“Quality Time”

Good morning Fil-Am Community Church. It is so good to see so many of you here this morning. For time’s sake let’s get into the word of God, more importantly let’s get the word of God into you!

Last week Pastor Rolly stared our series called “Let Me Count the Ways”. Our theme verse for the series is from 1 John 4:7-9, found below.

1 John 4:7-9 (NASB) God Is Love
7 Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. 8 The one who does not love does not know God, for God is love. 9 By this the love of God was manifested in us that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world so that we might live through Him.

This morning we are going to continue with the second sermon in the series dealing with the issue of “Quality Time.”

If you had a bank that credited your account each morning with $86,000 that carried over no balance from day to day, and allowed you to keep no cash in your account, and every evening cancelled whatever part of the amount you failed to use during the day, what would you do?

Draw out every cent every day, of course and use it to your advantage.

Well, saints, you have such a bank account, and its account is called “TIME” and every morning we are given 86,400 seconds and every night it rules off as lost whatever you failed to invest for good purpose.
It carries over no balances (Roll-Overs) it also allows for no overdrafts. Each day it opens a new account with you, if you fail to use the day’s deposits the loss is yours. There is no going back (re-do) and there is no drawing against tomorrow, we only have what is allotted today, so use it wisely!

Psalms 90:12, “So teach us to number our days, that we may present to you a heart of wisdom.”

Last week we discovered the first love language, words of affirmation. Love is often expressed in what we say and how we say it- words of encouragement, genuine compliments, and praising someone, especially in front of others. “I know you can do it. That color really brings out your eyes. Did you hear Johnny got an A on his science fair project?”

This week we’re exploring the love language of quality time.

Mark 6:30-44 (NASB)  
30 The apostles gathered together with Jesus; and they reported to Him all that they had done and taught. 31 And He said to them, “Come away by yourselves to a secluded place and rest a while.” (For there were many people coming and going, and they did not even have time to eat.) 32 They went away in the boat to a secluded place by themselves. 33 The people saw them going, and many recognized them and ran there together on foot from all the cities, and got there ahead of them. 34 When Jesus went ashore, He saw a large crowd, and He felt compassion for them because they were like sheep without a shepherd; and He began to teach them many things. 35 When it was already quite late, His disciples came to Him and said, “This place is desolate and it is already quite late; 36 send them away so that they may go into the surrounding countryside and villages and buy themselves something to eat.” 37 But He answered them, “You give them something to eat!” And they said to Him, “Shall we go and spend two hundred denarii on bread and give them something to eat?” 38 And He said to them, “How many loaves do you have? Go look!” And when they found out, they said, “Five, and two fish.” 39 And He commanded them all to sit down by groups on the green grass. 40 They sat down in groups of hundreds and of fifties. 41 And He took the five loaves and the two fish, and looking up toward heaven, He blessed the food and broke the loaves and He kept giving them to the disciples to set before them; and
He divided up the two fish among them all. 42 They all ate and were satisfied, 43 and they picked up twelve full baskets of the broken pieces, and also of the fish. 44 There were five thousand men who ate the loaves.”

The verses above begins with the twelve returning from their missionary journey on which Jesus had sent them, in which, Mark tells us, they told Jesus all that they had done and taught. Jesus then invites the twelve to come away with him to a deserted place so that they might enjoy some well-deserved rest.

So they got into a boat and headed to a place where they might be alone. But when they neared the shore, they discovered that a great crowd had anticipated where they were headed, and had arrived at their destination before they did. But instead of turning the boat around and heading off to another place of retreat, Mark tells us that when Jesus saw the crowd, he had compassion for them, because they were like sheep without a shepherd; and he began to teach them many things.

The image of Jesus as a shepherd is one that has been captured by artists and poets throughout the years. The picture of Jesus sitting in the midst of a flock of sheep with a lamb on his shoulder, captured in stained glass, has adorned many a church building. But what does that image of Jesus mean?

