

THE BIG IDEA: Weeding out allows God to step in.The Take-Off

Welcome to our July series, and it's one that ALL OF US can relate to, because ALL OF US feel like we're running out of time, out of money, out of energy, out of breath from time to time.

It shouldn't take much to convince any of you that our lives are crammed to the max, but if you needed some proof, look no further than the extent that many go to in order to save time during a day:

- shortened texts
- an overworked mother of three who "organized her time so ruthlessly that she always keyed in 1:11 or 2:22 or 3:33 on the microwave rather than 1:00, 2:00, or 3:00, because hitting the same number three times took less time."
- That sounds crazy, but we're just getting started
- Barby from Phoenix does dishes in the shower, and only wears flip flops because not trying shoes saves her 1 minute a day
- Robert, a teacher in Philly, estimates that he saves 67 minutes a day by not chewing his food; everything is put in a blender so he can drink it, even in restaurants (where he only gives dinner companions 2 minutes to choose their course)
- He even bought hundreds of identical socks so that he doesn't waste time trying to find matches
- But none of them compare to Manuel, who uses his coffee pot as an iron and drinks his cereal out of a mug because he thinks it may save him 100 days over his lifetime.
- Manuel even takes laxatives so that he can use the bathroom faster

What's funny is that some of you are thinking that some of those might not be bad ideas!

A few weeks ago, during our ongoing journey through the gospel of Luke, we looked at the Parable of the Sower.

If you were with us, you may remember the 4 types of soil: hard, rocky, thorny and good.

The type of soil that is especially important to us in this series is the thorny soil, because in it Jesus reveals why so many of us feel like we can't catch our breath and, well, breathe.

Look at Luke 8:14 with me: "The seed that fell among thorns stands for those who hear, but as they go on their way they are choked by life's worries, riches and pleasures, and they do not mature."

I need you to notice a few things before we go any further:

1. The seed didn't die (I always thought it did, but it grew some and then got stuck and didn't mature)
2. It didn't mature because it couldn't breathe
3. It couldn't breathe because it was being choked

What did Jesus say was choking the growth? Worries, riches and pleasures. All good things, or related to good things, but all doing a very bad thing: choking the life right out of us.

Weeds choked the seed, and so that means we've got to do some weeding, and here's why: we can't breathe if we don't have breath, and if weeds are choking us, the first step is to pull them, because when you're choking, the only thing that matters is getting that next breath.

This series is going to help us recognize three of the most common areas where we tend to get choked: our calendars, our cash, and our connections.

These weeds are so big that they'll each get their own week, so for today, I simply want to show you why it's so critical that you and I weed, and at the end of the day, I hope you walk out of here committed to weeding, because what we're going to find is that weeding out allows God to step in.

1. Be vigilant to see the weeds

- a. I'm sure we could name a lot of wars, right? The Revolutionary War comes to mind this time of year!
- b. What about the War of 1812, the War of the Roses, the War of the Worlds.
- c. I believe we're in another war, and we can call it the War of the Weeds.
- d. [VIDEO - Roundup commercial]
- e. Galatians 5:1 is clear that we've been set free in order TO STAY FREE!
- f. The war we wage now is a war to live free - Paul said to stand firm and not go back to slavery
- g. If Satan can't kill our souls, then you better believe he'll do all he can to fill them with stuff
- h. The Bible is full of commands to be vigilant

- 1 Peter 5:8 // Be alert
 - 1 Corinthians 16:13 // Be on guard
 - Luke 21:34-36 // Be careful and always on the watch
- i. Over the next month, I'm asking you to get vigilant with your calendar, your cash and your connections
 - j. There will be weeds there, planted by our enemy, and we must see them before we can do anything

2. Be diligent to pull the weeds

- a. I can't tell you how often I see weeds but don't take the time to pull them
- b. With that approach, it won't take long to be overrun with weeds
- c. Once we see them - and that's a great first step (a lot better than not seeing them) - we've got to be diligent to pull them, and here's how we do that
 - We learn to say no to some things (Proverbs 4:20-27)
 - We learn to let go of other things (Hebrews 12:1)
- d. As you pay attention to your calendar, your cash and your connections this month, you're going to feel some tension over changes that you may need to make
- e. Pay attention to the tension, and be diligent to make the changes

3. Be content to not replace the weeds

- a. Finally, let's talk about what happens when we see the weeds and pull them
- b. We'll find that we've created space in our calendars, our cash and our connections, and the temptation will be to fill that newly created space with more stuff
- c. Don't. Resist that urge, and be content to not replace the weeds.
- d. Remember the Big idea: weeding out allows God to step in, and he will, because God moves in the margins.
- e. Let me share one more passage of scripture to show you what God does when we give him margin to move
- f. Leviticus 19:9-10
- g. Increased margin leads to
 - Increased FAITH // The promise is based in "I am the Lord your God"
 - Increased GENEROSITY // Generosity happens in the margins
 - Increased PEACE // No stressing over "what we might be missing"
- h. Throughout the series, we'll see how these three benefits show up in our lives when we are content to live with margin in our calendars, cash and connections.

The Landing

Some of you may know that organize farming requires a buffer zone of somewhere around 50 feet That means that there is an area 50 feet wide that goes around the entire farm where nothing is allowed to grow, and the reason is so that the contaminants in the soil on the outside can't affect the soil on the inside.

That's what margin does for us.

Weeding out allows God to step in, and suddenly we can breathe again.

Let's pray.