

FIVE FORKS BRETHREN IN CHRIST CHURCH

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SERMON: *The Speed of Life*

SERIES: *Hurry Up*

SCRIPTURES: *Matthew 16:24; 1 John 4:8; Matthew 22:35-40*

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**Credit to John Mark Comer (Ruthless Elimination of Hurry)*

Well good morning, it so great to worship with you. Want to say welcome to all of you in this room and to so many gathered on-line, at home, tuning to the live stream.

Do you ever feel like that's your life?

Sometimes people will ask me where my ideas for sermon series come from. And the truth is my series' simply happen to come from my own journey of faith. You get a window into what Shaun is experiencing and learning as I continue seeking to follow Jesus in my own life.

This series is the epitome of that and has been a few years in the making.

It all started when I was reading about a pastor of a large church. His name is John. He was overwhelmed by trying to balance the many aspects of life. Church responsibilities, difficult decisions and at the same time he was also a husband and father and wanting to take good care of his physical body ...and in the midst of all of that trying live like Jesus. Be a person of patience and gentleness and contentment.

So he went to seek counsel from his mentor...a brilliant gentleman by the name of Dallas Willard. You've probably heard his name before, because I've quoted from

many of his books. Dallas Willard is perhaps the greatest theological mind of our generation.

So John went to Dallas seeking advice in his chaotic life... “What do I need to do to become a better me? Better Pastor. Better Father. Better Husband. How can I maximize my abilities? My time? My life? What do I need to do to start living my life more like Jesus? Where can I find contentment? Fulfillment? Satisfaction in life?”

There was a long pause. And then quietly and slowly...Dallas replied with this profound phrase... **“You must ruthlessly eliminate hurry from your life.”**
(Ortberg 20)

John said, he hurried up and quickly started scribbling. Frantic writing. *“Okay. Got it. What else? What other brilliant spiritual nuggets do you have for me? I don’t have a lot of time and I want to get all the wisdom from you that I can.”*

Another long silence. You can almost picture John getting agitated with the slowness of the conversation. Dallas replied, **“There is nothing else. Hurry is the great enemy of spiritual life in our day. You must ruthlessly eliminate hurry from your life.”**

From the first time I read about that conversation, that phrase...“ruthlessly eliminate hurry”...became a transformational moment in my own life.

You may have thought that the greatest threat to Christianity and spiritual health and vitality was **secularism** or perhaps you thought that the greatest threat to truly following Jesus was some **temptation** or a specific **sin** you are having trouble overcoming. Maybe you thought it was **materialism**. Maybe you thought it was threats to your **religious freedoms**.

But, according to Dallas Willard, one of the greatest theological minds of our time...it turns out the greatest threat to following Jesus in our world today is hurry.

Better yet, one of my new favorite writers caught on to that same story and has written an entire book on this concept. So I just to encourage you to go and check out John Mark Comer's book "The Ruthless Elimination of Hurry." **(PIC OF BOOK COVER)** We'll be using his book as one of our sources as we make our way through this series.

So five weeks **(SERIES GRAPHIC)** on this...ruthless elimination of hurry.

This morning I want to set us up for the rest of the series and I want to talk a little bit about **the problem of hurry**, so that we understand the importance of this issue and the relevance in our own lives.

Next week, we're going to look closely at a passage in **Matthew 11** which is kind of a key teaching from Jesus related to hurry, and anxiety and busyness.

And then the final three weeks of the series we're gonna look at three practical Biblical disciplines **(Solitude, Sabbath, Simplicity)** that we'll need to put into practice in our own lives if we are going to eliminate hurry.

Alright this morning, want to look at three things related to the problem of hurry: How it shows up in our lives? How we got this way (a little bit about the historical factors)? And then finally, why hurry is such a major problem to following Jesus?

I. You have a hurry problem.

If you have a Bible turn with me to Matthew 16:24...we're going to come back to this in a moment.

Moving from one check-out line to another because it looks shorter/Faster

Counting the cars in front of you and either getting in the lane that has the least or is moving the fastest (on the highway or at a bank.)

Multi-tasking to the point of forgetting one of the tasks.

Back in the 1950's a cardiologist Meyer Friedmann coined the phrase "**hurry sickness**" after noticing that most of his at-risk cardiovascular patients displayed a harrying sense of **time urgency**.

A behavior pattern characterized by continual rushing and anxiousness....a state of excessive haste...A continuous struggle to accomplish or achieve more and more things or participate in more and more events in less and less time."

So, I began to think about my own life. Where does hurry show up?

