

ASBURY CIRCUIT RIDER

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Unsure (Pace)



It happens to all of us. We're exiting off the interstate and see someone with a sign at the end of the ramp, asking for money. Sometimes we roll down our window and offer a small donation. Most of us, most of the time, ignore them. After all, we're almost always in a hurry

to get somewhere else. And if we're on the off-ramp, we're probably getting close to our destination.

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Doubtful (Pace)



Our microwave at the parsonage hasn't worked for at least a couple of years now. For the most part, we don't miss it. But there are moments. You pour a cup of coffee, get distracted, and come back to it cold. That's when you miss the microwave. Or when you're trying to defrost something quickly, or warm something

up in a hurry. There are things a microwave does that are really convenient.

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April Showers ... bring
May flowers!!



DONATE

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Before we ask why we hurry, we need to be honest about who is sitting on the side of the road. Not necessarily, at the end of an exit ramp. Rather, figuratively speaking, who is living on the margins and could use some help?

I'm talking about the family that can't keep up with their utility bills and wonders how long the lights will stay on. It's the person who cannot afford stable shelter and doesn't know where they will sleep next week. It's the household stretching groceries, trying to make something healthy out of almost nothing. It's the neighbor who needs medical care but cannot afford to see a doctor.

These are not statistics. These are our neighbors.

And while none of this is new, the strain has grown. Over the past year, more people have found themselves living on that edge—closer to the roadside than they ever expected to be. The gap between stability and crisis has narrowed, and for many, it takes very little to fall from one into the other.

A big part of the problem is that support has been reduced. Funding has been cut back. Programs have been limited. Safety nets have been stretched thinner than they were before. And when that happens people don't disappear. They don't simply figure it out. They move further to the side of the road.

We are often told there are reasons for this. We need to prioritize security. That we have to protect what's ours. That resources are limited, and difficult decisions must be made. On the surface, that can sound reasonable. It can even sound responsible.

But we should at least pause long enough to ask what kind of decisions we are making—and who bears the cost of them.

Because when a nation chooses to invest more heavily in power, in dominance, in the economics of war, while at the same time withdrawing support from those in need, that is not simply strategy. It is a moral decision. And the cost of that decision is not theoretical. It is carried by people—people who find themselves pushed further and further to the margins.

As Christians, we talk a lot about sin, and too often our focus is on behavior that we don't agree with. But when we speak of sin in a moment like this, we are not talking about one person's behavior or one leader's character. We are talking about something deeper. A pattern. A direction. A way of ordering our life together that allows us to walk past suffering in order to pursue something else—security, prosperity, influence, control.

Let's be clear: I'm not saying it is a sin to drive past someone holding sign asking for help.

Very few of us have extra, and I suspect most of us are quite generous. Nor is the solution stopping for every sign we see. The problem isn't this narrow, and the solution isn't either.

Throughout history, voices of faith have spoken into moments like this—not to take political sides, but to tell the truth. To name when something being called necessary is, in fact, harmful. To question whether what is being presented as urgent is actually faithful.

Because sometimes the reasons we are given—security, strength, necessity—can become a kind of camouflage. A way of explaining why we cannot stop. Why we cannot help. Why we must keep moving.

But before we place all of that at a distance, we should be honest about ourselves. We use the same logic. We tell ourselves we don't have time. We cannot afford it. We have too much going on. And so we keep moving. Not because we do not care, but because stopping feels costly.

And that is where the deeper question begins to take shape—not just about what is happening in the world, but about what is happening within us. What kind of people are we becoming in a world that keeps moving faster? What happens when we encounter someone on the side of the road?

Virginia Bigger
Sylvia Pittman
Mirium Watson



Dean Lamoreaux Norma Buzzard
Nancy Elston

COMING UP THIS WEEK: APRIL 20- 26

April 20	Mon	6:00pm	Leadership Team
April 21	Tue	9:00am-until gone	Produce will be available each week, along with canned goods, until further notice
		12Noon-6pm	Taco Tuesday
April 22	Wed		
April 23	Thu		
April 24	Fri		
April 25	Sat		
April 26	Sun	New Beginnings	Contemporary Worship

A stylized illustration of a gerbera plant. It features several bright red flowers with yellow centers, growing on green stems. The base of the plant is composed of large, rounded green leaves. A dark, irregular shadow is cast beneath the plant, suggesting it is sitting on a surface. The background is plain white.

