and rhetorically persuasive alpha males. But Jesus' choices were different. These guys would never have made the Jerusalem Times People of the Year. Christ called them, gave them new hearts, fired them up with zeal and passion and love for Him, poured His New Covenant truths into them, and sent them out. They weren't the smartest, but they loved Christ. They were unashamed of declaring His name to this world, and they were willing to lay down their lives for the gospel, which most of them did!

A. B. Bruce in *The Training of the Twelve* highlights the diversity of this group of men, "Little men are needed as well as great men, for human nature is one-sided, and little men have their peculiar virtues and gifts, and can do some things better than their more celebrated brethren." That, folks, is pure gold. Your human qualifications don't really matter. You may be pretty much a nothing, but you can love and follow Christ and be an effective disciple. You may be pretty dumb, but you can read your Bible, pray, encourage others in the body, and look for ways to share the gospel.

Don't think these guys had halos on their heads and their feet didn't touch the ground. Did these guys feel a cut above others when Jesus called them and appointed them? Sometimes. Remember how they argued amongst themselves as to who was the greatest, and who would get the top tier seating with Jesus on His throne. They were very human. But Christ used them! Praise God for that.

So what does Jesus call these guys to do and whom did He call? First, He called them to be with Him. That's the key to discipleship, life on life, hanging out together around the Word of God. He also called them to go preach. That's what the church does – we preach the Word. Anything less is not the church. And third, He gave them power. We aren't going around kicking out demons, but we do speak the Word of God with authority and it has the power to completely change people's lives, almost as if a demon had been booted out!

Finally, let's do a flyover of these twelve ordinary, unlikely representatives of the God-Man, who laid the foundation of the church and whose writings we still feed on today.

There's Peter, heading the list, the first to open his mouth, lots of bungling, opening mouth and inserting foot. "Never will they crucify you, Lord! Never will you wash my feet!" He whacks off the servant's ear. He denies Christ with cursing. But he's the first to go into the tomb. He's the first to jump out of the boat when he sees Christ on the shore. He loves Jesus! "You know that I love you, Lord!" And he's the one on Pentecost to stand up and preach a blistering sermon to the Jews, accusing them of murdering their Messiah, and 3000 got saved that first day!

James and John are brothers, cousins of Jesus since their mom was Mary's sister. Christ called them Sons of Thunder. They were ready to call fire down on that Samaritan village that rejected Christ.

Andrew and Philip were often together. Andrew brought Peter his brother to Jesus. Philip was the accountant who said, "It's not in the budget, Jesus," when Jesus told the disciples to go out and buy food for the multitudes.

Bartholomew is probably the same person as Nathaniel whom Jesus commended for his sincerity.

Matthew the tax collector was Levi, who threw the first Christian party in history.

Thomas was that dubious soul, tending to see the dark side of things. "Let's go and die with Jesus."

James the Less. Imagine having that name for the rest of your life? He may have been Matthew's brother.

Thaddeus means courageous. He asked Jesus why He wasn't manifesting Himself to the world as the Messiah.

Simon the Zealot came from an extremist nationalist group determined to free the Jews from Rome's rule. Some carried little daggers around and would assassinate Roman soldiers when it was convenient.

And finally, **Judas**, with the infamous title branded on his life, "who betrayed Him." Jesus knew he would, even from the beginning.

So what?

There they are, "the twelve." We'll hear more of them as we go along, but let's wrap it up with this. How should you handle crazy busy? What has Christ taught you here? He shows you the importance of having right priorities and keeping your schedule under God's control.

There are times when you need to withdraw like Christ did, catch your breath, refresh, and spend some time alone or as a couple away from the rush.

You need to plan for the unexpected to come into your life, have a margin of time. Stuff happens that interrupts your schedule. You need that boat ready.

You need to survey your life and get rid of stuff which keeps you from pursuing your God-given priorities.

You can't do it all by yourself. Jesus chose twelve men to be His assistants. Some take great pride in being crazy busy, when they simply need to delegate some responsibility to someone else.

Let Jesus be your teacher, example, and strength. Make the necessary changes to keep you from being crazy busy.