The example of Jesus as a Shepherd was something that all people during that time could understand, because the shepherd was a profession that was common, it was someone who not only cared for the feeding of the sheep but protected the sheep from the wild animals trying to kill them, without the guidance of a shepherd the sheep had no chance of survival.

The definition of Shepherd is: [shep-erd] noun
1. A person who herds, tends, and guards sheep.
2. A person who protects, guides, or watches over a person or group of people.
3. A member of the clergy.
4. The Shepherd, Jesus Christ.
5. Sheepdog.
Shepherd Verb (used with object)
6. To tend or guard as a shepherd: to shepherd the flock.
7. To watch over carefully.

In today’s society the profession of a Shepherd is not as common, and many people do not fully understand all that being a Shepherd means, so for the sake of clarity I would like to suggest you look at the job of a Shepherd as somewhat similar as that of a Lifeguard, so this morning we are going to pursue the image of Jesus as a Lifeguard.

When I was a kid growing up in Alabama, every few years or so we would take a family vacation to Gulf Shores Alabama and get to go swimming in the ocean.

I remember we would make our way out onto the sand and lay our blankets out beside the Life Guard tower and then hit the water.

I remember going into the water with a little inflatable float to try and ride the waves, not a body board or even surf board but just a plain old inflatable float. I never managed to master the way to ride waves on that float but it did give me the ability to stay out and drift further than I could have without it.

Even at an early age I realized that the current would pull me further and further away from where I started if I was not careful. So while I enjoyed this experience, I also kept my eye on the shore, and in particular, on that particular lifeguard stand, which reminded me of where my spot on the beach was located. The current of the ocean, is such that it tends to carry one along the shoreline, away from your point of entry.

Fast forward to just last year, when we took a family vacation in Orlando and while we were there for the week drove down to Miami to spend the day at the beach. The same thing happened because as soon as we would get to the beach we would find the closest lifeguard stand and lay out our towels and stuff under the watchful eye of the life guards.

While we were just relaxing on the beach by the lifeguard tower we noticed that the lifeguard was always watching the water and the people in their area, at times they would
stand and blow their whistle and instruct some kids to come back toward the shore or some surfboard to move further down the beach h line, etc. On one or more occasions the lifeguard would politely remind the people on the beach of the rules against having certain beverages or certain types of containers on the beach.

It is funny but the more I watched the duties of the life guard I began to them as the shepherd of this vacationing community that gathered on the shore, in need of his or her compassionate concern for their well-being.

They were there to protect us and save us from the destructive forces of the ocean’s current.

When you look back to the crowd that gathered around Jesus then, as well as the ones gathered on beaches today you can see some similarities.

You could say that the Lifeguard’s concern extended to...

- Rich and Poor,
- Young and Old,
- Intelligent and the not so intelligent,
- Male and Female,
- Strong and Weak,
- Color or Nationality

All who gathered on that shore came under the Life Guards concern and protection, just as all people of God’s creation come under our Lord’s same compassionate concern.

Another thing that I noticed was that when people exercised their freedom in the restless ocean, the lifeguard’s stand became a point of reference.

When the tide began to gently carry one unknowingly up the shoreline, the Life Guard Stand reminded you of where your “home” or starting point remained.
How easy it is for us to allow the waves of life to carry us away from the values of home and community, of living our life in relationship with God and others, which God has ordained for our benefit.

Yet, by keeping our eyes, and our minds, and our hearts focused on Jesus, and his revelation of God's redeeming grace, we can always find our way back to the joy of sustaining our relationship with God and family.

And I also noticed that if people exercised their individual freedom without responsibility, or if they ventured too far from shore, or trusted their life to an unsafe floating device, the lifeguard’s vigilant concern called out the danger to them.

Some may have experienced the lifeguard’s whistle and call to come back to shore as an exercise of power and restriction of their freedom. I now have a completely different view of the lifeguard as I now see them in a different light.