Upcoming Worship Series "Pace"



When I visited the Holy Land several years ago, one of our guides said something that has stayed with me ever since. As we were moving from one historic site to another, he paused and asked our group a simple question: "Have you found yourself running where Jesus walked?"

It was an observation more than a criticism. Most pilgrims arrive in the Holy Land eager to see as much as possible in a limited amount of time. The result is that people often hurry from one sacred place to the next, rushing through the very landscapes where Jesus once moved slowly from village to village.

But the guide's question lingered with me long after the trip ended.

Why do we run where Jesus walked?

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Book Club News



Beginning with Easter, we start a new series, *Pace,* accompanied by a book that helps us pace ourselves in a

world that won't. Given the theme of our series, don't read this book if it

causes you to hurry more than you already are. That's the point.

If you pay attention to the pace of life around us, it often feels like everything is speeding up. News travels instantly. Messages arrive constantly. Work and responsibilities spill into evenings and weekends. Even our leisure time can feel hurried, as if we are trying to squeeze one more experience into a schedule already too full.

Many of us sense that something about this pace is unhealthy. We feel distracted more often than attentive. We feel rushed even when we are doing things we care about. And we sometimes find ourselves reacting quickly to the world around us rather than responding thoughtfully.

In other words, many of us are running, rather than walking. The problem, of course, is that life was never meant to be lived at a sprint. Human beings were created for rhythms of work and rest, attention and reflection, engagement and renewal. Yet modern culture seems determined to push us faster and faster.

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Upcoming Worship Series — “Pace”

The question feels especially relevant in today's world. Our lives are packed with schedules, deadlines, notifications, and responsibilities. We move swiftly from one task to the next, often feeling like we're always trying to catch up with something just out of reach.

Many of us experience life at a pace that would have been unimaginable in earlier generations. Information arrives instantly. Demands on our time follow us everywhere we go, through our phones and computers. Even moments meant for rest are easily filled with more activity.

It is not surprising that many people today describe themselves as tired, distracted, or overwhelmed.

Yet when we read the Gospels, we encounter a very different rhythm of life.
Jesus walks.

Jesus walked from town to town, speaking with people along the way. He stops when someone calls out to him. He pauses to notice those who are overlooked by others. He withdraws regularly to quiet places to pray. Even when crowds press around him with urgent needs, he does not seem driven by the same hurried pace that shapes so much of our modern experience.

Is it possible that Jesus knows something that we don't?

In the stories of the resurrection, that pattern continues. The risen Christ appears in unhurried moments—walking with two disciples along the road to Emmaus, speaking Mary's name in the garden, sharing breakfast with his friends by the shore.

These are not hurried encounters. They unfold slowly enough for recognition, conversation, and understanding.

Come to me, all you who are weary and carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest.

Matthew 11:28

During the weeks from Easter to Pentecost this year, we explore what it might mean to rediscover that pace in our own lives. Each week, we will examine a Gospel story in which Jesus stops, listens, or withdraws from the pressures around him. Together, we will ask a simple question that will guide the entire series:

Upcoming Worship Series — “Pace”

Why run when Jesus walked?

This question is not meant to criticize the busy realities of modern life. Most of us carry responsibilities that cannot simply be set aside. But the question does invite us to reflect on the deeper rhythms that shape our days.

What happens to our relationships when we move through life too quickly?

What happens to our ability to listen—to God or to one another—when our attention is constantly divided? And what might change if we began to learn the slower, more attentive way of life that Jesus modeled?

To help us explore these questions more deeply, you’re invited to read *The Ruthless Elimination of Hurry* by John Mark Comer. The book explores how the pace of modern life affects our spiritual lives and introduces practices that can help people rediscover a healthier rhythm.

