

# *2CH Sunday at 7.30*

## A time to be with God

Armen Nalbandian – 13 Jan 2008

### **Introduction**

“Buy me, Buy me!” is what most advertising is all about. After all, I should know, I studied marketing at University and worked in marketing. The core purpose of advertising is to attract our attention.

The way marketers have gone about doing this is amazing. They have spent vast amounts of money on research to discover human psychology, physiology and sociology to unravel the secrets of grabbing our attention through the use of technology and human dynamics.

They have managed to push out what is important in life and replace it with the urgent and not-so-important things in life.

### **Segment 1**

Advertisers know how to grab our attention: We see the skimpy model with the latest designer wear on billboards. We laugh at the beer ads on tele. We eagerly listen to the news break – delivered with so much intent like it’s the end of the world. It’s the magazine and newspaper with features about the sex scandal of famous celebrities, the latest cars, and the latest properties on sale. It’s the next toughest computer game, the latest block buster movie, the heart wrenching DVD, or chatting away on the internet. And somehow, our lives get crowded out, and we get crowded in.

Being crowded in! Have you ever felt that way? No space to move. No place to drop things and walk away from them. There’s so much happening around you. The endless cycle of chores, the long hours of work, meetings to attend to, friends to see, children to look after, bills to pay, traffic lights to wait at, trains to miss, phone calls to make, and phone calls to answer.

Like a runaway horse bolting away, our time runs away and runs out. The urgent crowds out the important. At the end of the day we are left stranded, weary and tired, wondering how did the day, the week, the month, the year run by so quickly. We feel drained and we are left thirsty.

If you can agree with me, then I invite you to spend the next few moments to focus on what is important. Come with me, as I invite you to the place where you can rest. Drink deeply to restore your thirsty soul. Come with me as we discover what is important. What God says is important. Not what movies, rock-stars, politicians or media say, but what God says is important.

### **Segment 2**

The Bible tells us that as Jesus’ ministry grew, so did his popularity. His fame was so great people followed him hoping just to touch him and get healed.

Talk about being crowded out! Jesus, however, took time out to be with his Father and spend time praying. He didn’t give in to the crowd but decided to do what was important. Allow me to read to you the scene:

**Mark 1:32-35:-** That evening after sunset the people brought to Jesus all the sick and demon-possessed. <sup>33</sup> The whole town gathered at the door, <sup>34</sup> and Jesus healed many who had various diseases. He also drove out many demons, but he would not let the demons speak because they knew who he was. <sup>35</sup> Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house and went off to a solitary place, where he prayed.

Did you see what Jesus did?

He made time to get away from the busyness of life. Time to be alone with the Father. Time to spend and be refreshed by God. If Jesus did that, do you think it's something we ought to do too?

Whenever I meet with people, I often inquire about their spiritual walk with the Lord Jesus: "Do you take regular time-out to be refreshed by God? Do you let Him speak to you and encourage you through his words revealed in the Bible? And do you take time out to tell God what's on your heart?"

"Don't be absurd", is the polite quizzical response "How can I do that when life is so busy".

Good question. There is so much to do. We have so much information being bombarded into our lives. To cope with it we have surrendered what is important in life to that which is urgent but unimportant.

### Segment 3

Whenever I read the paper in the morning there is so much bad news that it dries up my energy and makes me worry. You know what I mean. We read about the threat of terrorism, climate change, another murder, the destruction of our land, the corruption of governments, the lack of housing, the increasing levels of poverty, drought, and youth suicide. The news stories attack our hope and deafen our ears to the hope that God offers. So what do we do?

We usually try to resolve these problems by working harder to make things right. We worry more, take more risks with good intentions to make life work, and we discover ourselves so very busy.

And that's our problem. We will never make this life work. We need to spend time at the feet of God and listen, feel, see and experience His unfailing love. Let's listen to Jesus' words

**Matthew 11:27-30:-** "All things have been committed to me by my Father. No one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and those to whom the Son chooses to reveal him. <sup>28</sup> "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. <sup>29</sup> Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. <sup>30</sup> For my yoke is easy and my burden is light."

Rest and intimacy with the Father. That's what we need.

We need to sit and spend quiet times with our Heavenly Father and learn from His Son Jesus. Only the Father knows Jesus, and Jesus alone knows the Father, and to those he reveals Him to. Let Jesus, the Christ, teach you.

The story of Mary and Martha, may illustrate the point:

**Luke 10:38-42** <sup>38</sup> As Jesus and his disciples were on their way, he came to a village where a woman named Martha opened her home to him. <sup>39</sup> She had a sister called Mary, who sat at the Lord's feet listening to what he said. <sup>40</sup> But Martha was distracted by all the preparations that had to be made. She came to him and asked, "Lord, don't you care that my sister has left me to do the work by myself? Tell her to help me!" <sup>41</sup> "Martha, Martha," the Lord answered, "you are worried and upset about many things, <sup>42</sup> but only one thing is needed. Mary has chosen what is better, and it will not be taken away from her."

Martha had a choice. Just like Martha we have a choice too. Martha decided to be busy and miss out on what was important. Mary chose to do what was important. Jesus commended Mary's decision.

So what about you? Have you been busying yourself by listening to bad news and worrying about life? Or have you closed the door to the voices that try to grab your attention and suck out all the life out of you? Have you invited the words of God into your life?

If your tendency is to worry, can I suggest two secrets from the Bible?  
Jesus said:

**Matthew 6:34** Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.

Secondly Paul the Apostle's advice in his letter to the Philippians is worth remembering:

**Philippians 4:6-7** Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. <sup>7</sup> And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

Peace from God. That's quite a promise. Nothing can beat that!

## Conclusion

So what are the important things in your life?

If you put anything before God you're likely to fail in the long-term.

If you put work before God, you know very well work will drive you to the ground.

If you put family before God, you will be disappointed and never find rest.

But, if you put God first - then you're on the way to living a really dynamic life.

Can I suggest the following priorities: Put God first, then your family, thereafter work and whatever else is important in your life.

Focus on what is important and let the urgent and unimportant things fall by the wayside.

If you do, then I look forward to hearing your results.

Until next time, I'm Armen.