

A few weeks ago I went to my absolute favorite place to sit and think: It's at the very tip of Bailey Island in Harpswell, and is called- appropriately – Land's End, since it seems to sit on the edge of the world.

So I'm sitting there on the rocks—looking out at the water. I scan the waves and notice several ducks. They flap around, then ride the waves for awhile, dive down into the water, flap some more, ride the waves some more, then eventually climb onto the rocks to get warm. Then they do it all again.

What are they really doing? Nothing.

They have fun, swim, eat, say hi to their friends, swim, rest. Certainly not productive, like us.

What do WE do?

Sleep. Eat. Get mad while reading the paper or watching the news. Go to work. Some of us love our work, some of us – maybe not so much—but after we've worked awhile, I think all of us are dreaming about when we can get away on vacation.

And what do we really want to do on vacation?

Rest. Swim, maybe. Eat. Lie in the sun. Rest some more. Nothing really. We don't want to do much of anything, just enjoy not working.

We would like to become...ducks.

We work and slave, and produce things and accumulate stuff and save—so we can do – what the birds and animals do every day?

I bet there are quite a few of you thinking of rebuttals to this.

But...we have to work hard to survive, to have enough for a place to live and food to eat!

And I agree with you one hundred percent except that we don't just work for enough money to live on. Enough money to eat with. Enough money to relax with. Enough to be sated, satisfied.

Because that's not what drives our world. We are taught from an early age—not always by our parents, but ALWAYS by society: earn more, buy more, get more things-- stuff-- travel, accumulate way past “enough”—into the realm of “never enough”. Greed.

Because the world tells us we never have enough.

*Someone in the crowd said to Jesus, "Teacher, tell my brother to divide the family inheritance with me."*

I don't know about you—but I think that “someone in the crowd” sounds like he's about 3 years old.

“Mommy, tell him to SHARE with me. It's not fair—he got MORE.” Is this sounding familiar to anyone?

And Jesus' answer is priceless: *“Friend,” he says— “Take care! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; for one's life does not consist in the abundance of possessions.”*

And the “person in the crowd” says, “What? The person who dies with the most toys DOESN'T win??”

Which brings me back to the subject of tiny houses-- small houses which range in size from about 100 square feet to 250 square feet. Now I wouldn't recommend them to families with 4 children, but for small families—they are getting some traction. One of their selling points: price. The prices range from 20,000 to about 50,000. They have all the necessities: bed room, bath, kitchen, living room. But there isn't a lot of room for extras.

That way of living is obviously not for everybody—but young people are finding the price tag and livability attractive. They are eliminating their debt. They are able to live without being worried constantly about bills.

Young couples say they like them because they can *work less but do more*.

And these people aren't saying that because they're slackers—they were saying it because they want to eliminate massive college debt, not have to live dependent on mom and dad forever, they want to have more time to do things they really want to do—spend time with each other, see friends more, travel, garden, volunteer in their communities and for causes they believe in.

Even people with non-tiny houses are trying to decide what they really *need*-- what is "enough". I know a couple of folks trying to decide what they really need, because they want to take a more fulfilling job that pays less.

Sometimes it's only by letting go of our accumulated stuff, lightening up-- sharing what we have with others, that allows us to *get* something that's much more important.

*"Life does not consist in the abundance of possessions."* Jesus is right, there. Sometimes life passes us by while we work ourselves to death-- and for what? A bigger house? To accumulate more stuff?

Not too long ago a friend and I were trying to figure out something to do on one of my Saturdays off. After naming several things we could do, it occurred to me that they all involved spending money-- shopping, movies, restaurant. It brought me up short. Why couldn't we do something that didn't involve cash? When did I stop thinking outside that cash-driven box?

What if we spent more time playing, swimming, hiking, cooking, gardening-- and just being with our families, friends and the people in our community. And maybe the occasional movie.

Maybe the ducks have it right. After all- they don't have an abundance of possessions, and yet they possess so much.

Maybe we need to learn to live more like a duck. Amen.