You do not need to read the book to follow the sermon series, but those who choose to do so may find that it adds another dimension to the conversation.

Easter celebrates the good news that death does not have the final word. But the resurrection also invites us into a new way of living—a way shaped not by fear, pressure, or constant urgency, but by the steady rhythm of love.

Perhaps the weeks ahead will give us an opportunity to slow down just enough to notice where Jesus is walking beside us. And perhaps we may discover that the most meaningful moments in life rarely happen at running speed.

From Easter to Pentecost, we will explore seven Gospel stories where Jesus either slowed down or stopped, and what happened at Pentecost that launched the first church:

<u>Episode</u>	<u>Sundays</u>	<u>Title</u>	<u>Scripture</u>
One	April 5	Hurried	Luke 24:13–35
Two	April 12	Doubtful	John 20:24–29
Three	April 19	Unsure	Mark 10:46–52
Four	April 26	Busy	Luke 10:38–42
Five	May 3	Prayer	Mark 1:35–39
Six	May 10	Sabbath	Mark 2:23–28
Seven	May 17	Worry free	Matthew 6:25–34
Eight	May 24	Rhythms	Acts 2:1–13

Our journey runs from Easter to Pentecost.

Please join us each Sunday at 10:30 a.m. We share our weekly episodes on [Facebook](#) and our [YouTube channel](#), and go live at 10:30 a.m. You can find these links and more information about us, or join our live broadcast on our [website](#), FlintAsburyChurch.org.

Pastor Tommy

Series concept and some content comes from: John Mark Comer. *The Ruthless Elimination of Hurry*. Colorado Springs : WaterBrook, 2019. ISBN 9780525653097.



“Feed Flint”

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A meal goes a long way for a senior living alone, a family struggling to make ends meet, or a child fearful of empty shelves at home. But for the residents of Flint who carry the effects of lead-tainted water, nutrition is critical. Feed Flint provides locally grown, chemical-free, fresh produce to residents living in and around Flint. And we're hoping that you can help us provide 10,000 meals this summer.

Feed Flint includes takeout meals, produce boxes with recipes, and home deliveries as part of our work to guide and support families in moving to sustainable abundance. The reality is that Michigan's food insecurity levels got worse during the COVID-19 pandemic, and this summer's recovery is leaving behind those at the most risk of having to miss meals.

Flint families continue to struggle with the ongoing effects of the water crisis.

We're bringing together the resources of the Asbury Community Development Corporation. This includes Asbury Farms, the South Flint Soup Kitchen, the Asbury Community Help Center, multiple food pantries, and our Sizzling Culture Mobile Food Trailer. Our plan is to care for our neighbors when they need it most. We accept all people as they are, and our doors are always open to anyone.

Asbury Farms provides locally grown produce used to create fabulous and nutritious meals. Our seed-to-table approach is community-based. This not only helps families make it through emergencies and crises. We help move families towards sustainable abundance.

Our Sizzling Culture program provides jobs and new skills to our city's youth. This includes year-round employment. Our staff and most of our volunteers come from the neighborhoods we support. We call this sustainable abundance because families move from need-based on scarcity to enough based on community-generated abundance.

Our work is also about food and justice. Our vision is a revitalized community where every resident can use their talents and passions for the common good, where children grow into active citizens. And all residents can enjoy safety, good health, and a culture that fosters life-long learning and satisfying lives. This summer, help us address food insecurity and strengthen Flint's budding local food system by supporting the Feed Flint campaign. Thank you for taking the time to see what we're doing and considering how you can help.

**Donate to our Feed Flint Campaign by visiting:
flintasbury.org/feed-flint-donate**

LIFE GROUP QUESTIONS & MORE:

What do you want me to do for you?" Jesus asked him.

