

ASBURY CIRCUIT RIDER

Volume 6

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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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Busy (Pace)



There are weeks when I find myself grumbling about things quite close to home: my busy schedule, too many doctors' appointments, my own struggles to slow down and pay attention. Most importantly, there are times when I feel like I'm missing out on the joy of what's going on around me.

And then there are weeks when the news from elsewhere feels so heavy that my personal challenges seem trivial in comparison... and I find myself going a little numb.

May is around
the corner!!



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?

IN OUR PRAYERS

Virginia Bigger

Sylvia Pittman

Mirium Watson

Paula Gamble

Richard Oram

Jonathon Misner

FRIENDS AND LOVED ONES WHO ARE
HOMEBOUND OR IN NURSING CARE

Dean Lamoreaux

Norma Buzzard

Nancy Elston

COMING UP THIS WEEK:

APRIL 27– MAY 3

April 27 Mon

April 28 Tue 9:00am–until gone Produce will be available each
week, along with canned goods, until further notice

12Noon–6pm Taco Tuesday

3:00pm CDC Board Meeting

April 29 Wed

April 30 Thu

May 1 Fri

May 2 Sat

May 3 Sun New Beginnings
Contemporary Worship

(We are live on [Facebook](#) and our newly launched [YouTube channel](#). You can find
these Links along with more information about us on our website
at ([FlintAsbury.org](#)).



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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Connie Portillo	Office Secretary
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Terry Kinze	Ops Manager/CDC
Sylvia Pittman	Empowerment Arts
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Terrance Williams	Arts Center Mgr
	South Flint Soup Kitchen

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Cyndi	Worship Leader
Anthony & Jim	Ushers
Jonathon & Terrance	Production Team
Yasheah & Mirium	Nursery
Christine	Cafe

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:

Lord, don't you care that my sister has left me to do all the work by myself? Tell her to come and help me!

Luke 10:38–42

NOTES FROM WORSHIP

QUESTIONS FOR LIFE GROUPS:

1. Read Luke 10:38–42 and this week's Circuit Rider article titled Busy.
2. This week, before we speak in the name of Jesus, let's make sure we've spent time listening to Him. Set aside a few minutes each day to sit with His words, and notice what He actually says.
3. Paying attention to what is forming you. Hold onto your convictions with humility. Not abandoning what you believe—but remaining open enough to ask, again and again: Does this sound like Jesus? Does this reflect the way He treats people? Does this align with His call to love—even when it's difficult?.
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

This has been one of those weeks. And they seem to be coming more often.

I've found myself wrestling with what I'm hearing in the world around me. In particular, I'm disturbed by hearing the name of Jesus spoken with confidence... used to explain decisions, justify actions, even defend harm. I hear faith language woven into conversations about war, about policy, about who belongs and who doesn't. And if I'm honest, there are moments when I feel unsettled, even grieved.

Because it's my calling and my job to know the teachings of Jesus. I know the way He moves toward people, especially the vulnerable. I know the clarity of His call to love—not in theory, but in practice. And yet, I also hear that same name used in ways that don't sound like Him at all.

Maybe you've felt that too. Not anger as much as confusion. Not certainty, but tension.

Trying to make sense of how the same faith that teaches us to love our enemies can also be used to justify actions that seem to ignore that very command.

And somewhere in the middle of that tension, this simple phrase came to me:

Don't blame Jesus.

Because whatever is happening around us—whatever is being said or done in His name—we need to be careful not to confuse that with Jesus Himself. This is not a new problem. It is just showing

up on a larger stage.

What I'm feeling is not just personal—it's something many of us are trying to navigate together. We are living in a moment where the name of Jesus is spoken often... but not always truthfully.

It shows up in conversations about war, where violence is explained as necessary, even faithful.

It shows up in discussions about immigration, where some lives seem to matter more than others. It shows up in how we talk about the world itself—what we use, what we protect, what we're willing to sacrifice.

