

SCREEN: Make Your Bed Day

This coming Thursday is National Make Your Bed Day.

Yes, you heard me right,

National Make Your Bed Day.

The idea is simple:

start every day with a well made bed.

Why?

Promoters believe that this small action
creates a sense of order and accomplishment
that can carry into the rest of your day.

I love this because I'm someone who makes my bed everyday without fail -
even though I live alone.

It's how I was raised.

So it's become a habit for me - a life long habit - and one that I can't break.

And I discovered that I'm not alone in this.

William McCraven is a retired four star Navy admiral.

Ten years ago he delivered a commencement address
where he talked about the importance of making your bed.

After he graduated from college he went off
for six weeks of training to become a Navy SEAL.

Every day began with an inspection by the drill instructor
of how he had made his bed.

He didn't understand the importance at the time,
but looking back he understood the purpose.

Here's what he learned, and I quote:

Making your bed reinforces the fact that little things in life matter.

*If you can't do the little things right,
you will never do the big things right.*

*If you want to change the world,
start off by making your bed.*

SCREEN: Small Matters main screen

Today we're beginning a new message series titled, Small Matters.
We're kicking off the Fall by focusing our lives on what is most important -
which are not the big things of this world like doing more or having more stuff.
In two weeks we will hear Jesus say that
when we are faithful in small matters we grow in the ways of God
and the values of Christ's Kingdom.
It's in the small things we do every day -
like the simple task of making our bed -
that we get to choose to do the right thing.
And today's gospel reading gets us started.

So we heard that Jesus was traveling from town to town
preaching and teaching and healing.

His ministry was attracting huge crowds of people
who followed him everywhere he went.

And one day he turned to the crowd and said this:

**SCREEN: If anyone comes to me without hating his father and mother,
wife and children, brothers and sisters,
and even his own life, he cannot be my disciple.**

If Jesus' goal was to attract more followers and draw bigger crowds,
this speech wasn't the best approach.

I'm sure it confused people in the crowd.

And probably struck them as harsh or extreme:

*"Jesus, I really like your message about
loving my neighbor and forgiving my enemy,
so why are you telling me to hate my family?"*

The reason Jesus used this extreme language
was to make the point that being a follower is
a 24/7 commitment requiring complete devotion.

It can't be on again off again depending on one's mood or schedule.

As if his message on family wasn't extreme enough

he went on to say that his followers need to renounce their possessions.
Most of those in the crowd weren't willing to make this commitment.
Eventually they drifted away and returned home.
So those who remained with Jesus were the ones who had their priorities in order.
They were willing to put God first above everything else.

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Throughout my forty years as a priest I've presided over
hundreds of funerals which means I've heard
a lot of eulogies by family members of the deceased.
The best ones didn't focus on their loved one's accomplishments,
didn't highlight their career, or brag about their possessions,
instead they shared the attitudes he or she had,
the habits they practiced, and the values they embraced.
How they always made time for family and friends.
Or how generous they were when someone was in need.
How they always kept their word and followed through on commitments.
Sadly, there have also been times when the opposite was true.
This didn't come out in the eulogies but in private conversations with family members.
They confided how their loved one's poor choices negatively impacted them.
How they weren't dependable, didn't keep their word,
or didn't make time for others.
So at the end of the day - for good or bad -
what people will remember about us won't be our worldly accomplishments.
They'll remember the small matters and choices we made throughout our lives.
With summer drawing to a close and the normal routine of life starting up again,
now is the perfect time to take an honest look at your life,
and answer this question:

SCREEN: how do you want to be remembered?

How do you want to be remembered?

Do you want the people in your life to say,
he spent too much time at work?

She was never there when you needed her?

They didn't make a difference in the world?

Wouldn't we all rather hear it said of us:

He was so generous, she was so loving,

they taught me so much about what matters most in life.

To jump back to last week's message on humility,

here's what this kind of life looks like:

SCREEN: God first

others second

me third

When God is first in your life, everything else falls into place.

Which was the point Jesus is making in today's gospel.

If this message is really hitting home with you,

I want to challenge you to make some small changes to help refocus your life.

Small changes which over time will have a big impact.

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For example, get in the habit of always greeting
your coworkers or classmates at the start of the day.

Ask how they're doing before you begin your tasks.

And in those conversations, always let the other person
finish speaking before you respond.

At home, get in the habit of tackling
that one chore that no one else wants to do -
empty the sink unload the dishwasher, take out the trash,
or walk the dog.

Here's another small change you can make:

cut back on the time you spend on your devices.

Notice I said cut back, not cut out.

A small reduction of ten minutes can have a big impact over time.

And I guarantee you won't miss it,
and you'll also feel better for having done it.

Here's another one: commit to weekly worship.

If you got off track over the summer,
decide today that you will be here each week.

Last month Pope Leo had this to say on why the Mass is so important:

SCREEN: The Eucharist is not celebrated only at the altar, but also in daily life.

He's reminding us that the small choices that make up our days
are opportunities for us to share Christ with others.

I began my message talking about the habit of making your bed everyday.

If like me, you already do this,
how about offering a simple prayer as you make your bed.

Here's one I came up with:

SCREEN: Dear Lord, thank you for waking me up.

Please bless me and everyone I meet today.

Smooth out any hard feelings or conversations which I encounter.

SCREEN: Straighten any obstacles that keep me from seeing you in others.

Help me to be warm and comforting with all those in need. Amen.

With this simple prayer you're asking God to bless you and others throughout your day.

Decide this Fall to that you will be faithful in small matters,

so that you can grow in the ways of God

and the values of Christ's Kingdom. Amen. +