I began to realize...it shows up everywhere, from the moment I get out of bed I have this sense that I need to be doing something. Hurry throughout my morning routine with my kids as we get ready for school and work. Hurry up Landon and finish in the shower. Hurry up Ady and get your lunch packed. Hurry up Keagan and finish your breakfast. Everyone hurry up and brush your teeth. Hurry to the car so we can hurry to school, get stuck behind slow drivers, speed to makeup that time. Hurry to the office. Hurry through breakfast. Hurry through lunch. Don't have time to eat. Gotta be more efficient more productive. Hurry to the meeting. Hurry to soccer practice. Hurry to Awana. Hurry through the grocery store. Hurry up and get my sermon written on how hurry ruins our souls and is incompatible with the life of Jesus.

I live my life in this constant state of excessive haste.

Hurry sickness.

And I have a sneaking suspicion it's not just me. I have this sense that it's the people around me, my community...the world I live in. Don't believe me. Comer talks about 8 symptoms of Hurry sickness and I've listed them for you in your bulletin. And so to begin our time, we're just gonna run through and I just every one of us to take personal inventory.

I think if we are actually going to be ruthless about eliminating hurry we have to recognize it's a problem. So here are 8 ways to know if you are suffering from hurry sickness.

1. Irritability - you get irritated, annoyed way too easily at simple every day things.

"Why can't my kids just put their dirty laundry in the hamper."

"Why are so many people at the gas station, the same time as me?"

"Can't people in the grocery store move just a little faster? And they stand right in the middle of the aisle. And can't they have their card out."

"I can't believe I have to park way out here. Why can't people park straight in their spot."

2. Workaholism

You just don't know how to stop. From the moment your alarm goes off, until you finish eating your late dinner at 8pm...you are on the job. Your drugs of choice are accomplishment and accumulation. Even though you may not explicitly say it out loud, deep down you believe that either you're working or being lazy...those are the only two options.

3. Emotional numbness

You've lost the capacity to feel other people's pain, maybe even your own pain. Part of the reason is, you don't have time to stop and process feelings. You're too busy.

Rather than being sensitive and trying to understand how another person is feeling and why they feel that way...you are right on to trying to fix them.

4. Out-of-order priorities

Your busier than ever but you don't have time for what really matters to you. Years go by and you never do the things you claimed were so important. You know you should ask your co-worker about their family struggles, but you just never find time during the day. Phone call to an estranged family member. You know you should spend time with your kids, fly kite, play legos, build a forte...but you never seem to have time.

5. Lack of care for your body

You don't have time for basic body management: 7-9 hours of sleep, daily exercise; eating healthy meals...you live off of caffeine, sugar, alcohol and processed carbs.

6. Escapist behaviors

When we're too tired to do what really matters we tend to escape into fantasy worlds of distraction: hours browsing social media, scrolling facebook, or the internet, watching television, binge watching Netflix, playing candy crush, overeating, ...did you know your phone tells you how much time you spend on it. Jenny my wife teaches in at the high school and one of the things she has her students do is check their phone usage time. It will probably blow your mind the amount of time you give to your phone.

7. Slippage of spiritual disciplines

Do you what you don't have time for? Bible reading, reading books on Spiritual formation, scripture memorization, prayer, worship on Sunday, joining a Sunday school class, having other families in the church over for a meal and getting to know them.

8. Isolation

Do you ever wonder why you feel disconnected from God and others in your life? You didn't put your time into them.

Ok...how are we doing on this hurry sickness self-reflection? Some of you were thinking there are 8 of these...he better hurry up and get through all those.

Anybody, feeling like maybe you're with me in this...you're looking around our world and thinking there are a lot of people suffering from hurry sickness? Looking at your own life...thinking maybe you're suffering from some hurry sickness?

You know what's scary...most us never stopped to think what all of this hurrying through life is doing to our souls? Is this what a life following Jesus looks like?

Look at Matthew 16 for just a moment. Jesus is explaining to his disciples about what it means to follow him.

24 Then Jesus said to his disciples, "Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. 25 For whoever wants to save their life^l will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me will find it. 26 What good will it be for someone to gain the whole world, yet forfeit their soul?"

What good is it...to hurry, hurry, hurry...filling our lives...if it's causing us to miss out on the life God has for us.

Psalm 127:2 -

We have hurry sickness. We are clamoring, scrambling, filling our schedules in an attempt to gain the whole world and in the process, we are losing our souls. We are irritable, hypersensitive, restless, work-a-holics...and we are missing out on the abundant life that Jesus wants us to have.

“Today a number of historical circumstances are blindly flowing together and accidentally conspiring to produce a climate within which it is difficult not just to think about God or to pray but simply to have an interior depth whatsoever...”

We, for every kind of reason, good and bad, are distracting ourselves into spiritual oblivion. It is not that we have anything against God, depth and spirit, we would like these, it is just that we are habitually too preoccupied to have any of these show up on our radar screens. We are more busy than bad, more distracted than nonspiritual, and more interested in the movie theater, the sports stadium, and the shopping mall and the fantasy life they produce in us than we are in church. Pathological busyness, distraction, and restlessness are major blocks today within our spiritual lives.”

