

I Timothy 6: “6 Now godliness with contentment is great gain. 7 For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. 8 And having food and clothing, with these we shall be content. 9 But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and harmful lusts which drown men in destruction and perdition. 10 For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, for which some have strayed from the faith in their greediness, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows. 11 But you, O man of God, flee these things and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, gentleness. 12 Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, to which you were also called and have confessed the good confession in the presence of many witnesses.

Being Ordinary Fathers

Well today I hope to provide an ordinary sermon in an ordinary way on an ordinary day.

I want to take this opportunity to explain and emphasize an important part of the church calendar that we are now entering called “ordinary time,” which is especially appropriate on this Father’s Day. Ordinary time in the Church calendar runs from the Sunday after Pentecost until the first Sunday of Advent and is intended to show the impact of Christ’s redeeming work in our everyday lives: Lives that can and should be seen as ordinary lives.

A work that can often be as subtle & quiet as the weekly reminders of ordinary time in the small print in the order of worship, which I hope more of you will notice this year!

The church calendar for much of the year focuses on the redemptive work of Jesus, beginning with Advent where we anticipate His comings, & then Christmas remembering how God became man to save His people from their sins and establish His Kingdom.

The time between Christmas & Easter has been used in various ways to focus on the earthly ministry of Christ:

For example we have used Herod’s slaughter of the innocents to draw attention to the Roe v. Wade decision.

- We then reflect on His passion and celebrate His victory during the Easter season.

Finally, we remember the establishment of His Church and the Great Commission with Ascension, Pentecost and Trinity Sundays which we have just celebrated.

- Then we begin the period of “ordinary time which is much more than just “filler” for the remaining months of the year!
- This is where we see a focus on application, on routine, on child-like faith doing ordinary things over and over again.
- And of course, the centrality of Christ’s work and the importance of routine are shown as we repeat this year after year!
- We see the importance of this routine in the covenants that God makes with Creation & mankind.
- We should REGULARLY thank God for how He enjoys routines, like having the sun come up each & every day!

But God also does extraordinary things which should not take our focus off of ordinary routines.

Even the Bible itself is an example of this balance: We have here the inspired Word of God, but God brought it to us over 1,500 years using over forty different human authors!

[to say nothing of translators & theologians]

God bringing forth His Creation in six days was pretty extraordinary! And yet He did not fill the entire earth with a Garden or populate it with millions or billions of people. He placed Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden and told them to be fruitful and to multiply and to fill the earth expanding that Garden to the ends of the earth [and that is just what we see with the Garden-City at the end of Revelation!]

Even after the fall we see both the extraordinary and ordinary acts of God with our redemption. Salvation is announced right there in the Garden with the promise of a Savior Who would crush Satan, but it would be worked out over many centuries using many people, again with some who are extraordinary and others who are rather ordinary...

- **Can anyone name some of the extraordinary characters in God's story?**

How about some of the ordinary players? How about Matthat?

- **He was the great grandfather of Jesus!**

Or how about the daughters of Shallum?

- **They made repairs to the walls of Jerusalem next to the valley gate after the exiles returned.**

There are hundreds of what we might call obscure or minor folks named in the Scriptures, & that does not begin to cover all of the many unnamed people who did ordinary things over many years.

- **My goal is to have this be an encouragement to our fathers & all of us – To see how God delights in our routines and vocations – the ordinary things we do in our ordinary lives!**

Our nation celebrates Mother's Day and Father's Day, but today sadly, they are just empty symbols instead of having real meaning? Today folks seem to struggle with the simple question: What is a woman?

- **A much better way to celebrate these days is to focus on the important & ordinary work that mother's and father's do throughout the year!**
- **And yes, that work is ordinary work, the ordinary work that our church calendar reminds us of week after week, each and every year.**

So, the importance of ordinary time is taught with a proper understanding and use of the Church calendar.

- **Our nation has turned to a strictly secular calendar and lost track of the church calendar, and sadly that contributes to the chaos we see in so many quarters today!**

Remembering the founding of our nation at the 4th of July or honoring those who gave their lives on Memorial Day are certainly not bad ideas, but our culture is now much more focused on "3-Day weekends", & special shopping days or seasons.

In the general culture, and sadly in much of the church, Halloween is now a major retail event and no one remembers or celebrates what happened on Reformation Day!

And the next step was to focus on some not so heroic 'heroes' and now we are a nation dedicating an entire month to a celebration of sexual perversions.

On the other hand, if the Church calendar is kept central in our lives, we have the major events of the ministry of Jesus celebrated each year and then an extended period to focus on our time of obedience.

When we think about it, our Covenant Renewal Worship each week should also impact our daily lives, and not just with remembering how good the sermon was or enjoying the fellowship of the Saints.

