

THE PERSON GOD HAS PLACED BEFORE YOU

4 JUNE 2026

SUMMARY

This message challenges the common understanding of ministry and God's calling by emphasizing that our vocation is not found in future destinations or grand plans, but in the present encounters God places before us daily. Drawing from Jesus's example of availability and interruptibility in the Gospels, the message calls Christians to recognize that every person we meet is potentially God's work, not an interruption to it. The message reframes ministry from scheduled religious activities to a way of living that sees Christ's presence in ordinary moments—at work, home, neighborhoods, and chance encounters. It emphasizes that as the body of Christ, we carry His presence everywhere, and our calling is to recognize where the Father is already working and join Him there, loving one person at a time rather than seeking crowds or visible success.

KEY POINTS

- Jesus was remarkably available and interruptible—people were not interruptions to His ministry, they were His ministry
- We often reduce ministry to religious activities rather than recognizing it as a way of living
- The greatest spiritual deficiency may not be unwillingness to serve God, but lack of attentiveness to recognize where He's already inviting us to join Him
- Ministry flows from seeing what the Father is already doing, not from inventing our own opportunities
- The vocation of laypeople is to seek God's kingdom by engaging in temporal (worldly) affairs and ordering them according to God's will
- There is no place we enter where Christ does not desire to be present through us
- We should pray: "Lord, help me to recognize the people you will place before me today" rather than "What extraordinary thing do you want me to do?"
- God often begins by giving us responsibility for one person before entrusting us with many
- Love is always personal—we love one person at a time, not humanity in the abstract
- Success in God's kingdom is not measured by numbers but by faithful presence to the one in front of us

SCRIPTURE REFERENCES:

- John 5:19 - *"Very truly I tell you, the son can do nothing on his own, but only what he sees the father doing. For whatever the father does, the son does likewise."*

- 1 Corinthians 12:27 - *"You are the body of Christ and individually members of it"*
- John 1:14 - *"The word became flesh and lived among us"*

STORIES:

- Bruce Downes' humorous personal story of accidentally entering the wrong house in California while staying with friends, mistaking an identical house for theirs
- The example of "L.A. John" who demonstrates holiness through treating every person with dignity, including inviting lonely diners to sit near him in restaurants
- St. Mary MacKillop of the Cross, who didn't begin with a grand strategy but simply saw children being neglected and families without education access, leading to her saying: "Never see a need without doing something about it"
- St. Frances Xavier Cabrini, who wanted to be a missionary to China but was redirected by Pope Leo XIII to serve Italian immigrants in the United States, discovering that the people before her were not a "consolation prize" but God's actual will for her ministry

THE PERSON GOD HAS PLACED BEFORE YOU

SMALL GROUP GUIDE

This guide is designed to help your small group dive deeper into the message.

OPENING PRAYER

Invite the Holy Spirit to guide your discussion and open hearts to God's transforming work. Pray the IMPACTERS Community Prayer .

ICEBREAKER

Share about a time when someone unexpectedly showed you kindness or attention when you really needed it. How did that make you feel?

KEY THEMES FROM THE MESSAGE

1. **Jesus was remarkably interruptible** - People were not interruptions to His ministry; they WERE His ministry.
2. **Ministry is a way of living, not just an activity** - We risk reducing ministry to specific religious activities rather than recognizing it as a lifestyle.
3. **God is already at work** - The mission is God's before it's ours. We don't need to invent opportunities to serve; we need to recognize where God is already working.
4. **Our vocation is in the ordinary** - The workplace, family, neighborhood, and everyday encounters are the central places of our ministry.
5. **Love the one in front of you** - Before God entrusts us with many, He often entrusts us with one. Success isn't measured by numbers but by faithfulness to the person before us.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Understanding Interruptions

1. **Reflect on this week:** When were you interrupted by someone? How did you respond? Looking back, could that have been a divine appointment?
2. **Bruce Downes asked:** "How many times have I regarded someone as an interruption to what I was doing when in fact they were the very reason God had placed me there?" Share a time when you might have missed an opportunity because you were too focused on your own agenda.

Recognizing God's Work

3. **Jesus said:** "The son can do nothing on his own, but only what he sees the father doing." What does it mean practically to "see what the Father is doing" in your daily life?
4. The message challenged us to stop asking "Lord, what extraordinary thing do you want me to do?" and instead pray "Lord, help me to recognize the

people you will place before me today." How might this shift in prayer change your daily approach to life?

The Value of the One

5. **Bruce Downes said:** "We can quietly convince ourselves that our real ministry lies somewhere beyond the horizon." Where in your life have you been waiting for "the right circumstances" before you truly serve God?
6. **St. Frances Cabrini** wanted to go to China but was sent to serve Italian immigrants in America instead. How do you respond when God's plan looks different from your expectations? Share an example from your life.

Ministry in the Ordinary

7. **Vatican II taught** that the layperson's role is "seeking the kingdom of God by engaging in temporal affairs and ordering them according to God's will." What are your "temporal affairs" (work, family, hobbies, community involvement)? How can these become places of ministry?
8. **The message stated:** "There is no place where you enter that Christ does not desire to be present through you." Think about the places you'll go this week. How does knowing you carry Christ's presence change how you might engage with people in those spaces?

PRACTICAL APPLICATIONS

Personal Reflection

Take 5 minutes of silence for each person to consider:

- Who has God already placed in front of me that I may have overlooked?
- What "interruptions" this week might actually be divine appointments?
- Where am I waiting for "someday" ministry instead of embracing "today" ministry?

THIS WEEK'S CHALLENGE

Choose **ONE** of the following to practice this week:

- **The Awareness Exercise:** Each morning this week, pray: "Lord, do not let me miss the person you have already placed before me today." At the end of each day, journal about who you encountered and how you responded.
- **Embrace an Interruption:** When interrupted this week, pause before responding. Ask yourself: "Could this person be God's work for me right now?" Respond with full attention and presence.
- **The One Person Focus:** Identify one person in your regular routine (coworker, neighbor, family member, barista, etc.) who you typically overlook. This week, intentionally engage with them—learn their name, ask about their day, show genuine interest.
- **Transform Your Space:** Choose one "ordinary" place you frequent (workplace, gym, coffee shop, school pickup line). Commit to being fully

present there this week, looking for opportunities to bring Christ's love into that environment.

- **L.A. John Challenge:** Like the example in the message, practice treating every person with dignity this week. Notice people who are alone or struggling. Find one way to extend simple kindness or companionship.

CLOSING PRAYER

"Loving Father, as people who have been impacted by you and who seek to impact others, allow us not to take on the thinking of the world. Allow us to see the one as you saw us. May we impact the world for you as you have impacted us. We make this prayer in Jesus' name. Amen."

Remember: An impactor is someone who has been impacted by God and impacts someone else for God. Your goal is that they would come into an ever-deepening relationship with Jesus.