(Ronald Rolheiser; Comer 25)

Second, how did we get this way? Have you ever thought about the speed of life and what that’s doing to the person you are becoming? We want to look at two historical factors that have impacted our speed of life.

II. The Speed of Life

In the 1960’s they used to predict that by now, we’d be working way less hours. One Senate subcommittee in **1967** was told that by 1985 the avg. American would work only 22 hours a week for 27 weeks a year.

Yet in spite of our smartphones and programmable coffee pots, dishwashers, laundry machines, irobot, grocery pick-up...we feel like we have less time today than in previous years.

Let me just give you a two examples of historical influences on our speed of life.

1370. Anybody know what happened in 1370? Many historians point to 1370 as a turning point in the Western world’s relationship to time. **Image of clock tower.**

In 1370 the first public clock tower was erected in Cologne, Germany. Now we, humans, can keep an eye on the clock. Don't waste time.

Before that, time was much more natural...rest when you're tired, work when you have energy, go to bed at dark, wake up at daylight. But with clocks so readily available, they began to dictate our use of time.

Since that time humanity has become progressively more dependent upon a time clock. 6am is wake-up. 7am breakfast. 8am – work. 12pm – lunch.

“When the sun set our rhythms of work and rest, it did so under the control of God; but the clock is under the control of the employer, a far more demanding master.” (Comer)

We started to value efficiency, productivity, capitalism. Don't get me wrong, I'm not saying time, efficiency, productivity, capitalism are evil. Or that clocks are evil. I'm just saying when they start to rule our lives, they can begin to take over...they drive our speed of life and that impacts who we become.

Are you familiar with the movie Castaway? Just a really great scene depicting the effect of clocks on the speed of life. Check this out...

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wpenuBnaVhs>

Did you ever stop think about how clocks have impacted our speed of life? What is good about it? But also, what is bad about it?

1879. Do you know what happened in 1879? **PIC OF EDISON'S LIGHT BULB.** That's right Thomas Edison is credited with the invention of the light bulb.

And light is great thing by the way. In fact it was God's idea before it was Edison's. remember Genesis 1...let there be light. But with the invention of the lightbulb, lack of daylight need not slow people down from activities and work and productivity.

Ready for this amazing stat...before Edison the average person slept about eleven hours a night. Now we're down to about 7 hours per night in North America. (Comer Pg 31). Any wonder we walk around exhausted, worn out, anxious, un-rested.

Speed/efficiency are ultimate assets in our culture. We have a lust for expediency. We used to walk. Now we have cars. We used to build a fire, now we turn up the thermostat. We used to make food, now we order take-out. Orders from Amazon come faster. Microchips in computers and phones get exponentially faster. We want to make money faster, retire faster, finish a degree faster, get projects done faster. Life is done in a rush.

And once again, I'm not saying any of these things is wrong or evil. When was the last time you thought about...what is all this busyness, and distraction, addiction, and pace of life is doing to our souls and the kinds of people we are becoming?

Perhaps this is why as Dallas Willard looked around at this world, he said the real threat to spirituality is not secularism or religious freedom..."hurry is the great enemy of spiritual lives today?"

Alright, hurry sickness all over our world. And so many things in our lives influencing us to continue this hurry addiction. Why should this matter to you? Why is hurry such a threat to following Jesus? Why are we taking the next 4 four weeks to talk about how we can ruthlessly eliminate it from our lives.

II. Why hurry is the "great enemy"?

First...you need to know this...hurry is

A. Satan's primary tactic.

Psychiatrist Carl Jung once remarked, **“Hurry is not of the Devil; it is the Devil.”**

Richard Foster writes **In contemporary society our Adversary majors in three things: noise, hurry, and crowds.**

Isn't that fascinating? None of those wrong, that's why they're so dangerous. It's easy to justify, ignore, overlook. It's just noise. But it's good noise. It's hurry, but all good and important things in my schedule. It's just people, wasn't I created for relationships. I need people.

Some of you are familiar with the name C.S. Lewis. Lewis wrote a fascinating book called “Screwtape Letters.” In the book, Lewis writes from the perspective of an experienced demon who is training other young demons in the art of “how tempt Christian and get them to turn away from their faith”...Listen to an excerpt from Lewis' book...

...You will find that anything or nothing is sufficient to attract his wandering attention. You no longer need a good book, which he really likes, to keep him from his prayers or his work or his sleep; a column of advertisements in yesterday's paper will do. ...You can make him do nothing at all for long periods...It does not matter how small the sins are provided that their cumulative effect is to edge the man away from the Light and out into the Nothing. Murder is no better than cards if cards can do the trick. (I'm just scrolling through Facebook. I'm just watching TV. I should put in another hour at work.)

