

“Christ, Interrupted”
C Lent Three; Luke 13:1-35
March 24, 2019; 10:00 am
Congregational UCC, Buena Vista, CO
Rev. Rebecca K. Poos

I. JESUS ON A ROLL!

Whew! What did you notice in that passage?
Does Jesus *ever* take a breath?! A day off? What all
does Jesus do, in those 35 verses?

Was he the original multi-tasker?! Did it wear you out
to hear it?

Last week we went with Jesus to the Desert; the time of
tempting, testing, seeing what he was made of. He
endured many trials: hunger, thirst, doubt. Lures of
taking on too *much* –grasping for power; or, the lure
taking on too *little*—ignoring the call and choosing an
easy life instead, with no real concern for others.

Jesus was on a quest and a test to find his
God-breathed identity, and to live out his life true to
that identity. And now, in this passage today, he’s
plunged in! Apparently, he’s figuring it out. For, he is
headlong into every kind of ministry imaginable! About
his Father’s business in every way.

Jesus is challenged about current events and violence.
And he dishes out a challenge right back. This is no
“Jesus meek and mild.” He challenges the status quo,
challenges their ways of thinking about everything! In
the next breath, he tells a parable about an apple tree

that doesn’t bear fruit and gives his listeners
something to chew on about whether they are bearing
fruit.

Then, he teaches on the sabbath and promptly starts
breaking rules by *healing* on the sabbath. Then, he
has to face the consequences of that and confront the
religious rules that prevent compassion. Next, a story
about what the kingdom looks like and how we might
imagine life within this kingdom. And how we have
some work to do and changing of our ways and
thinking in order to get there.

Then, “he went on teaching from town to village,
village to town, but keeping on a steady course toward
Jerusalem.”

And then, more interruptions! Questions about who
will be saved. Questions about what is God’s to
determine and what is our responsibility for ourselves
and working out our salvation. And next! A fox! A
warning—from some Pharisees no less! Are they
suddenly the *good* guys?! “Herod is trying to kill you!”

And Jesus’ comes back with a clear sign that he’s
getting his identity and what he’s to be about figured
out:

“Tell that fox that I’ve no time for him right now.
Today and tomorrow I’m busy clearing out the
demons and healing the sick; the third day I’m
wrapping things up.”

Jesus just kept focused. Being who he was supposed to be; being about his calling and business, some of it planned, and some not. Some in logical sequence, and some completely out of left field, running at him from every direction. It would seem, anyway.

II. LIFE HAPPENS IN THE INTERRUPTIONS

Is your life like that? Going from one thing to another, balls coming at you from every direction, but deflecting them, and throwing them back; staying the course, keeping your eyes on the prize. Figuring out your Identity, launching into your life's call and working the plan, until you neatly wrap it up, with success and satisfaction, at the end? No?

Well, Jesus' wasn't either. So, don't be discouraged! We are not trying to follow in someone's footsteps who just sailed through everything with ease, never interrupted, and never distracted from the course to an easy slide into home plate! You know the rest of the story.....

Interruptions

March 18, 2019

Written by **Donna Schaper**

Jesus said to them, "You give them something to eat." -

Luke 9:13

There must be some kind of sacrament to interruptions, like at open-air assemblies or picnics, where some spiritual guru demands your food.

My husband and I sat down to evaluate our life the other day. We realized that everything important that had happened was an accident, not an intention. We were steered by interruptions, not by grand plans. When Daddy died. When the twins were born. When the call to Chicago came. When the settlement for the car accident made the down payment. When the book didn't sell. When the friend in Paris died. When we were lost in Vermont.

A friend told me the story of how she was jinxed in the seventh grade by a certain project she had to do. It was to build a birdbath out of any materials she could find. I don't know why that assignment interrupted her. But I do know that another kid in her class built it for her, permitting her to advance. Angel mischief? Coincidence? Accident? What is clear is that we get by with the help of our friends.

Another friend tells of not knowing what to do in high school so she enrolled as a shop major, becoming the first woman so to do. She has a rewarding career as a carpenter. Not knowing what to do next is often the best platform for finding the unusual. Why not you?

Jesus is an interrupter, not just a disrupter. There is a difference. Disrupters tear down; interrupters build up. They let you enter the unknown feast.

III. IN REAL LIFE

I read that devotionals the other day, right after reading this 13th chapter in Luke, and I thought, Yep! Isn't that the way life is? For us *and* for Jesus? I immediately thought back over the main events in my life, like Rev. Schaper did, and sure enough, an awful lot of new and *good* directions, adventures and endeavors came as a result of an interruption!

The first one that comes to mind, is I was dating a guy off and on named Mark, when into my life walked Clarke!

