

Time #6: Jesus – What Is Your Purpose?  
Dealing with Requests, Resistance, Interruptions  
John 17:1-4

Introduction:

A.

Don't Bother Me

In a church bulletin that crossed my desk this morning a preacher wrote: "For a number of reasons, it has become necessary to establish some guidelines for a better use of my time. The need to read, study, and write demands quietness and a lack of disturbance. Consequently, should you call or come by the office to visit and the church secretary informs you that I'm taking no calls or visits before 11 a.m., don't take it personally. I do want to be available and of service. However, unless it is important or serious, beginning this Monday, I will be tied up in preparing the lessons for the week ahead until 11 a.m. each morning. After that time, if you have need to talk, you are of course welcome."

Well, that's one way of handling interruptions. But it would be interesting to see how well it works.

I couldn't help but reflect on the fact that Jesus was often interrupted as he went about his business. While teaching the disciples of John he was interrupted (Matthew 19:18). While on his way to raise the daughter of Jairus he was interrupted (Matthew 19:20ff). He was interrupted by Peter when he was at prayer (Mark 1:35-39). He was interrupted by a leper (Mark 1:40ff). He was interrupted while he was preaching in Capernaum (Mark 2:1-12). And even on an important mission to Jerusalem he was interrupted by a blind beggar (Mark 10:46-52).

Jesus seemed to take all of these interruptions in stride. He did not permit them to throw him off-balance, or cause exasperation. Patiently he met the needs of those that came to him. Never once did he hang out a sign saying, "No appointments until 11 a.m."

A teacher once remarked, "You know...my whole life I have been complaining that my work was constantly interrupted, until I discovered that my interruptions were my work" (John Gipson, Little Rock, Arkansas).

B. A preacher replied, "It is true that Jesus and Paul often responded to interruptions; but Jesus and Paul didn't have to study for sermons."

C. Jesus was the most effective time manager, ever.

1. He knew why He was here. John 6:38

2. He did what He came to do. John 17:4

D. Goals are important. Alice found it so when she was confused and asked the Cheshire Cat,

"Would you tell me, please, which way I ought to go from here?"

"That depends a good deal on where you want to get to," said the cat.

"I don't much care where...," said Alice.

"Then it doesn't matter which way you go," said the cat.

"...so long as I get somewhere," Alice added as an explanation.

"Oh, you're sure to do that," said the cat, "if you only walk long enough." (*Journal of Religious Speaking The Christian Family.*)

E. Today, we wobble.

1. No rule tells me or you when to accept and when to refuse a request.

2. How much do I allow interruptions and when do I eliminate interruptions?

3. When do I change my course when people criticize and resist?

4. When do I proceed in the face of opposition?

- I. JESUS IN MINISTRY – WHAT REQUESTS DO I ACCEPT? WHAT REQUESTS DO I REFUSE? Mark 1
- A. Context.
    - 1. John. Mark 1:1-8
    - 2. Baptism. Mark 1:9-11
    - 3. Temptation. Mark 1:12,13
  - B. Preaching. Mark 1:14
  - C. Unclean spirits.
    - 1. “Let us alone!” Mark 1:23,24
    - 2. “Be quiet.” Mark 1:25-27
  - D. Jesus healed Peter’s mother-in-law without being asked. Mark 1:29-31
  - E. He willingly ministered to the whole city. Mark 1:32-34
  - F. Jesus often went to deserted places to pray where He would have less interruptions. Mark 1:35; Luke 6:12; Matthew 14:23; Mark 6:46; John 6:15; Luke 5:16
  - G. When the apostles found Him, He turned down the requests of the multitudes in order to go to other towns. Mark 1:36-39
  - H. The leper’s request was granted. Mark 1:40-44
  - I. People came to Jesus. Mark 1:45
- II. JESUS RAISING JAIRUS’ DAUGHTER – INTERRUPTION AND RESISTANCE.
- A. Jairus’ daughter was sick. Mark 5:21-24
  - B. Jesus was interrupted. Mark 5:25-34
  - C. Since God was late, the daughter died; hope was gone. Mark 5:35
  - D. Jesus was still on GST. Mark 5:36-39
  - E. The people on HST think God is deluded. Mark 5:40
  - F. GST works better than HST. Mark 5:41-43
- III. JESUS RAISING LAZARUS – DELAY.
- A. Definitions.
    - 1. GST: God’s Sovereign Time.
    - 2. HST: Human Standard Time.
    - 3. delay: “To postpone until a later time; defer”, page 493
    - 4. procrastinate: “To put off doing something, especially out of habitual carelessness or laziness; To postpone or delay needlessly”, pages 1444,1445 (*The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language, Third Edition*; Houghton Mifflin Company, ©1992)
  - B. Jesus learned that His friend, Lazarus, was sick. John 11:1-3
  - C. His schedule and the timetable of His friends were different.
    - 1. GST comes from:
      - a. God’s knowledge, wisdom. John 11:4
      - b. Desire to bring glory to God. John 11:4
      - c. Genuine, godly love. John 11:5
    - 2. GST:
      - a. Acts from God’s perspective, not man’s. John 11:6,7
      - b. Must deal with man’s questions and resistance. John 11:8-10
      - c. Acts with assurance in the midst of man’s misunderstanding and misguided zeal. John 11:11-16
      - d. HST is often disappointed with GST. John 11:17-32
      - e. GST works better than HST. John 11:33-45
  - D. Principles.

1. Am I praying for wisdom in general and for this situation in particular?  
James 1:5
2. Is there absolute truth involved? Matthew 19:16-22
3. Have I considered different choices; am I willing to live with my confusion long enough to make a wise decision? Hebrews 11:24-27
4. Have I taken – enough, too much – time to make this decision?
5. Why do I want to do or not do this thing, use my time in this way?
  - a. Fear?
  - b. Self-interest to the hurt of others?
  - c. Love?
  - d. Vengeance?
  - e. Personal spiritual growth?
  - f. Strength and encouragement of another?
  - g. Growth of my friend? Psalm 51:6; 1 Corinthians 13:1-3
6. Am I trying to please someone else or some others rather than doing what I believe to be right or best? Galatians 1:10
7. Am I settled in my mind – can I tell you (myself) what I am doing, why am I doing it, and what do I hope to accomplish? Romans 14:5; 1 Corinthians 7:37

Conclusion:

- F. Learning to use the time God has given me wisely and relating in time to others is often difficult and complicated. Acts 24:16
  1. *Exercise* (KJV).
  2. *Take pains* (RSV).
- G. God has promised to help.
  1. Wisdom. James 1:
  2. Every need. Philippians 4:19