Mark 10:46–52

NOTES FROM WORSHIP

QUESTIONS FOR LIFE GROUPS:

1. Read Mark 10:46–52 and this week's Circuit Rider article titled Unsure.
2. This week, choose one moment to stop—not fix everything, not solve the system—but notice, listen, and respond to someone you might normally hurry past.
3. Reorder one priority. Take one concrete step—through giving, advocacy, or service—that reflects compassion over convenience. Align one decision with the kind of world Jesus reveals.
4. How can your group members help you be more receptive to hearing and understanding the Word of God this week? Pray for one another to be blessed by the Holy Spirit with greater courage.



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That is why our next book club selection may feel especially timely.

Our companion book for our new series is *The Ruthless Elimination of Hurry*, written by pastor and teacher John Mark Comer. The book takes a close look at the pressures of modern life and asks an uncomfortable but important question: What is hurry doing to our souls?

Comer begins with a striking observation that has resonated with many readers. Borrowing from the spiritual writer Dallas Willard, he notes that hurry may be the greatest enemy of spiritual life in our time. Not because we are doing bad things, but because we are doing too many things too quickly. When life moves at a relentless pace, it becomes difficult to pay attention to God, to other people, or even to our own inner lives.

If you have ever found yourself distracted during prayer, impatient with people you care about, or exhausted by the constant flow of information, you may already understand what Comer is describing. But the book is not simply a critique of modern life. Its deeper purpose is to explore how followers of Jesus might live differently.

Comer suggests that the life of Jesus offers a striking contrast to the hurried pace we experience today. In the Gospels, Jesus strolls through villages and along dusty roads at walking speed. He stops for conversations. He notices people others overlook. He withdraws regularly for prayer. And even when crowds gather around him with urgent needs, he refuses to be driven by the same frantic urgency that shapes so much of our world.

In other words, the life of Jesus moves at a different pace.

Comer invites readers to consider what it might look like to arrange our lives around that same rhythm. Drawing on both ancient Christian practices and modern insights about attention and distraction, he describes several habits that help people slow down and rediscover a deeper way of living. These practices include silence, Sabbath rest, simplicity, and intentional community—practices that have been part of Christian spirituality for centuries but are often neglected in the busyness of contemporary life.

What makes the book especially helpful is its practical tone. Comer is not writing as someone who has escaped the pressures of modern life. Instead, he writes as someone who has experienced those pressures personally and has been learning how to resist them. The result is a book that is both thoughtful and accessible, inviting readers to reflect honestly about their own lives.

John Mark Comer himself is part of a younger generation of Christian leaders who are thinking carefully about how faith is lived in a fast-moving, technologically saturated world. After many years serving as a pastor in Portland, Oregon, he now teaches and writes about spiritual formation—the process by which people gradually become more like Christ through the patterns and practices of everyday life.

His work resonates with many readers because it connects ancient Christian wisdom with the realities of modern experience. Rather than offering quick fixes or simplistic advice, Comer encourages readers to step back and ask deeper questions about the structure and pace of their lives.

Those questions are particularly meaningful for people of faith. Christians believe that following Jesus involves more than adopting certain beliefs. It also involves learning a way of life—a way that shapes how we use our time, how we treat other people, and how we pay attention to the presence of God.

Over eight weeks, we'll explore these ideas together. Each week, we will read a portion of the book, which will be reinforced in our Sunday teaching. The goal is not simply to finish the book, but to begin noticing how hurry influences our daily lives and to consider how the teachings and practices of Jesus might offer a healthier rhythm.

You do not need to read the entire book before joining the conversation. We will move through it gradually, one section at a time. Whether you have time to read every page or simply want to listen and share your thoughts, you are welcome.

In a culture that constantly urges us to move faster, taking time to read, reflect, and talk together may feel almost countercultural. But that may be exactly what makes the experience worthwhile.

After all, if the life of Jesus teaches us anything, it is that the most important things in life rarely happen at running speed.

Some of you may also be participating in the book study, starting after Easter, that explores our Methodist heritage through *Knowing Who We Are*. That study looks back at the theological foundations of the United Methodist tradition and how John Wesley and the early Methodists organized their lives around practices that helped people grow in faith.

Our reading of *The Ruthless Elimination of Hurry* approaches this same concern from a different perspective. While the Wesleyan study examines the history and theology of those practices, Comer's book reflects on how similar rhythms can help us manage the pressures of modern life.

