



What Stops You?  
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June 8, 2020

The Crossing Church  
Las Vegas, Nevada

## OPENING

This week we are continuing our study in the Gospel of Mark and God is asking us a question. “What makes us stop?” If we aren’t careful, we will be moving so fast that we will miss the very thing that God is trying to use to get our attention.

**QUESTION: What activities are you enjoying now that our city is opening up again?**

**QUESTION: What are you praising God for this week?**

## SCRIPTURE<sup>1</sup>

**Mark 10:46-52** Then they came to Jericho. As Jesus and his disciples, together with a large crowd, were leaving the city, a blind man, Bartimaeus (which means “son of Timaeus”), was sitting by the roadside begging. When he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to shout, “Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!” Many rebuked him and told him to be quiet, but he shouted all the more, “Son of David, have mercy on me!” Jesus stopped and said, “Call him.” So they called to the blind man, “Cheer up! On your feet! He’s calling you.” Throwing his cloak aside, he jumped to his feet and came to Jesus. “What do you want me to do for you?” Jesus asked him. “Rabbi, I want to see.” “Go,” said Jesus, “your faith has healed you.” Immediately he received his sight and followed Jesus along the road.

**2 Chronicles 7:14** If my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and I will forgive their sin and will heal their land.

## OBSERVATION

Our scripture begins with Jesus, His twelve disciples, those who took care of His needs, and a crowd of people who were making their way to Jerusalem. The huge crowds were traveling to Jerusalem because it was Passover week and all adult Jewish men were required to do this each year. They came from all over the Mediterranean, North Africa, and the Near East. What an amazing time for God’s plan to redeem the world to take place. For fourteen centuries, the Passover Feast was repeated over and over again so the metaphor of a lamb dying in place of sinful people was imbedded in the minds of Jewish people. Hopefully, they would recognize that Passover Lamb -- their Messiah – in the person of Jesus Christ. The timing was not accidental. There were crowds who would see what happened in the upcoming week and return to their homes far away, telling the story of the crucifixion and resurrection. There was no one who had a more important mission than Jesus and yet He stopped for blind Bartimaeus along the way. The amazing lesson for us is that He was never too busy to stop and be fully present in the lives of people around Him. He stopped for conversations, to meet needs and to show compassion and care.

**QUESTION: What times of the day or week are the busiest for you? When you are busy how do you react to interruptions?**

**QUESTION: What activity has kept you the busiest this past week? What will cause you to stop?**

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<sup>1</sup> All scripture is NIV unless otherwise indicated

We can imagine that Jesus was distracted when He stopped for a blind man in Jericho. That man was alone with his disability, with no safety net, and with no prospects for employment. His only way to sustain his life was through begging from others. Just like us, he had nothing to offer Jesus but his faith and Jesus stopped to illustrate this message: **His Kingdom is the place where people of power and resources use those powers and resources for those who have less power and fewer resources – an upside down Kingdom.**

**QUESTION: Jesus was open to “divine interruptions”. How do you recognize them? Tell us about your most recent experience with one.**

## **APPLICATION**

This pandemic we are all experiencing, has been a huge interruption for everyone, hasn't it? Jobs, schools, vacations, weddings, memorial services -- all were suddenly disrupted two months ago. Our kids are having a tough time, our marriages are stressed by too much togetherness, our finances are suffering, and there are no sports to watch! The current unrest in our cities right now is another disruption, yet it is an invitation to stop, to see, to listen and to understand. It is a time to engage in conversation with someone who is not like us; to seek to bring peace and unity through the name of Jesus because following Him requires that we stop for others. It's important to remember that all interruptions can either get in our way or they can show us the ways of Jesus. This is when Jesus comes to us and invites us to follow Him. All we need to do is ask, **“What can I do to help?” “How can I leverage whatever power and resources I have for your benefit?”**

**QUESTION: When you have asked these questions? What kind of responses have you heard?**

Ian Watson wrote two decades ago, “We live on a contaminated planet. It is contaminated on every level. It should have been quarantined from heaven. No reasonable God would go near it with a ten-foot pole. But Jesus is no reasonable God. He became a human being and took on your uncleanness and mine. Instead of the world infecting him, he infected the world with his immaculate infection and it's still spreading.” No matter what Satan is conjuring up for us, Jesus can use it for victory. He came to bring reconciliation between us and God and between us and one another.

**QUESTION: How is this time going to mark you and strengthen your faith and trust in God?**

**QUESTION: What step of faith is God calling you to? What areas is He calling you to stop?**

**QUESTION: What is tempting you today, because of your isolation, that is outside of God's will? What are you doing to resist it?**

**QUESTION: What burden has God placed on your heart and you have said, “Not today, Lord”?**

During this time of isolation, our church staff and volunteers have been busy – they have been interrupted by the many needs in our church fellowship and the Las Vegas community. The Production crew has prepared our on-line access to services, Crossing Recovery, Student Ministry and small group studies; young adults have been calling every senior in our church on a regular basis to see how they are doing; we have all been involved with community partners such as Casa de Luz, Family Promise, Hope for Prisoners and the list goes on, in supplying food, clothing, and finances for their needy ones. The work hasn't stopped, but we have stopped for others because **sometimes following Jesus requires stopping.**

**QUESTION: How have you been able to serve others during this time of isolation?**

God wants to heal our land and bring peace and unity to our nation. He is asking us to humble ourselves, pray and seek His wisdom, so let's do that together.

## **PRAYER**

Heavenly Father, help us to stop whatever we are doing and be divinely interrupted as we reach out to others and ask, “What can I do for you?” We humbly come to You for wisdom as we pray for every person who is suffering or grieving or is alone and sad. We pray for all who have encountered racism on a regular basis and for our men and women in law enforcement who are risking their lives to protect and serve our community with integrity. In Jesus' Name. Amen.



## QUESTIONS

**QUESTION:** What activities are you enjoying now that our city is beginning to open up?

**QUESTION:** What are you praising God for this week?

**QUESTION:** What times of the day or week are the busiest for you? When you are busy how do you react to interruptions?

**QUESTION:** What activity has kept you the busiest this past week? What will cause you to stop?

**QUESTION:** When you have asked these questions? What kind of responses have you heard?

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**QUESTION:** What burden has God placed on your heart and you have said, “Not today, Lord”?

**QUESTION:** How have you been able to serve others during this time of isolation?

## QUESTIONS YOU MAY WANT TO ADD

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