

# Infernal... Inter...rup... ...tions!

by Steve Brown



Coffee and Jesus always get me up in the morning. Well, this morning neither was able to make it better. Each morning I go into my office, start the coffee, then walk downstairs to the kitchen to get a large glass of water with ice. Today, when I walked back into my office, I could smell the coffee, and I looked forward to rejoicing in the day that the Lord had made.

That's when I set down the glass of water, accidentally hit it with my hand and knocked it over, spilling water all over my computer, the work on my desk, my chair and my pants. It was sort of like eating a live frog first thing in the morning, so you know that nothing worse will happen to you the rest of the day.

*Wait. You're telling me that in a world with cancer, a crashing economy, a war in Ukraine, a global pandemic and people dying all over the world, you had a miserable day because you spilled some water?*

Of course not! Well...uh...yeah. I'm not so shallow to think that spilled water is the equivalent of cancer, war or death. However, when your pants are wet and your computer won't work, it's hard to remember to put things into perspective!

Now to move from the frivolous to the important. This morning, I thought about interruptions and priorities, and then I thought about Jesus. You've read the story in Matthew 9—Jesus encountered a woman suffering from a discharge of blood for twelve years. At the time, Jesus was headed to the home of a ruler whose daughter was either dying or had died. He had places to go, things to do, God's work to be accomplished, and this woman got in the way.

She knew she was interrupting an important man doing important things, so the woman sneaked up behind Jesus, thinking she could steal her healing. *If I can just touch his coat-tail, she thought, I'll be healed.* And she was. In fact, Jesus was pleased that she came to him and said to her, "Take heart, daughter; your faith has healed you" (Matthew 9:22). But this woman was not on Jesus' *To-Do List* for that day.

Does that ever happen to you? Your day is planned and doable, and then something or someone gets in the way. Maybe it's a spilled glass of water, or

demands of family, or an accident, or a pleasant surprise—or a tragedy. The train was moving along just fine and then it gets knocked off the rails.

There's an old pastor's prayer that has more reality to it than the punch line would suggest: "Lord, I could do my job if it weren't for all these people." Maybe so, unless, of course, the people ARE your job.

What do we do with these infernal interruptions? The first thing is to remember that God is the God of interruptions. In Acts 27, Paul found himself called to an unexpected trip to Rome, which started with the interruption of his arrest in Jerusalem. And on the way to Rome, there was a shipwreck—an interruption of an interruption.

The Bible is full of interruptions from Genesis to Revelation.

James wrote "Come now, you who say, 'today or tomorrow we will go into such and such a town, spend a year there and make a profit'—whereas you do not know what will happen tomorrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapor that appears for a little time and then vanishes away. Instead, you ought to say, 'If the Lord wills, we shall live and do this or that.' As it is, you boast in your arrogance..." (James 4:13-16, NKJV).

But there is more than just recognizing the God we serve is a God of interruptions. We must also learn to set aside the irritation and be thankful for the interruptions. Paul wrote that we are to be "always giving thanks to God the Father for everything" (Ephesians 5:20). It's a radical and counterintuitive thought.

That brings me to Thanksgiving. Holidays irritate me. Do you know why? Because they are interruptions, that's why! It's a day lost in a busy week and one has to work twice as hard the day before Thanksgiving and the day after Thanksgiving just to do what needs to be done. Why can't we just say a Thanksgiving prayer or something?

It doesn't matter what the "interruption" is...life is all about Him. He loves us and he has it all in control. I'm going to try and remember that and be thankful for these infernal interruptions! ☐

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