For those who choose to take part in both discussions, the two books will complement each other—one helping us understand where our traditions originate, and the other encouraging us to consider how those traditions might influence the pace and patterns of our lives today.

Here is a suggested reading schedule:

<u>Sunday's</u>	<u>Chapters</u>	<u>Themes</u>
April 5	Prologue - Ch 1	Enemy of Spiritual Life
April 12	Ch 2	Enemy of Love
April 19	Ch 3	Hurry & Emotional Health
April 26	Ch 4	Hurry & Attention
May 3	Ch 5	Silence & Solitude
May 10	Ch 6	Sabbath
May 17	Chs 7-8	Simplicity
May 24	Chs 9-Epilogue	Slowing

We'll have a few books available for purchase at \$12 each. Additional copies of the hardcover edition are available through Amazon for \$13, with a few used copies at slightly lower prices. The paperback edition is more expensive. This book may also be available at the local library.

Our Book Club does not meet as a group. However, our weekly messages reference that week's chapters or themes. You can anticipate spoiler alerts unless you keep up with the pace. You can purchase your own copy or visit your local library.

You can contact our office with questions by phone or simply type your question or enter a prayer request on our website's homepage — FlintAsburyChurch.org.

Pastor Tommy

Don't get me wrong, microwaves have their place. But let's be honest—they're a poor substitute for the stove, for the oven, and definitely for an air fryer. Most of the time, the container is hot while the food is still cold. And when food does experience the zap, some parts are overdone, some parts are barely touched.

And that's been true for over fifty years. The microwave promised to make life better by making it faster. And it did make things faster—but not necessarily better. We can't blame it all on the microwave, but somewhere along the way, we started to believe that faster is always better.

Now that assumption has spread far beyond the kitchen. We want everything faster—faster answers, faster communication, faster results. And we've started to expect that same speed in our relationships. We want understanding quickly. We want connection quickly. We want trust quickly.

But relationships don't work that way.

You can exchange information quickly, but you can't build trust quickly. Trust takes time. It takes presence. It takes showing up again and again. And when life starts to move too fast, those are the very things we begin to lose.

We become efficient, but less attentive. Connected, but not always present. Busy, but not always known.

John Mark Comer, in our companion book, describes this cultural moment as the result of a long "history of speed"—a world shaped by one innovation after another, each promising to save us time. And yet, instead of feeling less hurried, most of us feel more so. His conclusion is simple, but hard to ignore: something is deeply wrong. Not just with our schedules, but with the pace of our lives.

And because we're moving so fast, we start settling for substitutes. We replace conversations with texts. We replace time together with quick check-ins. We replace listening with reacting. Comer goes so far as to say that hurry isn't just a schedule problem—it's a spiritual one. Because love, at its core, requires time. And when we rush, love is often the first thing to suffer. We assume we understand each other because we've shared information—but understanding isn't the same as being known. And being known takes time, we're often unwilling to give.

So misunderstandings linger. Assumptions grow. Patience thins. And instead of slowing down to repair those things, we try to fix them quickly. A short apology. A quick clarification. A rushed conversation squeezed in between everything else.

Sometimes it helps. But often, it just heats the surface. Because the deeper parts—the places where trust actually lives—are still cold.

We see this in our families, where we live under the same roof but struggle to find unhurried time together. We see it in friendships that slowly drift, not because of conflict, but because of neglect. We see it at work, where collaboration is constant but genuine connection is rare.

We're feeling this breakdown of trust beyond our personal relationships as well. In this current moment, as global tensions rise and the news cycle moves faster than ever, many people find themselves unsure what—or who—to trust. Statements are made, revised, contradicted, or walked back. Confidence has eroded, even among staunch supporters. And those who are paying close attention are left with the same conclusion: I can't trust what I'm hearing.

When trust is lost at that level, the effects ripple outward. Words feel thin. Important conversations become harder to navigate because we no longer share a common foundation. Even the systems meant to inform

us can struggle to keep up, still operating at a pace and posture shaped by an earlier time. And when that happens, it can feel like we're all trying to make sense of something that keeps shifting—like we're being asked to build understanding on something that never quite settles.

