

Whose “Private” World Are We Ordering? (The Radical Priority of Interruptions)

Matthew 14:10, 13-19 NKJV

(10)...John [was] beheaded in prison.

(13) When Jesus heard it, He departed from there by boat to a deserted place by Himself. But when the multitudes heard it, they followed Him on foot from the cities. (14) And when Jesus went out He saw a great multitude; and He was moved with compassion for them, and healed their sick. (15) When it was evening, His disciples came to Him, saying, "This is a deserted place, and the hour is already late. Send the multitudes away, that they may go into the villages and buy themselves food." (16) But Jesus said to them, "They do not need to go away. You give them something to eat." (17) And they said to Him, "We have here only five loaves and two fish." (18) He said, "Bring them here to Me."

If there was ever a time to “order His private world” and spend some time alone, it was now. Most folks would have taken time off from activities, even ministry, to grieve over the death of a loved one. In this passage, as Jesus was apparently going to do just that, “multitudes” with multitudinous needs “followed Him.” Advice given to Him today would likely be, “ignore them until You are done grieving”, or something similar.

Gordon MacDonald wrote, *“[Jesus] knew what we conveniently forget: that time must be properly budgeted for the gathering of inner strength and resolve in order to compensate for one's weaknesses”*

{“Ordering Your Private World”, 1984 (reprinted 2000)}

But what did Jesus do during this time that most would see as needed for “gathering inner strength”? He “had compassion” for those who came to Him with their needs, and ignored the budget of His own time and needs. Jesus only did what He saw the Father doing (John 5:19) – in this case, the Father had compassion on those who needed His touch and love, and Jesus responded.

The Gospels are filled with accounts of Jesus (some would have to say based on their convictions) not properly budgeting for His own time and needs; and instead, ministering to multitudes, day and night. Jesus lived a life of continuous communion with the Father, and there were times He pursued isolated intimacy with the Father. But when multitudes with needs, maybe some not very urgent, followed Him after the death of His loved one, He chose to be available for them. He trusted His Father to give Him the needed strength and peace.

Do we have a “private world”? Or are we “not [our] own”, having been “bought with a price” (1 Cor. 6:19, 20). Do we trust God with our needs when we are interrupted?

As Gordon MacDonald also wrote in the same book – *“Called people have strength from within, perseverance and power that are impervious to the blows from without.”*

Let’s live our lives as those who have one priority: do what we see the Father doing, which may very well likely include having compassion and love for those perhaps interrupting us, and let’s also allow God to take care of **our** “private” worlds.