And again, what makes this difficult is not the absence of faith. It's that faith is being used in ways that contradict the heart of the gospel.

Faith is being used to explain. Used to justify. Used to give confidence to decisions that are already in motion. And for many of us, that creates a kind of disorientation. Because we're not unfamiliar with Scripture. We're not new to the teachings of Jesus.

So when we hear His name connected to things that don't sound like Him...we're left asking: Am I missing something? Is this what faithfulness looks like? Is this really what Jesus would say?

How does someone reach a point where they place responsibility for harmful decisions on Jesus?

Harm that has lasting effects, destroys families, inflicts pain, and creates deep and lasting hatred. Before such decisions happen on a national stage, the patterns first show up much closer to home. We blame Jesus for everyday decisions.

It shows up anytime we feel certain about what needs to happen...anytime we feel justified in our position... anytime we find ourselves asking God to support what we already believe is right.

It shows up in the quiet ways we divide people into categories—right and wrong, in and out. It shows up in how quickly we move from concern to judgment. It shows up in how easily urgency takes over, and listening becomes secondary.

And before long, something subtle begins to happen. We are no longer listening for the voice of Jesus. We are speaking with confidence...assuming we already know what He would say.

And when that happens—whether in our personal lives or in the world around us—it becomes very easy to say things in the name of Jesus...that don't actually sound like Jesus at all.

Don't blame Jesus.

Luke shares a short, somewhat comical story about Lazarus' two sisters. However, like the rest of scripture, the story has layers that come alive as we dig in a little deeper.

Jesus comes by to visit. Martha welcomes Him and immediately gets to work. There are things to prepare, responsibilities to manage, and expectations to meet. She is doing what all good hosts do. Meanwhile, Mary, her sister, does something different. She sits at Jesus' feet and listens.

And as the story unfolds, the tension begins to rise—not in the room, but within Martha herself. What begins as service slowly becomes strain. What begins as care turns into frustration.

Unwilling to tolerate her sister's lack of attention to the job at hand, Martha takes her concern to Jesus. "Lord, don't you care that my sister has left me to do all the work by myself?" Martha blurts out. "Tell her to help me."

It's a human moment. An understandable moment. A moment most of us have been through. Neither Luke nor anyone else has the right to trash Martha. We all need Marthas in our lives, and we all need to be a Martha at times. But listen closely to what Martha is asking. Because Martha isn't asking Jesus what He wants. She is asking Jesus to take her side.

Lord, don't you care that my sister has left me to do all the work by myself? Tell her to come and help me!

Luke 10:38-42

Tell her..." she demands. In that moment, Martha moves from listening to Jesus... to speaking for Him. She has decided what needs to happen—and now she is asking Jesus to confirm it.

And Jesus responds. But not with harshness. He responds with clarity: "Martha, Martha... you are worried and distracted by many things. But only one thing is needed. Mary has chosen what is better, and it will not be taken away from her."

Jesus does not criticize Martha's desire to serve. He names what has taken over her attention. She is worried. She is distracted. She is pulled in many directions. And in her frenzied self, something good has begun to replace what is most important.

She is no longer centered on Jesus.

And that is the turning point of the story. Because this is how it happens. Not through rebellion. Not necessarily through bad intentions. Rather, it happens through a slow shift. A shift where urgency replaces attention...certainty replaces listening...and we begin to move ahead of Jesus.

And once that happens, something else follows just as quietly. We begin to act with confidence in what is right... and then ask Jesus to bless what we've already decided.

Don't blame Jesus.

Notice that Jesus never told Martha to take control of the room. Jesus never told her to demand

more from her sister. Jesus never told her that her urgency was more important than His presence.

And if we are going to use His name—if we are going to claim His authority—then we have to stay close enough of His voice to hear what He actually says.

