

**PAY ATTENTION!**  
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On the evening of April 14 1912 radio operators of the RMS Titanic received a message that the ship was heading toward a dangerous ice field. (IMAGE OF TITANIC, ICEBERG OR SOMETHING)

Later, a nearby ship also sent a message via Morse Code that they were approaching an ice field.

However the radio operators were preoccupied.

In a day when there were no cell phones, the radio operators were busy sending messages from the ship's passengers to loved ones back home - they were having a wonderful time aboard the world's most luxurious ship ever.

The operators had such a long list of messages that when the nearby ship sent the warning message that there were ice bergs up ahead, the radio operator responded in Morse Code. **"Shut up! Shut up! I am busy."**  
You know the rest of the story.

If only someone had gotten up, waved their hands in the air and cried out...

"Pay attention! Your life is on the line! You are too preoccupied with stuff that doesn't matter. Heed the warning!"

We have been talking a lot about God's warnings to the people of Israel. You heard briefly from the Curry's last week about Good King Hezekiah who returned the people to the Lord.

Thank goodness someone was good, right?

This week we learn that Hezekiah's son, Manasseh undid it all. He was yet another king who..."(Manasseh) **Did evil in the eyes of the Lord, following the detestable practices of the nations the Lord had driven out before the Israelites.**" **2 Kings 21:2**

Mannaseh rebuilt the pagan altars his dad had removed; he bowed down to the starry hosts and he made an Asheran Pole. (IMAGE)

This pole is mentioned 30 times in the Hebrew Bible – it was an abomination to the Lord - and it was made of wood and it was made so that people could worship the fertility goddess Ashera...who was a part of the whole cult of Baal worship.

Chronicles 33:10 **"The Lord spoke to Manasseh and his people, (that they were doing wrong things) but they paid no attention."** **2 Chronicles 33:10**

Sort of reminiscent of the Titanic.

Too busy to heed the warning. Too preoccupied

When our kids were young and they were doing something wrong we would warn them by counting...one...two...three.

Sometimes they'd listen, sometimes they wouldn't, but they knew that if we got to three and they didn't pay attention there would be negative consequences.

I didn't want to be mean...so I extended the counting as long as possible. Let's say one of them was putting rocks in his or her mouth and I wanted him/her to spit them out. This actually happened. One of them especially loved to eat rocks the size of golf balls.

So I would count...one.....two.....two and a half.....two and  $\frac{3}{4}$ .....who wants to get to three and lower the boom.... I kept hoping they would listen and do what I was asking them to do. Thank goodness the one that liked rocks didn't choke on them while I was doing the slow count...waiting for them to respond...right?

We keep reading about these warnings, and misbehavior, and idols – putting other gods before Yahweh. It just seems to go on and on...and God is counting....slowly....taking forever....waiting for his people to respond. Scripture tells us that “It is not his will that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.”

Lets read that first scripture together again.

**“The Lord spoke to Manasseh and his people, but they paid no attention.” 2 Chronicles 33:10**

*The icebergs are coming! God is saying...please listen to me!*

Warnings saved my kids' life time and again. That's why children have parents. My child did not choke on the rocks because I was watching ...I went over to him...and when he didn't listen I forcibly took the rocks out of his mouth – he was screaming about it – but I wanted him to live and not die.

What warnings might there be for us today?

Here are some traffic warning signs we see all the time...(IMAGES OF EACH OF THESE SIGNS) Maybe God is giving you a yield warning today...

**YEILD:** Maybe its time to surrender something you've been holding on for too long. Maybe God is saying to you today “let go of trying to control this situation before it eats you alive”....

**STOP:** Maybe you've been tempted to do something you know is wrong or you've already done it – and its time to just stop. Put the brakes on. Think about what you are doing and if the Holy Spirit is telling you it is wrong...don't continue...STOP. Ask people to support you in prayer, ask the Holy Spirit to help you, and quit the destructive behavior. Jesus was big on setting people free, but was also big on saying – Go and sin no more. STOP!

**GREEN LIGHT:** GO! Maybe you have felt the nudgings of the Holy Spirit for you to do something – not come up with excuses about why you can't – but move forward in a new direction, or engage in something that you haven't done before...take a little risk, step out, follow the leading of the Lord that is prompting you to GO and do ministry...

**SPEED LIMIT:** Maybe you need to slow down and pay attention to God's still small voice.

because I think it's harder than ever to hear God's voice in our current culture. We are more preoccupied than ever we have been in the history of the world.

And in all of the rushing around, a study recently showed that despite our time saving devices, and our hand held computers and and fast ways of communicating in a digital age our productivity as a nation is at the same level as it was in the 70's. Why? The study interpreted these findings by saying that we are doing way too much, way too fast without doing one or two things carefully and well.

We had a great Celebration of Discipline Class this past Tuesday. The room was full of all of you – almost 30! Wow. If some of you still want to join us, you can if you come a week from this Tuesday. After that it is going to be a little harder to catch up.

We are using the book **Celebration of Discipline** written by Richard Foster (learning to receive from God...not just give until we're spent) and Foster writes...**"OUR enemy majors in three things: WHAT DO YOU THINK THESE THREE THINGS ARE? Its not things we often think of as "sins"....but he majors in...noise, crowds, and hurry."** (Jesus was a one to one guy)

How can I pay attention to God in an age dominated by these three things? Its really hard.

