

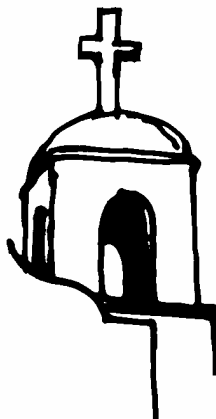
Cross Roads, Part 2: *A New Adventure*

Sermon by

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First United Methodist Church of Winter Park

On the move to make a difference through Jesus Christ.

Cross Roads, Part 2: A New Adventure
Matthew 7:21-29

We have become a culture committed to multi-tasking, haven't we? Many aspects of life are being shaped in ways that enable them to be performed with just one hand. Most of our vehicles have automatic transmission, and it's not at all uncommon for folks to talk on a cell phone, or eat a meal, or check a GPS, or comb hair, or put on makeup with one hand while they drive with the other hand. Recently I saw a guy driving on Aloma Avenue with the steering wheel of his car in one hand while his other hand held a cordless razor with which he was shaving his face.

At work we might be checking email or surfing the web while we are on the telephone. At home we might be looking at the newspaper or reading an article on the web and watching the television, all at the same time. In many circles this multi-tasking is expected and increasingly accepted. It's not unusual at all to be in face-to-face conversation with someone, for that person's cell phone to ring, and for that person to say, "Hey, I'm going to get this, OK – I'll just be a second." In fact, it's downright unusual for the person whose cell phone rings to be so absorbed in the face-to-face conversation that's going on that they don't at least glance at the screen on their phone to see who it is.

How in the world did we function when we didn't have a cell phone at our disposal and we wouldn't even know that someone tried to call us until we got back to our office or to our home and checked voicemail, or before voicemail, when we picked up a message slip in our office mailbox or heard from a family member that someone had called us at home? Whew – those were tough days, weren't they?

I'm not sure whether or not our high school graduates even remember those days. Do you?

For the past three years I've taught a class one morning a week once a year as an adjunct faculty member at Asbury Theological Seminary's Orlando campus. I feel some responsibility for being engaged in training and mentoring folks who are studying for the ministry. Teaching this class at Asbury is a good way to do those things; it's also a good way for me to take my ministry outside these walls and into the community as an extension of my ministry here.

The first year I taught the class I naively thought that the several students who had laptop computers with them in class were judiciously taking notes while I spoke or while we engaged in class discussion. Somewhere along the line I wised up and realized that what they really were doing was checking email, surfing the Internet, and instant messaging their friends. Needless to say, there's now a rule in my class that laptop computers are to be used only for the purpose of taking notes, and nothing else.

I found that even graduate students in a required class multi-task during class.

Dr. Sam Wells, Dean of the Chapel at Duke University, talks about the fact that there are one-hand tasks and experiences in life, and that there are two hand tasks and experiences in life. The difference is in the importance of the task or the experience. One might think that since the lives of the driver, the lives of his or her passengers, and the lives of folks in other vehicles on the road depend in part on the safe driving of that particular driver, that the act of driving the vehicle would be a two-hand experience. Certainly I would think that about taking a graduate level class. For many they don't seem to be.

Dr. Wells asks the question, "What things make you interrupt the one-hand culture" in which we live? What are the things you take with both hands?

Then he puts the question another way: “which are the places where you’re content just to be silent – with no iPod, no conversation... – just beauty or peace.”

He goes on and says, “And I wonder who are the people you are content to be silent with – not have great laughs, or great debates, or great dancing, but just company and stillness and companionship. Those are the places and the people with whom we can be still, through whom we can know what matters most, for whom we think it’s worth using both hands.”

People who have relationships like that – beginning with their relationship with God – are the ones referenced by Matthew in this morning’s scripture reading as those who have built their house upon a rock. Their lives have a foundation that is secure, a foundation that serves them throughout all of life and all that life brings.

It takes intentionality. It takes using both hands.

To the graduating seniors this morning, and I would assume that if your parents are honest they will agree with me on this: that people our age are still learning what it is in life that demands both hands, what it is in life that demands our complete attention. And if you can, today, decide that you’re going to make figuring that out a priority in your life I suspect you will end up with a life that is much more full, much more complete, much more whole, much more filled with joy because you have decided to build your house upon a rock. You have decided to discern what are those aspects of life that demand both of your hands, and your complete attention.