IV. EVER HAVE INTERRUPTIONS?

Think back on the interruptions that have happened in your life. Was it a blessing? A new path opening up that led to new insights and explorations? Even a sacrament, where you saw God's working presence in your life and were allowed to "enter the unknown feast?"

Or, was it more of a disruption, a derailment, a knock upside the head?

Interruptions can indeed be a *holy* thing—a place where God breaks into our lives in amazing ways. Where we *find* God in the midst of the chaos, gathering us like a mother hen under Her wings of comfort and protection.

They can also be brutally painful—and take us off the tracks of life for a time—such as happens with an illness or death; faith crisis, job loss, family disruption or community tumult.

Or, they can be all of the above! Wonderful, exciting, energizing, inspiring, stressful, painful, derailing, disorienting, disarming and alarming! And *still* a holy thing. A place where God breaks into our lives; where we *find* God in the midst.

V. FULL CIRCLE

We had an interruption in our lives recently that was kind of all of the above at once! In a weak moment, right about my birthday, we learned of a mama dog who had recently been rescued and needed a loving home. She had been through a horrific experience in her short two years, most recently having puppies in a too-small crate in a cold, open pick-up bed on a mountain pass in winter.

She persevered and cared for those pups through thick and thin and now it was her turn to be gathered under some warm and welcoming arms.

Now, the *last* thing we needed was another dog, but something tugged at my maternal heartstrings in a way I couldn't deny, and I knew this interruption to our family was a necessary one. We didn't "need" another dog, we thought, but she needed us and we felt led to gather her in like Jesus' mother hen.

When I learned that the shelter had assigned her a birthdate that was my maternal grandmother's, I knew it was a holy moment. With my mom dying recently, and my own child launched and far away,

our hearts and home had room and a longing for some “mother-love.”

And....there was chaos, and adjusting, and ever-changing dynamics in the family system! For Cheyenne found her puppyhood again, and all the mischief that goes with it! But, she’s very sweet and loves to be right with us and in the midst of life. She’s wonderful company and loves on everyone—whether they need it or not. So, I brought her to church several times, when I was working in the office. Many folks who dropped in found themselves in a “therapy session” of sorts!

And then, just the other day, I learned a big lesson about interruptions coming full circle.

For the last few weeks I’ve been trying like the devil to delve in and clean my office—both church and home offices, actually. Every day I marked out on my calendar that THIS would be the day—I’d start first thing in the morning and work till I was done—that day would soon get filled up with meetings, errands, visits, people in crisis. Yep! Interruptions.

Every time I’d get to the office and start tackling the desk, the “stuff to do first, before the cleaning and filing” would commandeer the entire day and *more* projects needing my attention would pile on. It was starting to make me nuts! By this past week I was more than nuts—I was committable.

I started Tues. morning with great intentions to clean, and by Thursday afternoon I was barely skimming the surface. I told Clarke that I’d have supper with him but was not coming home till *significant* progress had been made and he’d just have to deal with it! I’d just had too many interruptions and maybe late on a Thursday night I could focus.

But, there’s just one problem, it’s a little dark and creepy at the church alone in the dark—especially late at night.

And this is where one interruption saved the day for another.

Remember that dog we didn’t need? The one we rescued that invaded our family and we wondered what we were thinking?! Doyle can tell you—it seems Cheyenne is a fine *watchdog*! Doyle came in to change the sign, and they ended up being fine friends. But at first she sat on my foot and checked him out thoroughly. She spent the rest of the evening tucked back under the corner of my desk—not causing any problems, but I knew I was safe and could get my work done! (And Clarke could quit worrying about me being over here alone in the dark.)

Interruptions.....

Unexpected, unplanned, sometimes unwanted or unwelcome. Other times, a gift from the heavens. Sometimes, an interruption can be the best thing that ever happened to us! And sometimes, we have to stop

and pay attention to realize that. Or look back much later with the wiser eyes of hindsight.

Even when we *think* we've passed the Identity Test, figured out what we're called to do and who we're called to be, and we go out and live the call, we are reminded, like Jesus, that ministry—and life itself—happen *in* the interruptions. In the *midst* of the chaos, the change, the challenge and the calling to follow in faith.

“Something in us knows that we have to die, be displaced, or interrupted, so that a greater life can emerge. (David Tracey, *The Everyday Empowerment of a Shamanic Life*)

“New ideas stir from every corner. They show up disguised innocently as interruptions, contradictions, and embarrassing dilemmas. Beware of total strangers and friends alike who shower you with comfortable sameness, and remain open to those who make you uneasy, for they are the true messengers of the future.
– Rob Lebow

Prayer

Permit us to understand interruptions as sacraments, as ways that the Holy enters our home. Let there be wholeness to my life and let me see interruptions as unexpected blessings.
Amen.