And we even see it in the church.

We can gather in the same room, sing the same songs, pass the same peace—and still not really know one another. We can share prayer requests without sharing our lives. We can move quickly from one thing to the next and never slow down long enough to truly see the person in front of us.

Over time, something begins to feel off—like life is full, but something at the center is still cold. Because you can microwave a meal, but you can't microwave a relationship. Trust is slow to build—and fragile once it's formed.

You can't rush trust. But you can destroy trust quickly.

Something has happened. You can feel it before you even understand it. The room is different. The air is different. The people who were hiding just days ago are now talking all at once—voices raised, energy building, trying to put words to something that doesn't quite fit

into words. There is laughter where there had been fear, movement where there had been stillness, hope where there had been grief.

They keep coming back to the same thing: "We've seen him." Not remembered him, not honored him—seen him. Alive. And it's not just what they're saying, it's how they're saying it. Something in them has shifted. Whatever they experienced didn't just inform them; it changed them.

Have you ever walked into a moment like that? A moment where everyone else seems to share something real—something powerful, something that changed them—but you weren't there? So you're listening, trying to make sense of it, wanting to believe it. But you don't have what they have. You didn't see what they saw.

That's where Thomas found himself after the resurrection, according to the Gospel of John. And if we're honest, it's where many of us find ourselves. You've heard the stories, you see the change in other people, and you want it to be true—but your experience hasn't caught up yet.

So when Thomas says, "Unless I see... unless I touch... I will not believe," it doesn't sound like defiance. It sounds familiar. He's not asking for more than the

others received; he's asking for the same thing. He's naming the gap between their certainty and his experience.

And then the story does something we don't expect—it slows down. Jesus doesn't show up right away. Scripture tells us it's a week later. A full week of living with questions, of wondering if you missed it, of trying to trust something you didn't experience.

And then Jesus returns. Not in a rush, not on demand, but at the right time. And when He does, He doesn't correct Thomas or shame him or say, "You should have figured this out by now." Jesus simply says, "Put your finger here... reach out your hand..." In other words: take all the time you need.

Jesus doesn't rush trust. But He also doesn't leave Thomas hanging. Jesus comes back. He shows up again. He meets Thomas right in the middle of his doubt. And in that moment, Thomas responds with one of the clearest declarations of faith in the entire gospel: "My Lord and my God."

What changed? Not the story. Not the message. The difference was presence. Because trust isn't built through pressure; it's built through encounter.

Unless I see the scars of the nails in his hands and put my fingers on those scars and my hand in his side, I will not believe.

John 20:24-29

And that's the good news for us. In a world that tries to microwave everything—even faith—Jesus refuses to rush the process. He is willing to wait, willing to return, willing to meet us in the very place where our questions live.

You can't rush trust. But you can destroy trust quickly. And Jesus knows the difference. So Jesus moves at the speed of relationship.

What would it look like to live differently? What would it look like to resist the constant pressure to hurry—not by withdrawing from the world, but by choosing a different pace within it?

If Jesus refuses to rush trust, then following Jesus means learning to slow down. Not everywhere and not all the time, but in the places that matter most. Because if trust is built slowly, then it must be practiced intentionally.

In our companion book, Comer suggests that if something is deeply wrong with our pace of life, then the solution isn't simply to try harder—it's to live differently. To adopt rhythms that make space for what hurry crowds out. And at the center of those rhythms is something surprisingly simple: presence.

To be fully present with God. To be fully present with one another. To be fully present to our own lives.

That kind of presence doesn't happen accidentally; it has to be chosen. It looks like staying in the conversation a little longer instead of moving on too quickly, and listening without preparing your response. It looks like giving someone your full attention—even when your mind wants to rush ahead.

It looks like showing up again, and again, and again. Because that's how trust is formed—not in big, dramatic moments, but in small, repeated acts of presence. Over time, those moments begin to change us. We notice more, listen more carefully, and become less reactive and more patient—less hurried and more grounded.

