



August Minister's Message Before Summer Slips Away

There is something about August that makes us pay attention. Summer is still here. The days can still be hot, gardens are still producing, and there are still plenty of opportunities to sit outside in the evening. But somehow, August also reminds us that summer will not last forever. The days are beginning to get a little shorter. School supplies appear in store aisles. Vacation plans are winding down. Before long, the leaves will begin to change, and another season will arrive. Perhaps August is an invitation to slow down and savor what is here before summer slips away. One of the best ways to do that is through our senses.

Stop and smell. Take in the smell of freshly cut grass, a garden in bloom, or rain falling on a hot sidewalk. These are ordinary things, but they can become reminders of the incredible world God has created.

Stop and listen. August has its own soundtrack: the hum of cicadas, the rustle of leaves, an evening breeze, children laughing, music playing, or conversation around a table. And sometimes, in the midst of all the noise, we need to listen for the quiet voice of God.

Stop and taste. August gives us an abundance of good things to eat... fresh tomatoes, sweet corn, peaches, watermelon, berries, and perhaps an ice cream cone or two. Psalm 34 reminds us, "Taste and see that the Lord is good." Sometimes gratitude begins with something as simple as enjoying a good meal and remembering where our blessings come from.

Stop and look. Notice the flowers, the gardens, the sunset, the clouds, and the people around you. Jesus often taught his disciples by pointing them toward ordinary things, the birds of the air and the flowers of the field. Maybe part of faith is learning to see what we have become accustomed to overlooking.

Stop and feel. Feel the warmth of the sun, the coolness of water, the evening breeze. Feel the grass beneath your feet. And perhaps most importantly, feel the touch of another person... a handshake, a hug, a hand held in comfort. God's love often becomes tangible through the simple ways we care for one another.

The truth is, we don't have to wait for something extraordinary to experience God's presence. God is present in the ordinary moments of our lives. In a meal shared with friends, in laughter, in beauty, in the kindness of another person, in the quiet of an evening, and in the simple gifts of creation. Maybe that's one of the gifts August gives us. It reminds us to pay attention.

Before summer slips away, take some time to savor it.

- Smell the flowers.
- Listen to the sounds around you.
- Taste the goodness of the season.
- Look for beauty.
- Feel the warmth of the sun and the warmth of human connection.

And as you do, give thanks. Because these ordinary moments are not interruptions to our spiritual lives. They are our spiritual lives. They are opportunities to notice the goodness of God, to reconnect with one another, and to remember that every day is a gift.

As we continue living into our calling to Connect, Grow, and Serve, perhaps we can begin simply by being present... present to God, present to one another, and present to the world around us. Summer will slip away. But God's goodness will not. So, before it does, slow down. Pay attention. Savor the moment. And give thanks.

Pastor John

