

Week of January 8-14

## **INTERRUPTIONS OR INVITATIONS?**

**Scripture Reading:** Read Matthew chapter 9

Like many people, my wife and I have lives that are full of appointments and often tight schedules. Children transported to school and picked up afterwards from some sporting practice, club or school event. A son in college that has to get back to school for a spring semester. Games, meets, concerts, and assemblies to attend. Doctor's appointments, dentist appointments, eye exams. Grocery shopping, bills to pay, meals to cook, a house to clean. People to see, work to do, sermons to prepare, bulletins to complete, letters to write, calls to make. Whew! Trying to carve out white space in the calendar requires great effort. The last thing we want to see is an interruption. We have agendas that must be kept!

What a contrast to Jesus. It seems as if his whole life was filled with interruptions. In Matthew 9, Jesus was in the process of teaching his disciples when he was interrupted by a synagogue ruler who needed Jesus to come and heal his daughter. While he was on his way to the ruler's house, he was interrupted again by a woman with a bleeding disorder. Interruption after interruption. Most of us would be frustrated with such interruptions. Not Jesus. Why? Perhaps it's because what we would call an interruption, he saw as a divine invitation from His Father in heaven.

To be sure, not every interruption in Jesus' life came from the Father. When Jesus was explaining to the disciples that he had to go to the cross, Peter interrupted and rebuked him. Jesus immediately discerned the interruption came from the devil and rebuked him.

In our lives, not every interruption is from the Lord either. Sometimes, it's someone attempting to force their agenda on our lives and these are to be resisted. Nonetheless, how many times have we missed a divine invitation because we were irritated with an interruption? Jesus stayed in communion with His Father so he was able to discern which interruptions were worth being interrupted for and which were not. At the end of his life, he was able to declare to his Father (as recorded in John 17:4) that he had completed the work God had given him to do. Jesus finished the Father's agenda because he was willing to accept God's interruptions in his life.

Interruptions or invitations? It's all in how you view them.

**Action Step:** For the next 24 hours, look for divine invitations from the Lord and respond as Jesus did with grace and truth

**Prayer Focus:** For sensitivity to see interruptions through the eyes of Christ

**Take-a-way:** *Divine invitations often come packaged in life's interruptions.*