



# Thoughts on the Journey

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We all have deadlines in our lives: times when we are under the gun to get things done. When I'm feeling the pressure to keep my focus on a project or I have a particular mindset about a plan or opportunity, I get frustrated when I am derailed by interruption. Even though *interruption* can't always be helped, it can be irritating nonetheless.

A number of years ago, I was in the middle of a home project. Deciding to try my hand at tiling for the first time, I gathered all my tools, tiles, mortar, rags, and the like. "There's no time like the present," I thought and began the project in the hopes of completing it by the end of the day. Grabbing my trowel and scooping some mortar I began to spread the white paste on the wall. I was a little nervous about not going fast enough for fear it would dry, so I managed to get a rhythm going as I placed each tile. About six tiles in, the phone rang. It was my friend Ruth; her husband was dying. Her voice quivered as she said, "Don is dying and I need you to come over as soon as you can." My initial thought was, "Why did I pick up the phone? Of all the times...!" I tried not to let my frustration bleed into the tone of my voice, so I softened my response, "OK Ruth, I'm on my way."

My drive to her home was riddled with exasperating verbiage that kept firing off in my brain as I drove - all because my tiling project was interrupted. I made every effort to calm down as I arrived in their driveway.

Ruthie welcomed me in and I could see the pain and sorrow in her swollen eyes. She asked me to pray with her and Don; he was struggling to take each breath as intermittent pain consumed him. The suffering that filled the room was sobering and I could feel the sting of my selfishness convict me.

As I stood at the side of Don's bed, tears filled his eyes as he reached for me. With a near breathless

whisper he said, "Thank you for coming to pray with us. You are such a good friend."

This week in the Gospel of Mark, after John the Baptist had been arrested, Jesus began proclaiming the Kingdom of God. While walking along the Sea of Galilee, Jesus saw two fisherman, Simon and his brother Andrew. They were casting their nets into the sea. Jesus said to them,

**"Come after me and I will make you fishers of men."**

They abandoned their nets and immediately followed him. Walking along the road farther, Jesus saw the sons of Zebedee, James and John, and he called to them. They were mending their nets along with their father, but left what they were doing to follow Jesus.

In preparing for this reflection, I was in awe of the apostles' willingness to drop everything when Jesus asked them to follow him and become *fishers of men*. They weren't walking away from a household project, they were walking away from their livelihoods. They trusted Jesus enough to surrender everything to be his disciples: talk about an interruption! Not only did they surrender everything to follow him, they were willing to pay the ultimate price and give of themselves body, mind, and spirit.

Since that profound encounter with my friends all those years ago, I don't take interruptions lightly. Instead, I weigh the value of each phone call, each email or text, each knock at the door and ask myself, "Is Jesus calling me to follow him?". I've learned over time, that when I hear his voice and answer his call, I am blessed abundantly with a boundless grace as he reveals more of himself with each experience.

The apostles have set a wonderful example for all of us. Jesus continually calls us to put away our distractions, follow him, and become fishers of men.