

Dilly-Dally No More – Is 55

Is 55; Before we get going in the message, let me say “Happy Mother’s Day” to the Mom’s among us; And I trust that *all* of you will take the time to . . .
Honor your mom in your *thoughts*, and if possible, with your words and presence

In fact, I want to show you a little video clip of someone who did exactly that recently – as an inspiration to do the same

His name is Kevin Durant, and the occasion was his acceptance speech as the NBA’s Most Valuable Player this year; He started by saying . . .

“First off, I want to thank God for changing my life; and [letting] me really realize what life is all about. Basketball is just a platform in order for me to inspire people, and I realize that.” That’s how he started; And 23 minutes later, this is how he ended

(**Video** – NBA 2014 MVP Speech; <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ksRjNOvSGiY>)

Thank you Mom’s, for all you’ve done, and all you do

➤ That said, it’s appropriate that the *message* title this weekend (**Intro**) *comes* fr my Mom When I was in grade school I used to walk to school each day, .8 of a mile; No small thing for a scrawny little kid prone to mischief

B/c of which, it seemed like my Mom told me every single day as I was walking out the door – “Now don’t you dilly-dally or you’ll be late; You hear? No dilly-dallying”

“And come straight home”; Where I knew milk and cookies were waiting

But you know what I remember most about my grade school days? The things we did while *dilly-dallying* on the way home

Like crawling through a 4 foot storm drain that ran 150 feet under the street

And forging new paths in the woods instead of walking on the road

And swinging on a massive tire swing at the house of a schoolmate

And having snowball fights in the winter; Or real fights in the summer

And building snow dams in the road during the spring thaw

Or playing crash cars with our bikes to see if we could knock each other off

Dilly-dallying was my middle *name* in those days! It’s what I did; Even though I was *hungry* for milk and cookies, and *loved* being home

But that was out of sight out of mind, and mischief was center stage

➤ Which is a lot like our lives as children of *God*

We occupy ourselves with mischief, and trouble, and a whole host of *lesser* things – while God beckons us to come home; To come to *him*

To stop dilly-dallying and start enjoying the *richest* of fare – the *best* milk and cookies

That’s the gist of this chapter – dilly-dally no more, and run to Jesus; Look at v1

➤ God is speaking, and says – [1] “*Come, everyone who thirsts, come to the waters;*

Come, everyone who longs for something more in life; Everyone who acknowledges their need; Everyone who desires God and all that he offers

Everyone who longs for more of him; *Come to the waters* – the sustenance for life, the grace for life, the refreshment for life, the provision for life; Come, and drink up

Like Jesus said in Jn 7:37 – *If anyone thirsts, let him come to me and drink.*

It’s a universal invitation to meet a universal need – life

And so close to the heart of God, that it’s one of the last things he *says* to us in the Bible

Rev 22:17 – *The Spirit and the Bride* (the church) *say, “Come.” And let the one who hears say, “Come.” And let the one who is thirsty come; let the one who desires take the water of life without price.* It’s an invitation that couldn’t be any clearer
The question is, are you responding? Or more pointedly . . .

What are you doing? (v1-2a)

It’s the first of several questions that beg to be asked from this passage

In light of God’s invitation to come – What are you doing with your life? Are you responding? Are you running to him every single day?

Or dilly-dallying through life in pursuit of lesser things?

➤ I saw a movie recently based on a true story from WWII, about a group of guys who escaped from a Russian prison camp in Siberia, and walked *4000* miles to freedom
And along the way they encountered every danger you could possibly imagine – including a *desert* they had to cross
And right about the time they were at death’s door, they saw a *well* in the distance, a mini-oasis

And here’s the thing – not a *single* one of them had to be coerced to come to the water

Not a single one had to be convinced that *life* was to be found there

And not a single one of them *walked*; Despite their exhaustion, every single person *ran* to the water – *desperate* for the sustenance and satisfaction it offered

➤ And we ought to do the same w/ the water of life that God offers; Especially b/c it’s free [1] “*Come, everyone who thirsts, come to the waters; and he who has no money, come, buy and eat! Come, buy wine and milk without money and without price.*

It’s a universal invitation to meet a universal need, free of charge!

