**August Reflections from Pastor Donald:** *The Unbusy Disciple*

About two weeks ago, I was driving up to Malverne, NY to attend the ordination service of a good friend of mine from seminary. I was surprised to hit traffic in NY on a Sunday afternoon and found myself in some pretty slow-moving segments of highway at times. At one point during this stop-and-go interlude, a car with one of its brake lights out pulled in front of me. This wouldn’t have been considered anything too out of the ordinary. But when a second, and then a third, car got in front of me with the same problem, all within a 20-minute time span, I knew something was up.

There are many different ways God speaks to us. The way God speaks to you is often not the same way God speaks to another, and vice versa. And oftentimes, God speaks to us in new and unexpected ways. On Sunday, July 23, 2017, God spoke to me in an unexpected way: through brake lights. It wasn’t an audible voice. It was just an overwhelming sense that a message was being communicated to me that I needed to hear. The moment I saw the third malfunctioning brake light, it was as if God was telling me, “Donald, your brake light’s not working.” I mentioned my revelation in comical-like fashion to the other two in the car I was driving with, but no sooner had I ushered the words from my lips than the reality of the conviction set in: My brake light is out.

Now, I’m not talking about my car. I’m talking about my life. I had not been intentionally carving out Sabbath time and giving myself the rest I needed on a week-to-week basis, and God was saying, “Donald, you’re not doing Sabbath well. You need to fix your brake light.” As a pastor who wants to model a life of faith and discipline, even the discipline of rest, this was a hard thing to realize. But I realized that in my striving and serving, I had let an adjective be placed in front of my title that should never take residence: the “busy” pastor. If this adjective is one that describes you, I invite you to ask “Why?” and to consider how you might move from being a “busy” to an “unbusy” person. This is not to say that your life is not characterized by tasks that need to be completed or that you stop being productive, efficient, and achievement-oriented in the work you put your mind to, but that the word “busy” should never define you.

Something needed to change when God spoke to me in this unexpected way, and I knew it. From a pastor’s perspective, Eugene Peterson writes, “How can I lead people into the quiet place beside the still waters if I am in perpetual motion? How can I persuade a person to live by faith and not by works if I have to juggle my schedule constantly to make everything fit into place?”

I imagine that, as a disciple of Christ, the same holds true for each of you. If you are in perpetual motion, you are going to miss out on a great deal of what God has called you to be and do in the places God has strategically positioned you in. Is God telling you your brake light’s out? I want to invite you into relationship with the God who commands us to rest for our own sake and well-being, and for God’s glory. If your brake light is, indeed, out, I want to invite you into the Sabbath rest God offers us as beloved children.

I’ve gone to my planner and carved out a Sabbath every Friday in the weeks to come and I plan to guard that time like an animal guards their young. I’ve changed one of my normal days in the office to a different day and tried to put daily and weekly rhythms in place that will be more conducive to living the life of an unbusy pastor. If your brake light is out, I hope you’ll consider what God might be calling you to in this next season. As I strive to live the life of an unbusy pastor, I hope you can learn to live the life of an unbusy disciple. And I bet you will be surprised at how much more productive and impacting you are for the Kingdom of God when you ensure your brake light is working.