And slowly, something at the center begins to warm. Not because we forced it, and not because we rushed it, but because we gave it time.

What if we became a community that refused to microwave relationships? A community that didn't just exchange information, but made space to truly know one another? A community where people could bring their questions, their doubts, their unfinished stories—and not feel rushed to resolve them?

A community shaped not by efficiency... but by presence. Because that's the kind of community Jesus creates. One where trust is not demanded, but formed. One where people are not hurried, but seen. One where Christ meets us—not at the speed of our expectations, but at the depth of our need. You can't rush trust. But you can destroy trust quickly.

So the invitation is simple—and not easy: slow down and stay. Stay in the conversation, stay in the relationship, and stay present long enough for trust to grow. Because that's where Jesus meets us, and that's where life begins to change.



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And that is where the deeper question begins to take shape—not just about what is happening in the world, but about what is happening within us. What kind of people are we becoming in a world that keeps moving faster? What happens when we encounter someone on the side of the road? Long before Jesus walked on earthly roads, the prophets spoke into moments like this. The prophet Isaiah once confronted a nation that believed they were faithful—who gathered for worship, who spoke the right words, who honored God in public—and yet ignored the suffering around them. And the message was clear: true faith is not measured by what we say or where we gather, but by whether we defend the vulnerable, care for those in need, and refuse to turn away from those who have been pushed aside.

That same thread runs straight into the life of Jesus, who often quoted Isaiah.

Mark tells a story that illustrates where God weighs in on this idea of helping those on the side of the road. One day, Jesus was walking on a crowded road, surrounded by people who believed they knew exactly who He was...

Jesus stops.

Jesus was leaving Jericho with a large crowd. There is movement, every, and direction. People are going somewhere. They are following someone important. They are, by every measure, on the right path.

But sitting just off that path is a man named Bartimaeus. Mark tells us he is blind. He is begging. He is sitting by the roadside. Bartimaeus is exactly the kind of person we've been talking about—the kind of person who lives on the margins, dependent on the mercy of others, easy to overlook when life is moving quickly.

When Bartimaeus hears that Jesus is passing by, he doesn't hold up a sign. He begins to shout, "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!" It is not a quiet request. It is not polite or contained. It is desperate. Urgent. Disruptive. And the crowd responds the way crowds often do. They rebuke him. They tell him to be quiet. They try to keep things moving.

Because that's what crowds do. They maintain momentum. They protect the flow. They silence whatever threatens to slow things down. But Bartimaeus cries out all the more. And that is when everything changes.

Jesus stops.

While the crowd keeps moving, Jesus stands still. While others try to silence the man, Jesus hears him. While the world treats him as an interruption, Jesus treats him as the reason to stop.

And then Jesus does something even more remarkable. He turns to the very people who were trying to silence Bartimaeus and says, "Call him."

The crowd that once pushed him aside is now told to bring him forward. The ones who tried to move past him are now invited to participate in his restoration. Bartimaeus throws aside his cloak—perhaps the only thing he owns, the thing that keeps him warm, the thing that marks his place in the world—and he comes to Jesus.

And Jesus asks a question that seems almost unnecessary: "What do you want me to do for you?" The answer is obvious. And yet Jesus asks anyway.

Because this is not just about healing. It is about dignity. It is about seeing and being seen. It is about restoring a person, not just solving a problem.

"What do you want me to do for you?" Jesus asked him.

Mark 10:46-52

"Rabbi, I want to see," Bartimaeus blurts out. And Jesus responds, "Go... your faith has made you well." Immediately, Bartimaeus receives his sight. But the story does not end there.

Mark tells us that Bartimaeus begins to follow Jesus along the road. He moves from the roadside... to the road. From being someone others passed by... to someone walking with Jesus.

And this is where the story meets us.

Because the difference between the crowd and Jesus is not what they believed. They were all following Him. They were all in the same place. They were all, in some sense, on the right road. The difference is what they did when they encountered someone in need. The crowd hurried past. Jesus stopped.

