

## Everything Beautiful in His Time

*"He hath made every thing beautiful in his time: also he hath set the world in their heart, so that no man can find out the work that God maketh from the beginning to the end" (Ecclesiastes 3:11).*

This past Tuesday my alarm went off at 4:30 a.m. I had allowed myself only the briefest margin to get my things together that I would need for the day and get out the door arriving at the 5:00 a.m. early morning prayer. I didn't want to keep any of the men who had come to prayer in waiting. I forgot to plug my cell phone in over night, so I was low on charge, but I thought, I'll just grab my cell phone charger and plug it in after I arrive at church.

In the vestibule of our home is a truly prized possession. It is an old oak table that has been in our family for years. It is hand-carved, without a nail in it. It is beautiful, with spiraled meticulously carved legs. The sentimental value is even more than it's worth as an antique. It is the table that my father served The Lord's Supper on in my youth. My first communion was celebrated at this table.

So, with that picture in mind, see me in my hurried state of affair. I am now ready to exit our house. I grab the charger and charge for the door, when suddenly I am stopped in my tracks. I felt a tug coming from behind. I looked behind to discover my phone cord had wrapped itself around one of the table legs on the antique oak table. With my hands full and not wanting to put everything down and take the time to carefully pull the cord away, wrap it up, and proceed out the door...I gently yanked the cord. Nothing happened. A little exasperated, I yanked harder. Now I could tell the cord was stuck somewhere. Oh, brother, now I was going to have to put everything down, get on my knees, find out the trouble, pick everything up...why this could cost me every bit of twenty seconds!

Descending to my knees, I discovered to my chagrin that the small end of my phone cord had lodged deep into the spiraled leg of the great oak table. I was in a hurry! I pulled, but to no avail. I could not get my finger into the spiral to push. Hopefully, what I say now will not mortify my wife or mother as they read these words; I (gulp) grabbed the nearest thing to my hand, a butter knife. My goal was to push the small plastic covered connection point out the other side into freedom. I did nothing of the sort. I managed to lodge more of the piece deeper into the oak spiral. I realized to use the butter knife any further was a risk of scratching a precious piece of furniture. I put the butter knife away, pulled a little more, and lodged it deeper yet.

What was I to do? I'm late now for prayer and the cord to give me a charge for the day is stuck. If I leave now, I'll have to make an extra trip to retrieve my cord, which means more time wasted. I can stay here, miss prayer with the men and attend to this problem. As I sat there for just a moment longer, surmising my situation, I decided to leave for prayer. While en route to the prayer meeting and while praying, these thoughts came to mind about the rather comical comedy of errors I was accruing.

### **I. Haste makes waste.**

That phrase has deservedly passed from being a cliché to being a maxim. As a rule, this is true! If I had taken the time to simply wind up my cord, I would not have lodged it in the table. If I had not proceeded to yank the cord, it would have not lodged deeper. If had not tried to make a tool out of the butter knife, it would not have worsened. Every short cut I took was robbing me of more time.

This maxim applies to the more important things of life. I find that if I allow myself more time (which I am bad about not doing) and take the extra time to do things right, in the end, accomplishment is sweeter. Also, in the long run, more time is saved.

If an airplane mechanic gets in too much of a hurry, he may miss the subtle crack across the wing, which could bring the plane down. If a surgeon gets too hurried, he may stitch up a scalpel or

sponge inside a patient, creating a new problem. Imagine what would happen if a seismologist hurriedly scans across the monitor and misses the earthquake in the ocean that could cause a tsunami.

Jesus said, "...*Are there not twelve hours in the day?...*" (John 11:9). The Bible also says, "*For he knoweth our frame; he remembereth that we are dust. As for man, his days are as grass: as a flower of the field, so he flourisheth*" (Psalm 103:14, 15). God knows who we are and how much time we have. He has designed us with the amount of time to get everything done (here's the key) "*in His time*". God's time is so much better than our time.

## **II. Prayer and stillness unties knots!**

When I settled down in prayer, after a good laugh on myself with my comrade in prayer, the simplest solution on how to remove the phone cord came to me. You may think I am kidding, but I believe the Lord will talk to you about little things as well as big things.

I cannot resist the opportunity to tell on Richard Sanchez at this point. After prayer, I announced a "eureka". I explained that I thought the Lord had revealed to me how to remove the cord. Richard gave me another explanation on how to do it. My gut feeling was to go with my new plan. But I thought, who am I? Richard knows more than I about this stuff. I nearly tore the cord up doing it Richard's way. When I stopped and tried the method that came to me in prayer, it popped right out without any further harm to the cord, and to my wife's relief, none to the table!

I had a little fun with Richard over this matter. The next time we talked, I expressed thanks for helping me with advice that nearly destroyed my phone cord. Although we had a good laugh, there is a serious reminder for all of us. Prayer is so much more than a session with God. It is during the stillness that answers often come and hard knots are untied. "*Is not this the fast that I have chosen? to loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, and to let the oppressed go free, and that ye break every yoke?*" (Isaiah 58:6). In the extreme prayer of fasting, God promises to lose our bands, lifting of heavy burdens, and every yoke broken. "*Be still, and know that I am God....*" (Psalm 46:10).

## **III. Put first things first.**

You know what was more important than getting my problem solved immediately? Prayer and obligation to friendships. Praying was more important than improvising with a new technique that may free up a silly wire covered by plastic. Prayer is time with God! Everything I was doing could easily wait until I had prayed. Also, there was someone waiting to pray with me. Friendships and commitments to those friends are more important than getting things done in my time. "*Thine own friend, and thy father's friend, forsake not....*" (Proverbs 27:10). Let us not sacrifice friendships, brothers and sisters animated with the very life of God over inanimate objects that in comparison mean nothing. Jesus said, "*But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you*" (Matthew 6:33).

Putting first things first is moving into the beauty of God's time!

- Pastor Pope -

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