If God tried to get through to me, I might well say just what was said by the radio operators on the Titanic *"Shut up! Shut up! I am busy...or in a hurry...or absorbed in the crowd of multiple voices and agendas...and you know what God...I just can't hear you, and I don't want to take the time to try. Too much going on right now."*

The Israelites were running after pagan Gods...when God spoke they didn't pay attention – they were preoccupied

We are running after other more contemporary gods (you can name them materialism, success (not significance – very different), huma relationships of all kinds...and hurry itself has become a disease in our culture...*doing instead of being...*

And for some of us its scary to slow down. We aren't sure what we will find when we stop. Will there be anything there that tells me I have meaning. Will I even know myself if I slow down.

Stephanie Brown, world renowned clinical psychologist and author declares that speed and rushing about has become an addiction in our culture to avoid the emptiness that we might find is close at hand if we had the courage to stop.

But if we did stop, and had the courage to face the emptiness, we would find that God the one who fills our emptiness with himself is also very close at hand when we choose to pay attention. (Or as the violinist played...when we choose to turn our eyes upon Jesus)

Wonderful things happen when we pay attention to God's voice, and his presence, and follow the promptings of the Holy Spirit.

When we aren't too busy, or hurried or frantic or preoccupied to grow calm and open our ears to God who is constantly trying to communicate with us.

God is a communicator, and is always trying to get our attention. He even calls himself THE WORD...right? God is a great communicator, and will communicate with us in ways that change our lives and the lives of the people we come in contact with

Zee DeFugo and I had coffee on Wednesday and she told me that she and John had been taking a walk around the block this past week when a very nice man came up to them.

It was the middle of the afternoon, and she had never seen this man before. But very kindly he went up to them, introduced himself and then

He said, "You know I saw you walking here, and the Lord told me to come and pray for you. And I know that when the Lord tells me to do something, I have to follow through."

And Zee and John said sure, go ahead and pray for us, and the man prayed for them right there on the sidewalk.

And then he had to go to work and he jumped into his car and went off.

Zee told me what a blessing it was that he did this. What an encouragement – she said he was like an angel to them. And when she told all their children they were so moved by what this man did as well.

This guy was tuned in.

He was listening to God, and not only that! He followed through. He wasn't too busy... he was willing to be interrupted...he honored God enough to take the time to STOP and pray.

How many people would we bless if we just slowed down a bit, great quiet within, and listened to God a little more, and actually followed through on his agenda, not our own.

I remember being so stressed out after college – I had been struggling to figure out what I was supposed to do...I was working full time... I was busy... busy, preoccupied with a lot of things in my life way back then - that I don't have a clue about now...most things I don't remember.

What I do remember, I must have been about 22, was God's word to me when I finally had a moment to listen...a moment to focus on him....a moment of calm where I could tune in... It happened in a church sanctuary at a friends ordination that I finally heard the voice of God.

God spoke 9 words to me that my life since then has been all about. The words were these...(again at a friends ordination to the ministry) "As you have seen, so be it unto you." I'll never forget it.

As I look back, I think God had been trying to get my attention for a long time before that. I just was too busy to listen and

I was dead set against the ministry because we had too many in our family.

I didn't want to be dubbed as "one of those". I didn't want people patting me on the head and saying, "Oh how nice...you are following in your father's and grandfathers and uncles and great uncles footsteps." No!

I am a reluctant pastor. A reluctant follower of Jesus. A reluctant “get up in front of people and talk every Sunday about God” person. I went to seminary kicking and screaming.

Let me tell you something.

When you decide to pay attention to the One who gave you life to begin with, *the one to whom you owe everything*....when you say to that One “I love you and my life is yours” be ready...be ready to be asked to do something that maybe you don’t want to do.

**Be ready to be stretched.**

**Be ready to be interrupted and inconvenienced.**

**Be ready to be asked to take a risk**

**Be ready for a change that maybe you don’t want**

But also **Be ready to have your life saved...saved from the gray dull halls of mediocrity, to the wide open places of a life of trust and radical faith**

I read a great definition of Grace recently from Craig Barnes who is a theologian. He said grace is not a concession. Its not God saying to us, “Well, that’s alright sweetheart; please try not to do that again, okay?” That’s not grace.

**Grace is whatever it takes for God to come and get us. It can be confrontational, frightening, disruptive and demanding, (we’ve seen that in the Old Testament) but in the end it saves our life.**

This table before us saves our lives.

Jesus giving his life for us is God’s ultimate effort to come and get us, in the frenzy of our lives, in the hurry, and busy and worry;  
in the frantic pace of life in Silicon Valley Jesus comes and gives his life to get our attention.

Does he have your attention today?

This table stands here, as a visible manifestation of Gods holy eternal and unchanging desire for us. PAY ATTENTION...to the this table as it speaks to you today...listen

This table says...I love you this much...enough to give my life to save yours...enough to wait for your response...enough to give everything I am to come and get you right where you are.

This table is the voice and presence of God for you today...grow quiet, take this message in, and pay attention to the God who is here...

Before we partake of the elements I’d like to ask VP to come up and share her story about what happened to her when she decided to finally pay attention to the God who had been speaking to her for a long, long time....