Extended to people like you and I who *have* no resources, to receive the things of infinite worth we desperately *need*

➤ The problem is, we don’t see it that way; We don’t *see* our needs; Nor the benefits of having them met; And we certainly don’t tend to admit our *desperation*

Instead, we think we know better – we think river water will do when we could be drinking Perrier; We think that mud puddles are sufficient when *oceans* await

Instead of desiring *all* that God has to offer, we’re content with the status quo

Is that you? If so, what are you doing? Go home; And do whatever it takes to drink *deeply* from the wellspring of life; B/c God’s calling

What are you thinking? (v2b-5)

That’s the idea of v2 – *Why do you spend your money for that which is not bread, and your labor for that which does not satisfy?*

IOW why do you expend yourself, and all that God has given you – including your time, and talent, and treasure – on things that don’t last?

Things that just *add* to your thirst instead of satiating it? Things that leave you feeling *worse* in the long run, instead of better?

Things that are fleeting instead of permanent? Why do you do that?

Like the addict who keeps going back to the pit for more/more; As if the drug or the alcohol or the porn or the food or the video game will actually *satisfy* their longings

Only to wake up the next day even more parched and famished

Or how about the work-a-holic who spends all his time at the office, but can never seem to get enough time or money

Or the perfectionist who can never seem to get enough *satisfaction*

And in the end, our life is one great big karaoke of Mick Jagger's – "I can't get no . . . satisfaction"; Constantly giving ourselves to things that *can't* satisfy

- Things that aren't *bread*; True bread; Like Jesus, who said (**Jn 6:35**) – *I am the bread The bread of life* [the *real* sustenance; the *real* satisfier of your needs]; *whoever comes to me shall not hunger, and whoever believes in me shall never thirst.* The life he offers is the only thing in the bread aisle of life marked "Permanently Satisfying"; The only thing in the hardware store marked "Already Done and Free"

And yet day after day we enter the Home Depot of life and go straight to the Do-it-Yourself section; Where everything costs an arm and a leg, and eventually our life Or, we stand *between* the aisles marked "Do-It-Yourself" and "Already Done", and agonize over the decision
"Let's see; Do I want a lame life, or an awesome one? A temporary fix, or a permanent one; I think I'll go with lame; B/c I *like* things that suck"; That's what we do*****

- And God's like – What are you thinking?
"I'm offering you everything you need and everything that's awesome"
"It's completely finished and entirely free"; Which is why he says in v2 . . .
Listen diligently to me, and eat what is good, and delight yourselves in rich food [all the best that's found in me].
[3] *Incline your ear, and come to me; hear, that your soul may live*
How do you listen diligently and incline your ear to hear? Read your Bible, pray every day, come to church, and meet with others who do the same

And the life you get is not only full, but permanent; Come to me God says – [3b] *And I will make with you an everlasting covenant, my steadfast, sure love for David.*
Receive all that I have to offer God is saying, and I'll establish an inseparable relationship with you, just like I promised to David 300 years earlier
I loved him, I'll love you; *All* of you; Not just you Israelites, but everybody
That's the gist of v4-5

[4] *Behold, I made him* [King David] *a witness to the peoples* [the nations], *a leader and commander for the peoples.* [5] *Behold, you shall call a nation* [a people group] *that you do not know, and a nation that did not know you shall run to you, because of the LORD your God, and of the Holy One of Israel, for he has glorified you* [he has exalted you; he's made you attractive].

IOW just like David gathered various nations under the tent of God's protection and provision in *his* day – so too would God's people welcome them now
Enlarging their tent and becoming *one* under the Lordship of Jesus Christ, the new David; It's a statement of assurance
Come to me, listen to me, receive me – and you'll live, forever and full

- In which case, "What are you thinking?" is a question every single one of us needs to

consider; Some, as a *preventative*, so we don't think wrongly and get *off* track

Some as a *corrective*, to get *on* track . . .

And some as a rebuke, to wake up; What are you thinking?

What are you waiting for? (v6-7)

[6] *"Seek the LORD while he may be found; call upon him while he is near; [7] let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; let him return to the LORD, that he may have compassion on him, and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.*

Is God patient? *Not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance?*
Yes (2 Pet 3:9); But is that patience going to last forever? No
B/c he's also just, and he's coming again to judge the living and the dead (1 Pet 4:5)

Which means that the time to seek him, is *now*, today; And *every* day; While he may be found; B/c there's going to come a time when that's no longer possible –
Either when you die, or when he returns, whichever comes first
Which begs the question for *some* of you, or some of your friends, or family members –
What are you waiting for?

Especially when *compassion* and kindness awaits you like it says in v7
And forgiveness – abundant *pardon*; Release from punishment and relief of guilt
In light of *that*, and the fact that God won't wait forever – what are you waiting for?