Just like the lifeguard, may have enforced the law of the beach. This was done not to prevent people from enjoying life, but rather to enable the people to avoid the snares that would endanger their life.

It is not a bad image of the Christ, this lifeguard, this shepherd of the crowd, who in compassion cared for those who gathered at the beach. May we keep our eye upon our Lord, and listen to his teachings, for he truly cares for our wellbeing.

Ok getting back to the message today, dealing with Quality Time, we will see as we read through the Gospels, that Jesus spends a great deal of time expressing love through quality time. We will look at a few of those examples below...


It’s Easter Sunday. Jesus is dead along with the hopes and dreams of his followers. Now there are rumors his body’s been stolen. Two of the disciples decide they’ve had enough. They’re heading home. On the road a stranger comes up alongside them. He begins to ask them questions, drawing them out, listening to their heartbreak. Then he begins to share
with them the scriptures about the Messiah, how he must suffer and die for the salvation of all. Time passes. It grows dark. The disciples are going to stop for the night and invite the stranger to spend more time with them over a meal. Towards the end of the meal, the stranger takes the bread and breaks it.

Their eyes are opened. Their hearts soar. **Jesus is alive.**

Jesus could have shared the Good News in a much quicker fashion, but he knew **spending quality** time with these men was the best way for them to hear and receive his love.

**B. The Restoration of Peter, John 21:1-19**

Peter and a few of the disciples have gone back to fishing after Jesus’ death. Peter’s heartbroken, scared and dealing with all that grief over denying Jesus in his time of need. They fished all night and haven’t caught a thing. As the morning breaks, they notice a guy hanging out on the beach. He calls to them. “Throw your nets on the other side of the boat.” Suddenly there’s a huge catch of fish. They haul it in and he’s still hanging out on the beach. He’s even got breakfast ready for them. Over the course of the meal Peter’s faith and calling are restored by the risen Lord. “Feed my lambs... Tend my sheep.... Feed my sheep... Do you love me?” Jesus expresses love, forgiveness and hope. *(Words of Affirmation) (Quality Time)*

**C. Mary and Martha, Luke 10:38-42**

The home of Mary, Martha, and Lazarus was a safe place for Jesus and his followers, a place for great food, rest and conversation. Mary appreciates the gift of quality time. She’s always found listening at Jesus’ feet.

Martha however, is wired differently. *(Acts of Service)* may be her love language, but it’s gotten twisted. It’s not about expressing love anymore. She’s trying to be Martha Stewart.

Jesus says, “**Martha, Martha, you are worried and distracted by many things; there is need of only one thing. Mary has chosen the better part, which will not be taken away from her.**” *(vs. 41-42)*
Worry and distraction have gotten the best of Martha and Jesus gently talks her back down. Worry and distraction are the enemies of quality time.

They steal our joy and our ability to be present to another human being. A loved one is sharing an important feeling, but our mind is far away worrying about the project that’s due, the bills yet to be paid.

At its heart, Quality Time is loving someone enough to lay aside the worry and distraction in order to be fully present.

The Biblical understanding of Quality Time is abiding. Drawing near and drawing the other person out.

God doesn’t just show up once in a while, God abides.

God draws near in Jesus’ Christ and draws us out through the prompting of the Holy Spirit. God is in it for the long haul, through the good and the bad and the ugly. God desires a deep, intimate relationship with us, a relationship rooted in being present to one another, in quality time.

1 John 4:11-16 NASB

11 Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. 12 No one has seen God at any time; if we love one another, God abides in us, and His love is perfected in us. 13 By this we know that we abide in him and him in us, because He has given us of His Spirit. 14 We have seen and testify that the Father has sent the Son to be the Savior of the world. 15 Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God abides in him, and he in God. 16 We have come to know and have believed the love which God has for us. God is love, and the one who abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him.

