

A Timeout for Compassion

I have always thought it was fascinating when watching a sporting event that you have a field full of players actively competing and then an official will blow their whistle and call a timeout. Almost instantly all the activity on the field stops while the issue is attended to. The reason for the timeout may be an injured player needing medical attention or a coach that wants to give his players a moment to rest and regroup.

One day I read the story of the man who brought Jesus his son who was tormented by a demon. The disciples had been unable to help him and now he was before Jesus seeking assistance. In the midst of the action of the story Jesus asks the father a rather peculiar question.

MK 9:21 Jesus asked the boy's father, "How long has he been like this?" "From childhood," he answered.

As I read this verse I pondered why Jesus would ask this question. Did Jesus need to know the number of years the boy had been suffering this way to properly heal him? Obviously the answer is "No".

Jesus already knew that he would heal this young man in just a few minutes. Then why did Jesus take the time to investigate how long this boy and his family had suffered. Then it occurred to me that Jesus had called a "Timeout for Compassion". The needs of the crowd, the needs of the disciples, the threats on his life, the pressure to accomplish so much in three short years of ministry all stopped and the focus was on this man and his son and empathizing with what they had suffered.

I was reminded how often that I need to set aside the busyness of my schedule and take a timeout for compassion and be Jesus' arms and to allow him to Love someone through me.

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