- But this isn't just for those who've *never* sought him; It's also for those who *have*, but stopped somewhere along the way

When I was in college, my roommates and I decided to go north for spring break one year, instead of south; Just something different
And we found ourselves one day at the shores of Lake Michigan in the upper peninsula, across from Mackinac Island
And thought it would be cool to venture out on the ice, which we could see *ended* about 100 feet off shore, getting thinner and thinner as it met the water
Not bright; And the epitome of dilly-dallying

And I remember one of my roommates going so much further than the rest of us, that we began to get nervous and even mad as we called for him to come back
To forsake the stupidity of his way, and the error of his messed up thoughts – and return to the safety of the shore
And while he eventually did, he wasn't *nearly* as quick about it as we wanted

- And that's exactly how we are sometimes, before God
We step out on the thin ice of our sinful ways, or unrighteous thoughts, or nonchalant complacency – and *ignore* his call to shore
His invitation to seek *him* instead of the things of this world; And *call* on him while he's near; And forsake our wicked ways by returning to the safety of his presence
Not to mention his offer of compassion and forgiveness, no matter *what* we've done;
No matter how far out on the ice we've wandered; We ignore it; All of it
Sometimes for a moment, sometimes for a day, sometimes for a decade

If that's you, when are you going to return? When are you going to stop flirting with *disaster* and missing out on God's best?

When are you going to get serious about the Lord, and stop dilly-dallying?

When are you going to remove the things that *keep* you from him?

And do what he says without excuse?

When are you going to prioritize your life according to *his* purposes?

And steward your money based on his *desires*?

When are you going to rest in his grace *all* the time?

➤ That's what it means to seek him; It's not just a mental thing, but a whole life thing

It's not keeping one foot on the ice and another on shore

It's not conforming your life just enough to *look* like a Christian, but denying the transformation that *makes* you one

It's not being a nice, status quo, churchgoing person – with no joy, no sacrifice, no pursuit, and no passion

And it's not hiding behind a glaze of sentimental religion to cover up your doubts and struggles; That's not seeking him

Seeking him means *calling* on him – for the *first* time in your life, and the *rest* of your life

And *forsaking* your way – which could be anything from blatantly sinful indulgences, to well-meaning associations that aren't God-glorifying

It means *returning* to God with *all* your heart, soul, mind, and strength – whether you've wandered for a day, or a lifetime

It means receiving his compassion and forgiveness over and over again

What could you possibly be waiting for?

What more could you want? (v8-13)

[8] *For my thoughts are not your thoughts* [God says], *neither are your ways my ways, declares the LORD.* [9] *For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts.*

It's the first of 3 reasons in v8-13, to seek him; That . . .

1. God knows what he's doing (v8-9)

You may not think that God will pardon you; You may not think he'll extend compassion

You may not think it makes any sense with his suffering servant and all

But God knows what he's doing; What more could you want?

2. God does what he says (v10-11)

How many times have we seen this in Isaiah? God does what he says

Which means you can fully entrust yourself to him; And rest in his covenant promise;

And depend on the life he gives

[10] *“For as the rain and the snow come down from heaven and do not return there but water the earth, making it bring forth and sprout, giving seed to the sower and bread to the eater, [11] so shall my word be that goes out from my mouth; it shall not return to me empty, but it shall accomplish that which I purpose, and shall succeed in the thing for which I sent it.*

God does what he says; Just as the rain accomplishes *its* purposes, so God's word accomplishes his; What more could you want?

3. Our future is amazing (v12-13)

Seek him, call on him, come to him, listen to him, return to him . . .

[12] *“For you shall go out in joy and be led forth in peace; the mountains and the hills before you shall break forth into singing, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands. [13] Instead of the thorn shall come up the cypress; instead of the brier shall come up the myrtle* [an evergreen bush]; *and it* [i.e. God's work of redemption – both in us and in *all* of creation] *shall make a name for the LORD, an everlasting sign that shall not be cut off.”*

Changed lives and changed things will be a testimony to God's goodness and greatness forever and ever

Part of a future filled with joy, permeated with peace, bursting with worship, and marked by transformation (**Summary**); What more could you want?

He knows what he's doing, he does what he says, and he gives us a future (**Summary**)

Dilly-dally no more

Prayer – Lord, thank you for the word you've spoken, the promises you've made, and the life you've given; Forgive us for wandering; Forgive us for waiting; Forgive us for wasting; We come, wanting you and the water you give, more than ever

Receive our tithes now; We give b/c you gave