

Sermon Preached on  
Ninth Sunday after Pentecost  
(July 17, 2016)  
"Pokemon Sit"

You may have noticed a strange sign on the front door with a red and white ball.

This is a Pokeball, and it invites Pokemon trainers to come and rest in the church after a battle. If this sounds like a foreign language, let me explain.

There is a craze going on - an augmented reality game called "PokemonGo." You probably have heard of it if for no other reason than it's all over the news. It is a computer game played on smart phones and based on the children's TV show / card game / video game that reached its zenith in the early 2000s. The new version uses GPS and overlays game pieces on a real GPS-type map. It requires that players physically go to a location to either capture Pokemon (which is short for pocket monster), get the necessary equipment to continue playing, or "battle" against another player. This has been called the single best incentive to get young people out walking again, and even though there have been glitches, there's no denying that this summer, they've logged a lot more time outside than in the past twenty years or so. Our church has been designated a "Pokegym" where such battles take place. Trust me, over the past week and a half, I have seen several people stand in front of the church with their phones - so I figured, why not invite them in?

Now, it may seem counterproductive to interrupt this moment where kids are actually spending time outside by saying, "come in and sit."

But sitting has its value too.

Let me give you a couple of quick examples from today's readings.

Mary and Martha were sisters, and they were friends with Jesus. Jesus came over one day with his disciples, and he was teaching them. Well, in those days, women were supposed to clean and cook and serve men - not learn. But Mary heard what Jesus was saying, and she wanted to know more. So, she dropped what she was doing and sat down with the disciples to listen. Martha kept working, kept busy, but she got mad that Mary was sitting, so she complained to Jesus. But Jesus said, sometimes, it's more important to sit and listen than to act. And he invited Martha to join them.

Now, we know that action is important. Last week we heard about the Good Samaritan who saw someone who was injured and helped him when nobody else would. There are a lot of hurting people in the world, so there's always an opportunity to act.

And still, Jesus says, come sit with me. Because you have to rest sometimes, and you have to listen sometimes before you know how to act or what action to take or even WHY you should act.

Sometimes, sitting still will help you know exactly what to do. The apostle Paul did a lot of traveling, but he also did a lot of sitting. When he wrote the letter we read from today, he was sitting in jail - for like two years! It was then that he heard that things weren't going so well in the Colossians church. He could not leave, of course - but Paul could think about those problems and write to them about how they could fix things.

Let me give you another example of how you can do good just sitting around. I've got a friend in the hospital. He can't do much for himself right now, but he can listen. Sometimes, the nurses or aides or doctors talk to him about what's going on in their lives. He shares a word or two but mostly listens, and they leave feeling better.

Sitting has its value. It helps you find time to talk to and - even better - listen to God. It helps you learn. And it helps you know what you need to do when you DO get up and go. Yes, we are called to go out and serve, and work, teach, feed, clothe, seek justice... All those things - absolutely.

But there is a balance - and we are the church of the Via Media, the Middle Way - the church of both and, not too much one way or the other but a balance between them. There is a healthy, holy balance between our Go and our Sit, our coming and our going. We want to find that balance.

So today ... sit. Listen. Be with each other. You can get your smart phones and play PokemonGo later on, but today - today - the Word of God is in our seats.

Amen