

A Prayer to Look Beyond Life's Interruptions

By Boyd Bailey

"Come, see a man who told me everything I ever did. Could this be the Messiah?" John 4:29 (NIV)

Early one morning as I sat in my prayer chair at home, my precious 7-year-old grandbaby Lily caught me reading and praying the Psalms.

Instead of being glad she saw her Pop reading the Bible, I was a little annoyed my time with God had been *interrupted*. As she crawled into my lap, my heavenly Father spoke words that warmed my heart as He reminded me, *"My dear son, this is not an interruption, but an illustration of My love, care and affection for you."*

As she sat in my lap I couldn't help but notice several bruises, scratches, bug bites and a matted band aid on her legs. To which the Holy Spirit whispered, *"Boyd, you are bruised and broken — and I Am — your Comforter and Healer."*

Peace, joy, confidence, hope, faith and love all at once erupted in my heart, moving me closer to Christ. My heavenly Father illustrated through an *interruption* what I was seeking all along: His loving presence.

One day an unnamed Samaritan woman, going about her daily business, was interrupted by a stranger who asked her for a drink of water: *"The Samaritan woman said to him, 'You are a Jew and I am a Samaritan woman. How can you ask me for a drink?' (For Jews do not associate with Samaritans.) Jesus answered her, 'If you knew the gift of God and who it is that asks you for a drink, you would have asked him and he would have given you living water'"* (John 4:9-10, NIV).

He asked her for a favor — a drink of water — but what was Jesus' bigger idea for stopping by the well? To give a gift. He offered it to this searching, hardworking woman who needed living water for her thirsty soul. The Messiah she'd heard about was in her presence to offer her

His forgiveness and love.

So she couldn't help but tell everyone what Jesus had done: *"Come, see a man who told me everything I ever did. Could this be the Messiah?"* (John 4:29)

Our lives are full of interruptions.

Traffic, a sick child, a financial surprise, a long line, a needy neighbor, a complaining customer, a co-worker in crisis, unfaithfulness, divorce, illness and death. These all look, sound and feel like interruptions. However, with eyes of faith we have the ability to look beyond life's interruptions and instead see illustrations of God's love. Interruptions can be appointments for compassion. Life may feel unfair, but in your everyday routine recognize the Lord in the little things and love like Jesus. Interruptions represent people to love and are opportunities for you to be loved!

Loving people is the business of Jesus' followers. It may be a person in your immediate presence, or it could be an individual in your peripheral vision, such as a restaurant server who needs to be included in your mealtime prayer.

A doctor or nurse who cares for you, a loved one who needs to be encouraged, or a critic who doesn't have the full story — they too need the gifts of your patience and grace. Look for illustrations of God's hand at work,

home, vacation and especially during the holidays. Let interruptions slow you down, so you can better focus on receiving and giving God's love.

Has your life been interrupted? How can you turn this into an opportunity to love and be loved?

Lean into God and learn of His love for the person who may have interrupted your life, then go share your story.

Today, settle into the lap of your Lord, rest secure in His comfort and compassion. He beautifully illustrates His story of love for you, written with grace by His Son and your Savior, Jesus.

Heavenly Father, open my eyes of faith to see Your illustrations of love in the interruptions of my life today. Lord, help me see these moments as opportunities to love and to accept Your love and the love of others. Help me share the good news of Your great love with everyone I know. Slow me down, so that I can receiving and give to others. In Jesus' Name, Amen.