Throughout Christian history, there have been attempts to wrestle honestly with difficult realities. Perhaps none more serious than the question of war. Humanity has wrestled with this question so often that a theory called "just war" emerged, which has resurfaced again as to why we have soldiers and war machinery prosecuting a war in the Nation of Iran.

However, "just war" was never meant to make violence easy to justify. It was meant to place limits on it. To slow things down. To ask hard questions. To protect the innocent wherever possible. Not to give us confidence in harm, but to make us cautious in the face of it.

Which means anytime faith is used to make harm sound simple... or necessary... or unquestionably right... We should pause.

And we should listen again.

The same is true when we hear people describe someone as being guided by an "Old Testament" mindset—as if that somehow explains or excuses behavior.

But for those who follow Jesus, we don't choose between parts of Scripture. Jesus is the clearest picture of who God is. Not instead of Scripture—but as the One who brings Scripture into focus. Which means we don't use Jesus to justify our way. We follow Jesus—even when it challenges our way. And that brings us back to Martha.

Because her story is not about choosing between work and stillness. It's about choosing whether we will remain close enough to Jesus to be shaped by Him...or move ahead of Him and ask Him to catch up with us.

Only one thing is needed. And it begins by listening. Instead, too often, we blame Jesus.

If Jesus is right—if only one thing is truly needed—then the invitation before us is not just to believe differently, but to live differently. Because the alternative to confusion is not certainty. The alternative is clarity rooted in presence.

In the story, Mary is not praised for choosing stillness over work. She is praised for choosing “what is better” because she stayed close enough to Jesus to be shaped by Him.

That's the vision. A life where we remain close enough to Jesus...that His voice becomes more familiar than all the others. A life where urgency does not get the final say. Where outrage does not form our instincts. Where we are not constantly reacting—but intentionally listening.

John Mark Comer, author of our companion book for this series, reminds us that hurry is not just about pace—it's about formation. We become what we give our attention to. And if our attention is constantly pulled toward noise, conflict, and urgency, we will slowly begin to mirror those same patterns—even in the way we talk about faith.

But if we give our attention to Jesus—consistently, intentionally, relationally—something else begins to take shape.

We become people who are not easily rushed into judgment. People who do not need to grasp for certainty. People who refuse to treat others as problems to solve or obstacles to remove. People who sound like Jesus... because we've spent time listening to Him.

And that kind of life doesn't just change us. It changes the way we move through the world. It creates communities that are slower to speak, quicker to listen, more careful with their words, and more grounded in love.

Communities that don't need to use Jesus to justify their way—because they are being shaped by His. That is the better part. And Jesus says it will not be taken away.

So what does this look like for us? What might we do differently this week? Not in theory. Not in abstraction. But in the real pace of our lives.

It begins simply. Before we speak in the name of Jesus...we make sure we've spent time listening to Him.

That might mean setting aside a few minutes each day—not to analyze, not to debate—but to sit with His words. To notice what He actually says. To let His voice become familiar again. It means paying attention to what is forming us. What voices are we listening to most? What patterns are shaping our reactions? What sources are feeding our sense of urgency, certainty, or fear?

And then, gently but intentionally, we begin to make space for something different. Space to slow down. Space to listen. Space to notice when we are moving ahead of Jesus instead of walking with Him.



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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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 **Drum and Dance**

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!!

Page 23



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It also means holding our convictions with humility. Not abandoning what we believe—but remaining open enough to ask, again and again: Does this sound like Jesus? Does this reflect the way He treats people? Does this align with His call to love—even when it's difficult?

And when we find ourselves drifting—when we feel the pull of urgency, frustration, or certainty—we return. Not with guilt. Not with shame. But with the simple invitation Jesus offers to Martha: Come back. Sit down. Listen again.

Because in a world full of noise, full of confident voices speaking in His name, our calling is not to keep up. Our calling is to stay close.

Listen to Him. Don't blame Jesus for the decisions we make that are counter to His teachings.

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Pastor Tommy

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