Quality Time often results in quality Conversation. Words of Affirmation focuses on what we are Saying... Quality Conversation focuses on what we are Hearing...
So what does **Quality Time** look like?

This morning we are going to look at a few aspects of what **Quality Time** looks like, however before we go any further we need to define what we mean when we say “**Quality Time.”**

- It is more than just being in the **same room**
- It is **more** than just sitting on the **couch** watching TV, because typically when we do that, Netflix or ESPN or TFC has our undivided attention, not the person we are sitting on the couch with.

Some examples of **Quality Time** would be sitting on the couch, with the TV turned off, or talking a walk together and saints here is a drastic thing you need to consider, it’s a thing called talking....

This all takes that ever so precious time... Which is a precious commodity, as we all have multiple demands on our time?

Being that Valentine’s Day has come and gone for another year, if you happen to go out and eat on Valentine’s Day if you pay attention and observe your surroundings you could see couples sitting together, some were dating and others have been married for a while. Now this is just an observation so please don’t kill the messenger but you can typically spot the difference between those dating and those who have been married for a while.

The dating couples look intently at each other, like there is no one else in the room. They actually look into each other’s eyes and **TALK** to each other.

Where the typical married couples sit there and gaze around the restaurant or check their Facebook status on their phones.

Like **Words of Affirmation**, the language of “**Quality Time”** has many different dialects, and one of the most common is the dialect of conversation.

When asked at numerous Marriage seminars and weekend getaways what is the one thing that is needed above everything else in order for your marriage to succeed, and the number one answer is “**We Need better Communication!”**
The quality of our communication affects every area of every relationship! Why such a high priority on communication? Because good communication is the key to what all of us who marry basically want, “To Love and be Loved.”

1. Quality Conversation

Quality Conversation, is quite different from the 1st Love Language (Words of Affirmation) which focuses on what we are saying, (Quality Conversation) focuses on what we are hearing.

James 1:19 NASB, “This you know, my beloved brethren. But everyone must be quick to hear, slow to speak and slow to anger.”

Below are a few tips that will help you maintain the ability to show who you are communicating with that you value their time and are actively engaged in Quality Conversation

✓ Maintain Eye Contact
When talking with your significant other or anyone else for that matter, maintain eye contact. It communicates that they have your undivided attention as well as helps keep your mind from wandering.

✓ Don’t try and listen and do something else at the same time

When you listen and try and do others things at the same time it has a tendency to send the signal that what you are listening to is not that important, because you are dividing your attention between multiple things at the same time.

It just requires you to say something like, I know what you are saying is very important and I want to give you my undivided attention could you just let me finish ______ and then get back with you? That way they understand that their topic is important to you and you want to give it the time and attention it deserves.
Just a note this typically does not work when the football game is on and you use this but it is only in the first quarter.... This should only be used when it is a short timeframe.

The first point we talked about was **Quality Conversation**, the second point is ...

2. **Quality or Active Listening**

Another very important aspect of **Quality Conversation** is the art of **Quality Listening** or more commonly called **Active Listening**.

This is where you as the listener are putting your emotional feelers up and trying to get a sense of what the other person may be feeling or going through at the time.

This is where you ask yourself what emotions are they experiencing, and when you thing you have this figured out ask them to make sure you are both on the same sheet of music. An example of this is I sense that you are disappointed because _______ .

Another example is when we are trying to work through a roadblock or hurdle at work and we set up a meeting with all the parties involved and try and work through a way-ahead. During the meeting someone agrees to do this in return for this or that, and a new course of action is developed. However, to make sure we are all on eth same sheet of music prior to departing the meeting, I will typically say, let me make sure I have this correctly, from what I gathered from the meeting in order to do ______ I need to do _____ and you need to do _______, is that correct? That makes sure that prior to departing we all understand what was decided and we all have the same deliverables or at least expatiations.

You would be surprised how many times this simple task has saved all of us valuable time and energy, because if not done we will leave the meeting thinking that they were going to do _____ and they thought we were going to do ______.

