

A Day in the Life of Jesus

A sermon preached by Ted Atkinson, Minister, Oxford Presbyterian Church, Oxford, PA on February 6, 1994.
Scripture Lessons: Isaiah 40:21-31; Psalm 147:1-11, 20c; 1 Corinthians 9:16-23; Mark 1:29-39.

IN THE NAME OF THE FATHER AND OF THE SON AND OF THE HOLY SPIRIT. AMEN.

Sally Krieger left her home on Sunday morning with her 16 year old Son, Bill, for Sunday School and church. Sally's husband volunteered to stay home with their twelve year old daughter, Becky, who had a slight fever. After church Sally returned home and checked on Becky while her husband prepared soup for lunch. Becky felt well enough to join them. After eating the soup, in fact, she felt good enough to clear the kitchen table. The whole family relaxed that afternoon. At dinner time Sally and her husband talked with their son about how to handle a disagreement with a school friend. Billy remembered the discussion from his Sunday School class about how Christians should seek to forgive and be reconciled. "I don't want to forgive, I want to get him back," Bill said. His mom and dad shared how they dealt with similar circumstances as teenagers and encouraged him to do the right thing.

Later Sally received a phone call that an elderly man her family had adopted was taken to the hospital. She and her husband left immediately for the emergency room. On the way there, they spotted a stranded motorist who had run out of gas. They drove to the nearest gas station and carried back a five gallon can of gas and waited to see if the car would start. No sooner had they gotten home from the hospital, the phone rang again. A distraught friend wanted to talk about the divorce she was going through. Sally listened for a half hour and ended by inviting her for dinner Monday evening. After a busy day the Krieger family retired

to bed.

Early Monday morning Sally was up before anyone else. It was still dark outside. She enjoyed this time in the morning, alone and quiet with the sound of the coffee percolating and its aroma filling the kitchen. She sat at the kitchen table with her Bible and a copy of The Upper Room devotional. After reading a portion of scripture and accompanying devotional, she took a few moments to sit quietly in God's gracious presence. She prayed for her hospitalized friend, for her neighbor going through a messy divorce and for her son's reconciliation with his school friend. While she was praying, Bill came downstairs asking where his favorite tea-shirt was he wanted to wear to school. Soon after Becky came downstairs well enough to go to school. A day in the life of Sally Krieger. A day, perhaps, not too different from our own.

~~Final in ~~the~~~~
Mark tells us of a day in the life of Jesus. In some ways it was quite ordinary. ^{like Sally Krieger's busy day} Yes, he did some things we're not likely to do - like miraculously healing and casting out demons - but in one way it was much like the busy days we Americans live, crammed filled with activities and hurting people with whom to deal. What strikes me about the description of this day in the life of Jesus is that almost ^{& that of Sally Krieger} everything ~~Jesus~~ did took place outside the worship service. The Gospels tell us that it was the custom of Jesus to go to the Synagogue on the Sabbath. Corporate worship was indispensable for Jesus. But worship led Jesus to do practical things outside the church building - healing, teaching, praying, ~~casting out demons~~. ^{They, not Sally & her family did as ~~was~~ a working out of what happened in church.}

When I worshiped two Sundays ago in St. George's Cathedral in East Jerusalem I found on the pew a bulletin made of heavy weight paper. it contained the order of

the worship service. After the service I was going to take a copy with me as a souvenir. But I noticed these words stamped on the cover, "Please do not remove from the sanctuary." It was a way for the church to save paper and money. They use the same bulletins week after week and simply announce the hymns and Scripture lessons. I think it's a good idea.

All too often, however, we go out from the worship service, leaving behind, not the bulletins, but the truth proclaimed in the sanctuary. ~~Americans have a tendency to divide life into two spheres: The religious sphere and the secular sphere. We listen to sermons, pray, and sing hymns in the religious sphere. We talk about politics, money, and rock music in the secular sphere. The religious sphere is sometimes hermetically sealed off from the secular sphere. The teaching and example of Jesus is too often left behind in the sanctuary, like those bulletins in St. George's Cathedral which are stamped "Not to be taken from the church".~~

But Jesus carried the truth he preached in the synagogue into the home. That evening in that home they brought to him all who were sick or possessed with demons. And the whole city was gathered around the door. And he cured many who were sick with various diseases, and cast out many demons. Jesus didn't separate what happened in the sanctuary from what happened in the home or in the city streets. *In his everyday life worked out the implications of the word of God proclaimed in the worship service*
~~The ministry of Jesus was empowered by God through worship and prayer and embraced not just the religious, but the secular world. The very shape of the cross teaches us this. Look at the cross on the communion table! The shape of the~~

~~cross shows us the various elements that were in a typical day in the life of Jesus. The shape of the cross shows us of several indispensable elements of the Christian life. The shape of the cross reminds us of how Christ unites the secular and the religious.~~

The cross of Christ reminds me that Jesus was rooted in this world but drew strength from God.