And in that moment, Jesus reveals something essential—not just about compassion, but about the very heart of God. The roadside is not a distraction from the work of God. It is where the work of God happens.

And that raises a question for us. What would it look like... to become people who stop? People who stop, not just in theory. Not just in belief. But in practice? In the ordinary rhythms of our lives, in the decisions we make, in the way we move through the world.

Because if we're honest, most of us are not intentionally unkind. We are not trying to ignore people. We are not setting out to walk past suffering. We are just in a hurry. We have places to be. Responsibilities to carry. Schedules to keep. And somewhere along the way, hurry has become normal. Expected. Even necessary.

But if we are always moving ... we will miss what Jesus sees. We will miss who Jesus stops for.

Years ago, I wrote something that I think I understand a little differently now. The poem begins, "I saw Christ the other day, but I didn't sit in a church seat. So surprised was I that I barely noticed, and nearly continued on my way, missing the chance to see the face of the One who called me."

When I wrote this poem, I was a seminary student trying to figure out why God seemed to be calling me into ministry with people living on the margins. Each Thursday, I volunteered at a soup kitchen that fed the homeless. And frankly, I was overwhelmed by what I experienced.

As the poem continues, "I saw the One who called me on a street corner - there we were, face to face and eye to eye, the weather cold with wind and snow. In a hurry, I walked quickly by, yet I passed a holy spot where Christ held out a hand, cold with fingers sticking out of gloves."

Around that time, I asked the director of a well-respected homeless ministry in Detroit what I should do when I pass someone asking for money. His answer was immediate: "You should never give cash."

It sounded certain. Responsible. Even wise. But something about it didn't sit right with me. "Never? I asked, genuinely puzzled. He paused, then clarified. From a safety standpoint, from a best-practices standpoint, it often isn't wise to give cash. There are real concerns. Real risks.

And yet... he admitted that he still does.

Not because it's always the right solution. Not because it fixes the problem. But sometimes the moment calls for something more than a policy. Sometimes it calls for a response.

The poem ends with, "I wondered how many had passed by that day, missing what I nearly passed by."

At the time, I thought I was writing about a moment. Now I realize I was naming a pattern. A way of living. A way of moving through the world where we expect to encounter Christ in certain places—sanctuaries, services, moments we've set aside as sacred—while overlooking the places where Christ is already present.

On the roadside. In the person we almost made eye contact with. In the moment we didn't think we had time for. In the interruption, we tried to move past.

What if the places we rush by... are the very places Jesus stops?

What if the question isn't whether we believe in Jesus... but whether we recognize Him when He is right in front of us? Because in the story, the crowd thought they were following Jesus. And they were. But they almost missed Him. They were moving in the same direction... but not at the same pace.



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And that may be the question for us. Not just, are we on the right road? But are we moving at the pace of Jesus? Because we can be headed in the right direction... and still miss what matters most. "We hurry past... while Jesus stops."

So, where is the roadside in your life? Who is sitting there—waiting, hoping, perhaps even crying out to be seen? And what would it look like—not to fix everything, not to solve every problem—but simply to stop?

To notice. To listen. To respond. To allow our lives to be interrupted in the same way Jesus allowed his to be interrupted.

Because when we stop, something changes. Not just for the person in front of us. But in us. Our pace slows. Our vision clears. Our hearts begin to align—not with what is expedient, not with what is efficient—but with what is compassionate.

And in that moment, we may discover something we didn't expect. That the roadside we were trying to move past...is holy ground.

You can join us each Sunday in person or online by clicking the button on our [website's](#) homepage. [Click here to watch.](#) This button takes you to our [YouTube channel.](#) You can find more information about us on our website at [FlintAsburyChurch.org.](#)

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Pastor Tommy

Some content comes from John Mark Comer. *The Ruthless Elimination of Hurry.* Colorado Springs : WaterBrook, 2019. ISBN 9780525653097.

STOP IN!! ... AFRICAN DRUM AND DANCE WILL COOK FOR YOU
ON MOTHER'S DAY!!

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