

How many of you like to be interrupted? Show of hands, please. Doesn't matter if you're in the middle of something important or menial. I am slowly getting used to interruption. Having kids has something to do with that, I'm sure. Just ask any of our Canterbury students or any kid or counselor at St. Crispin's while I've been serving as chaplain and they will tell you that Clayton has perfected the art of timely interruption. Don't get me wrong here, I'm not complaining. Nothing puts you in your place quicker than an earnest kiddo with something "very important" to say in the middle of the "very important" thing you are trying to say or accomplish. At least I'm not foolish to possess any doubt as to which will be remembered most between the interjections of a precocious 5 year old or the blatherings of a 37 year old priest. Funny how that works.

Mark makes no mention of what Jesus' plans were for the day in question as we encounter it in this morning's gospel lesson. Jesus and his disciples have just returned from the "other side" where we left off last week. The Lectionary leaves out the amazing story of Jesus healing the Gerasene demoniac, leaving dismayed and frightened swineherds and citizens in His wake. Today they are back in familiar territory, and I am guessing they were pretty tired. Though Mark isn't clear, it seems to me we are sticking to a pretty clear chronology here. There is no mention of them eating or resting, or even Jesus having some time to pray and recharge so I'll be so bold as to suggest that was number one on the agenda.

Alas, there is no rest for the weary. As soon as Jesus and His disciples set foot on shore they are once again mobbed by a crowd. So much for catching your breath. From the crowd a man comes forward and throws himself at Jesus' feet, just as the Gerasene demoniac had done on the other shore. His name was Jairus, a leader of the synagogue. And he had no place left to turn. He placed his hope and his faith in this healer and teacher. He wasn't worried about decorum. He was done with pride. All he knew was his daughter was nearing death and didn't know what else to do.

Before he could gather himself, the crowd was heading towards his house. Sit for a moment with him as he feels a glimmer of hope rise in his heart. With determined steps he makes his way home, swelling with confidence that he could in fact protect and provide for his family, his daughter. He must have felt as though he were floating. Until he wasn't.

Imagine his confusion, maybe even his panic and anger as the crowd grinds to a halt. His mission was interrupted. What could be more important than his daughter? Can you put yourself in his shoes? What is going through your mind? You see Jesus stop in his tracks, you may or may not hear what he is saying. You see his disciples looking around, annoyed, confused. "What do you mean someone touched you? Who hasn't?!" All momentum is lost as the crowd begins to part and you can see a frantic woman, trembling as she is confronted by Jesus and his disciples. The only thing that matters to you is that you are no longer walking to your house, right? I imagine him pushing his way through the crowd towards Jesus, aching to get moving again. But the crowd is frozen, listening to this exchange between Jesus and the woman.

Who is this woman who interrupted Jairus' mission of God? As she explains herself I imagine audible gasps and people recoiling as she explains her twelve year malady. If you were in the crowd, you'd have been worried that coming into contact with her would make you ritually unclean. If you were Jairus you'd likely be furious that someone who should have been on the very outskirts of society, regardless of her fault or not, was interrupting the life and death task before you. Like I said, no one likes interruptions. I can almost hear Jairus saying to himself, or outloud, "that's great, your faith has made you well, we have more pressing matters before us."

And then the other shoe falls. "What's the use? She's gone." I can't imagine. Jesus overhears the news and offers only "Do not fear, only believe." Here we go with faith and fear again. I'll be honest, that's not what I would have wanted to hear if I were Jairus. But then again, who here likes to be reminded of what is right before us? Jairus knew there was something more

about Jesus than just some healings and new teaching. He knew, before he knew, that Jesus was the answer. Even as the sound of mourners, weeping and wailing filled the afternoon, Jairus knew that a bigger interruption was taking place.

As we brace for this next round of cultural strife and fear mongering, my prayer is that we allow ourselves to be interrupted. As we look at a hopefully brighter future for the Episcopal Church in no small part to the election of Bishop Michael Curry as our next presiding bishop, may we be open to interruption. As we continue on with our daily lives, focused on work, family, bills, and other distractions, may we be open to interruption. By what you may ask?

By the inbreaking of the Holy Spirit. By the presence and promise of Jesus CHrist who called and calls the outcast daughter, brother, friend, raised the dead to new life, and took the time to be present in the midst of his own life and troubles, ever aware that in those moments of interruption the very Kingdom of God could be breaking through. What are we missing when we have our blinders set with dogged determination moving from point A to point B? What are we missing when our best laid plans and notions become so set we unintentionally leave zero room for the Holy Spirit to wriggle in and shake things up? What are we missing when we have already made up our minds?

May God who sent his Son to retrieve us, to empower us, to save us, open our hearts and minds to see His work about us, especially when we aren't looking. May we be interrupted by his grace, by His wisdom, and by His love. What then do we have to fear? Not much.