“Today you're far more likely to run into the enemy in the form of an alert on your phone while reading your Bible or a multiday Netflix binge or a full-on dopamine addiction to Instagram or a Saturday morning at the office or another

soccer game on a Sunday or commitment after commitment after commitment in a life of speed.” (Comer)

Satan’s goal isn’t necessarily to get you to commit one of the BIG sins. It’s to simply go through life avoiding, unaware of the constant Presence of God. Hurry takes our attention, distracts us. When our attention is elsewhere, we are no longer “present” with God. We lose our awareness. Hurry will leave your scheduled filled, from one moment to the next only to wake up one day and wonder where God is.

We don’t follow Jesus, we don’t take on the character of Jesus, not because it’s not possible, but because our lives are too hurried to have time for stuff like that.

You should know...your (busy) schedule is the enemy’s #1 priority.

Second reason...hurry is the great enemy is because...

B. Hurry and Love are incompatible

Think about it...what is the highest value in Jesus kingdom? Love.

1 John 4:8 - ⁸ Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love.

Matthew 22:35-40 - ³⁵ One of them, an expert in the law, tested him with this question: ³⁶ “Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?”

³⁷ Jesus replied: “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.”^[c] ³⁸ This is the first and greatest commandment.

³⁹ And the second is like it: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’^[d]

Love God and Love others.

John 13 Jesus said... **³⁵ By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.”**

Love is the outstanding marker of followers of Jesus...the highest value in His kingdom.

Now are you ready for this, in its essence, love is incredibly time consuming. Just ask any parent or long-term friends or romantic lovers...what is it at the heart of that relationship...TIME!

Suppose you went on a date and when you arrived to pick up your girl, you said "hurry up we don't want to be late for dinner." Rushed her to the car and then during dinner you said, "we should hurry up and eat so we can get to the movie on time." You rushed her out of dinner to a movie.

Do you think you're ever getting a second date? No, because the truth is love is not about getting to dinner and getting to movies...it's the time spent together and you can't speed it up or slow it down.

In fact the Apostle Paul wrote an entire chapter in one of his letters, just on the topic of love. Are you familiar with this? The Love Chapter in your Bible. 1 Corinthians 13, Paul uses a whole host of words to describe love. He says love does not envy or boast, it is not proud, or self-seeking...gets quoted at a lot of weddings.

Do you know what the first word is that Paul uses to describe love? Love is...**patient**. Love takes it's time. Love and hurry are not compatible.

What speed do you like to move? You hit a speed limit 25, it seems slow, 45 you feel good. Then you hit the highway and it's like 65 or 70 and now you can just really move. Any idea how fast the average person walks? **3 miles an hour** is about the average pace of human beings walking.

There's a book written by a Japanese Theologian Kosuke Koyama called the **“Three Mile an Hour God.”**

His basic premise is that God walks through life, slowly because God is LOVE.
(Comer 21)

It's fascinating all throughout the Gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke & John)...this phrase show up to describe Jesus movements...

John 9:1 – “As he passed by he saw...”

“he noticed”... There are lots of these little phrases filling the pages of the Gospels about the life of Jesus. It gives the sense that Jesus went walking through life at 3 mph. He had time to notice people. We use the phrase in our world “stop and smell the roses”. Take your time to notice, and to pay attention. When you're in a hurry you don't.

Creation, took time... God did not make it all happen in 20 minutes. The OT tells the story of a people (Israel) coming to know their God. It was a long, unhurried journey and God was ok with the pace at which they learned, made mistakes and finally repented. Jesus becoming human was unhurried. He came when the time was right, grew in utero 9 months instead of just appearing. He learned like any human would; to eat with utensils, potty train, read, share, do chores, relate to others; the unhurried way we all do. As an adult, his conversations, meals, miracles, teachings, were all unhurried. He even sent his disciples on ahead several times so His time with His Father would be unhurried and uninterrupted. He is unhurried in having us 'get it' and 'get it right' immediately. He took the time to make mud for a blind man's eyes. He took the time to have conversations with the woman at the well, Nicodemus, and obviously his disciples. He rested and withdrew, instead of constantly moving from one place to the next because time was running out. (Rochelle Nolt)

John 8 – woman thrown before Jesus. He sits in the dirt.

Love is patient.

Are you beginning to understand? If you want to know who God is. If want to walk through life with Jesus by your side. If you want to love God and neighbor. If you want life in the Kingdom. You will have to slow down...Or as Dallas Willard says,

“There is nothing else. Hurry is the great enemy of spiritual life in our day. You must ruthlessly eliminate hurry from your life.”

How do you find the time to slow down? How do you make time to sit at the feet of Jesus and learn from him about life?

Well, that’s what the next four weeks are all about.