Look at the cross: The vertical bar of the cross is planted in the earth. The ministry of Christ and his followers is down to earth, rooted in the soil of our sinful and suffering world. God has come down from heaven to earth in Jesus Christ to heal the broken hearted, and bind up their wounds. He lifts up the downtrodden as he lifted up Peter's mother in law (Psalm 147) and enables them to serve him. Each one of us can bring something of the healing power of Jesus to our sick and feverish world *as Sally Kueper did, adopting a shut-in, listening to a grieving friend, teaching out of her life experience how to forgive & contributions to the Neighborhood Services Center or to the prison ministry or to seek reconciliation* ~~through our volunteer activities and through our contributions to the Neighborhood Services Center or to the prison ministry or to the Alcohol Recovery program or to the Lighthouse Ministry to street kids or the Young Life ministry.~~ These aren't dispensable extras for the followers of Christ. ~~These ministries outside the church grow out of our worship here in this sanctuary.~~

Look at the cross again! One end of the vertical bar is rooted in the earth but the other end, like the steeple on our church, points up to heaven. It reminds us of how Jesus took time out from his busy schedule to pray. The followers of Jesus *like Sally Kueper* also take time out of our busy lives to look to God in prayer. In prayer we bring the hurts and suffering of *our busy* the world into God's presence. Prayer is an indispensable part of our Christian life. ~~I invite all of you to join with us on Wednesday morning when we gather before sunrise to pray to the Lord. I invite~~

~~you, during Lent, to join us hear from a half hour of prayer at 12 noon. In prayer we bring the hurts of the world before God in prayer. In prayer we remember missing people, hurting people, isolated people. In prayer we confess our failures to follow Christ into the world and seek the power of God's Spirit to enable us to be faithful Christians.~~

The horizontal bar on the cross reminds us that the arms of Jesus were stretched out on the cross to embrace the whole world, for God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son that whosoever believes in him should not perish but have everlasting life. The horizontal bar reminds us that Jesus has a love that goes beyond ourselves and our own town of Oxford.

Just as Sally Kruger
the faith led her to stretch her arms out to a hospitalized shut-in and a friend going
through a divorce
~~Simon and his companions hunted for Jesus. When they found him, they said to him, "Everyone is searching for you." But Jesus answered, "Let us go on to the neighboring towns, so that I may proclaim the message there also; for that is what I came out to do." And he went throughout Galilee. Jesus saw his mission as an inclusive mission that went beyond his own town. The horizontal bar of the cross reminds us that the arms of Jesus were stretched out on the cross to embrace the whole world and not just the ancient town of Capernaum or our little town of Oxford.~~

Too often Christians feel that mission giving outside the local church and beyond the community is expendable. I believe that nothing can revitalize a local church so much as a vision of the mission of risen Christ around the world. I would suggest budgeting money to send two people every year to spend two weeks visiting one of the ministries of our church around the world. Ever since my trip

to Guatemala ten years ago I've become more aware of God's work in Central America and want to support that mission with my money and prayers. And now that I've been to the Middle East and have seen God at work at the Ahli Arab hospital and at Father Chacour's school for Palestinians in Ibellin I want to support the mission of our church in the Middle East. It has been my experience that mission giving doesn't undermine local ministry. Rather it revitalizes local ministry.

William Willimon, the chaplain at Duke University, once received a telephone call on a Sunday evening from a member of his church. He said that his daughter Anne had just decided to drop out of pharmacy school. Anne had been home for the weekend. In fact she had worshiped with her mother and father that morning, and the news of her leaving school had caught them totally by surprise. Willimon asked why Anne was doing such a thing, but the father was uncertain. What he mainly wanted was for Willimon to call his daughter and "talk some sense into her."

Willimon called Anne on Monday evening and reminded her of the many hours she had already put into pharmaceutical training and of her many academic achievements, all of which she now seemed to be willing to throw away. "How in the world did you come to this decision?" Willimon asked.

"Well," she said, "it was your sermon yesterday morning that started me thinking." She admitted that she was in pharmacy school to earn a good living and to meet her own self-defined needs. Willimon's sermon had emphasized the call of God which comes to all of us, that God has something important for all of us to do.

The sermon had caused Anne to remember the satisfying summer she had spent teaching in the church literacy program among migrant workers, a time when she genuinely felt as though she was serving God. She told Willimon that, after his sermon, she had decided to leave school and to give her life to helping those people. "There was a long silence on my end of the telephone," wrote Willimon. "'Now look Anne,' I said at last, 'I was just preaching.'"

For Anne, however, it wasn't just preaching. Like Jesus, she left the sanctuary, but took the truth proclaimed there ~~into her heart and out~~ into her home and then into the world. When we take what we've heard and experienced in this building outside the sanctuary... ~~when we look up to God in prayer...~~ then God broadens our horizons... and enables us to see how wide God's mercy is... and how we, as followers of Jesus, must look beyond our sanctuary and our building and our town to see the whole world for which Christ died as our field of ministry.

Let us pray: Most holy God, the earth is filled with your glory, and in your presence angels stand in awe. Enlarge our vision, that we may recognize your power at work in your Son and join the apostles and prophets as heralds of your saving word. We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God forever and ever. Amen.

The Willimon story is retold by Tom Long in *Shepherds and Bathrobes*.