Coming into God presence as He calls us to worship should help us remember that we are in God's presence each and every day!

Our time of confession and absolution should encourage us to have daily confession, remembering that Jesus is faithful to forgive us of ALL our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

Our responsive readings and Pastor Liberati rightly dividing the Word in his sermons should remind us to be faithful in our daily devotions and to be ever learning more and more about Jesus!

Presenting gifts and prayers remind us that ALL of our money belongs to God and that we are to pray for our daily bread [*how often should we pray that kids?*]

Our Communion meal with the Savior should not only gives us comfort, but bring new richness to all of the meals we participate in throughout the week. And our commissioning and final blessing reminds us that God has sent us on a mission and that He is always with us!

Quite simply, what we learn in church on Sunday should impact how we live before the watching world AND they will notice, for good or for ill!

- This is a pattern that we see consistently in the New Testament as well: Almost all of the Epistles outline important doctrines and then follow with the applications for our lives.

We should think about this in the same way that I have described extraordinary and ordinary events: The Apostle lay out the important and extraordinary truths about our salvation and then speak to us about how to live ordinary lives. Sometimes our ordinary living will lead to some extraordinary things, but , we should never forget that God works more often through the ordinary [*remember those Biblical examples*]

Think about how God spreads the Word in the world today: Tens of thousands of faithful ministers are rightly dividing the Word to the Saints God has put under their care. Could one of them become the next Charles Spurgeon? Perhaps but if that is their goal they are likely not properly focused on the job at hand. We have men in our congregation who have or desire to have small businesses. Will any of them become the next computer company like Hewlett Packard which began with two men in a garage? Not likely, but we do our ordinary work and the results are in God's hands. AND we should remember that while those BIG companies get lots of attention the biggest portion of jobs in America are produced by small businesses.

- In both cases, and many others, it is the ordinary things that must not be overlooked.

When it comes to applications to consider during ordinary time,

I could literal have turned to any of the Epistles as our text.

For this morning's examples I choose some of the final challenges the Apostle Paul left Timothy with at the end of his first letter

6 "Now godliness with contentment is great gain. 7 For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out."

- We must remember that in life there is a place for striving and a place for contentment: A time for battle and a time for rest.

Constant striving will in the end produce stress & anxiety. At the same time, contentment alone with no striving or goals is what the Proverbs call sloth. And the Apostle puts it in very practical terms w/ a strong contrast about what to avoid...

8 “And having food and clothing, with these we shall be content.” 9 But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and harmful lusts which drown men in destruction & perdition.

Please note that the Apostle is not saying: Contentment good -- Rich bad!

He explains the wrong desire to be rich in verse 10: “For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, for which some have strayed from the faith in their greediness, & pierced themselves through with many sorrows.”

- That is certainly NOT a place that any of us should want to be, & the epidemic of pills & shrinks among the rich today confirm the wisdom of this warning.
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Then in verse 11 the Apostle gives us a great focus for ordinary time: “But you, O man of God, flee these things and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, gentleness.”

So where are we to pursue righteousness & godliness? In our everyday lives! How about faith, love patience & gentleness?

- Again in our routine & ordinary everyday lives!
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To quote an old line from my youth, practice makes perfect! Want to be patient and gentle? Then first you stop rushing about and being cruel to your fellow man. Take time to think before you speak and watch for ways to help other people.

Finally if we go just a bit further then our morning reading, Paul reminds Timothy that his prior warnings are against greed and selfishness and NOT prosperity...

- Which should be a comfort to those fathers struggling to prosper! – but for a purpose...

17 “Command those who are rich in this present age not to be haughty, nor to trust in uncertain riches but in the living God, who gives us richly all things to enjoy. 18 Let them do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to give, willing to share, 19 storing up for themselves a good foundation for the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life.”

I would encourage our fathers and young men to take the time to study and review the application portions of all those Epistles – Often!

In a few moments we will be singing a hymn that can help us ponder these comforting verses: BUT I hope you can see why we need to be reminded of the “ordinary time” year after year, after we have focused on what Jesus has done for us!

Now let us as mothers and fathers, as future mothers and fathers, as the covenant people of God prepare to heartily sing O Give Us Homes, paying special attention to the wonderful words of this hymn: Words that capture the true meaning & purpose of our living in and celebrating “ordinary time”

Communion Meditation: Psalm 128

“Blessed is every one who fears the Lord,

Who walks in His ways. 2 When you eat the labor of your hands, You shall be happy, and it shall be well with you. 3 Your wife shall be like a fruitful vine

In the very heart of your house, Your children like olive plants

All around your table. 4 Behold, thus shall the man be blessed Who fears the Lord.

5 The Lord bless you out of Zion, And may you see the good of Jerusalem All the days of your life.

6 Yes, may you see your children’s children. Peace be upon Israel!”