

When Distractions Turn Into Divine Appointments

She interrupted everything. Slowly but deliberately, she approached the platform as we all stared in wonder.

Apparently she had no idea she was disrupting a very prestigious gathering of clergy. There must have been 500 of us, all ministers, sitting silently in our lovely clothes at the posh Grand Hotel, enjoying a conference on how to be more efficient in the ministry.

Suddenly this woman had emerged and walked right down the center aisle. Now she cautiously extended her hand to our speaker, releasing a worn piece of paper from her grasp. "Here's my name. Please, please pray for me," she humbly pleaded.

This beautiful but broken piece of humanity was seeking mercy and release. She was frail, thin and looked utterly exhausted, but in this moment her truest need overshadowed any other concern, giving her the strength to cry out for help.

I sat motionless, wondering what would happen next. The atmosphere was tense. My heart was filled with compassion for this young woman as I watched her pensively await a response.

It was as if we were taking a test from God, a pop quiz of sorts, to determine the quality of love we possessed. Then the speaker said, "Folks, she has asked for prayer ... let's pray." That day I heard the sound of triumph—the church in intercession!

Jesus came for interruptions. He understood His mission. He was not trying to accomplish His own agenda but was about His Father's business. Our Savior was alert and on the lookout for just such strategic appointments—what we could call human

interruptions turned divine.

In fact, when I think about the ministry of Jesus I am impressed by how many times He was interrupted by commotion from the common. A vacation in the mountains ends with a frantic father and a lunatic boy in need of healing; a teaching seminar comes to a screeching halt when an adulterous woman is thrown at His feet; and a boat ride to the islands concludes with a demon-possessed wild man in chains serving as a tour guide.

But all these irritating “disruptions” found healing and forgiveness as a result of their encounter with Jesus. He did not resent them; He rescued them. There was such an obvious and genuine love emanating from His life that people flocked to Him. He was an attraction to distraction.

I wonder ... are people attracted to us? Do we possess such a genuine faith and love for all people that we come across to their suspecting eyes and distrusting hearts as authentic?

If so, then desperate people will come, and when they do, they will interrupt everything. They will walk right down the aisle of our comfortable lives and make a commotion.

Their presence demands a response. If we believe that the coming distractions are sent from heaven, we will move past merely being efficient to being effective. We will impact lives when we learn to embrace interruption.

But we must do more than respond; we must also initiate. We must become aware of the need around us and allow our compassion to take us to the next level of interaction.

The Word of God says of Jesus that “it was necessary that He go through Samaria” (John 4:4, MEV). Known for its heathen population, Samaria was a place any respectable Jew would avoid, even if it meant taking an extra days’ journey to arrive at the desired destination.

Not Jesus. He did not wait for hurting people to find Him; He was compelled to seek and save that which was lost (Matt. 18:11). Like Him, we have to go where the wounded are. Who else has the bread that revives the hungry and water that gives life to the thirsty?

For you see Jesus also interrupted. He interrupted a funeral, raised the dead and brought a celebration of life instead. He turned obstacles into opportunity and interrupted the natural to bring the supernatural.

So must we. We have the words of life to share with people. We have the love of Christ and the hope of eternal salvation to give others. If not us, then who? If not now, then when?

"The King will answer, 'Truly I say to you, as you have done it for one of the least of these brothers of Mine, you have done it for Me'" (Matt. 25:40).

Prayer Power for the Week of August 14, 2016

This week ask God to make you aware of the needs around you. Be sensitive to His Spirit's leading to put love into action. Pray that revival fires would sweep across the nation and shift it back toward righteousness. Continue to pray that the Lord of the harvest would send more laborers into His already ripe harvest field, for God's kingdom to expand around the world, for the upcoming elections and for effectual change to take place for the glory of God (Matt. 18:11; Matt. 25:40).