This is also known as **Drive-through Talking**, which helps us stay focused and on target in your communication. This is done by your listening, I mean concentrating on what the other person is saying and not on what you will say next.
This is repeated again and again at every fast food restraint drive through, you say what you want they take the order repeat it, you correct them they repeat it again and again until they get it right....

It is the same as our conversations with our significant others, we need to make sure we are both receiving the same information, because it does not always come across like that...

This method of repeating back what we think we’ve heard (or what we think the real meaning was behind the words) eliminates so many unnecessary misunderstandings.

Another very valuable lesson is to pay attention to body language, like trembling hands, clinched fists, tears, lack of eye contact etc. The list could go on and on but you get the point.

Why is this so important? For one reason, body language speaks one message, while words speak another. Ask for clarification to make sure you are receiving the whole picture rather than just assuming!

The last one is one of the hardest to do but it is to try your very best not to INTERRUPT!

The average person listens for 17 seconds before interrupting.
Dr. Chapman has a perfect illustration for this in the book 5 Love Languages where Patrick confesses to him about his 16 year marriage.

It typically goes that his wife would come home and explain a problem she was having at work. Patrick would hear the issue and then give his advice on how to fix it. The process would repeat itself and Patrick would ask did you do what I told you to do and she would respond “no.”

At this point Patrick would get mad because she was not taking his advice and would respond with the, “Do not expect any sympathy from me if you are not going to follow my advice.”
The next time she would bring the issue up, Patrick would respond, “I don’t want to hear it” if you’re not going to take my advice I don’t want to hear about it.”

After a failed marriage Patrick realized that she didn’t want advice when she told him about her problems, what she wanted was someone to listen to her, she was looking for sympathy, not a solution, she needed Patrick to listen to her not try and fix her problems.

The problem with Patrick is one shared by most males; we listen but sometimes only long enough to hear the problem so we could formulate a solution, the problem is Patrick did not listen long enough to hear a cry for his support, for his understanding, she didn’t need a solution she needed someone to listen to her.

Far too many of us fall into the same trap as Patrick as we are trained to analyze problems and create solutions, we need to put up our feelers and see what they are looking for and most times its more about a relationship not about solving a project.

The first point we talked about was Quality Conversation, The second point was Quality or Active Listening And the last point is...

3. Quality Togetherness

Parents rate their ability to spend enough time with their children as the greatest threat to the family.

In a survey conducted for the Massachusetts Mutual Life Insurance Corp...

- 35% pointed to time constraints as the most important reason for the decline in family values.
- 22% mentioned a lack of parental discipline
- 63% listed Family as their greatest source of pleasure
- 44% described the quality of Family life in America as good or excellent

Despite their expressed desire for more family time, two-thirds of those surveyed say they would probably accept a job that required more time away from home if offered higher income or greater prestige.
As we discussed earlier it is not enough to just be in the same room with someone, a key ingredient is **giving your focused time and attention**.

In the book the five Love languages the perfect example of this would be a father sitting on the floor with his two tear old son, **rolling the ball** back and forth between themselves.

Another example would be the same father having a **tea party** with his daughter, as both examples show how you could and should spend quality time with your children.

Spending time together is the key, however it needs to be said that many people spending quality time together, when in reality they are only in **close proximity**.

Remember spending quality time does not just mean sitting across from each other gazing starry eyed at each other, but it does mean spending time doing things together.

This is an activity that each couple should try, have each partner come up with a list of inexpensive things they would like to do, limit it to the top 3 or 4. When each partner does this, start systematically trying to knock at least one off every other month or so.

This is another way of showing your partner that you do hear what they want and also put it into action, try this and tell me how it works out for you...

The activity is the vehicle that creates the sense of togetherness.

Jesus practiced a ministry of presence (**Quality Time**) and we are commanded to do the same.

**Let us Pray....**