



For the last few weeks, I have been thinking about some words that someone has said to me recently. On a cold and frosty February morning, I had a brief conversation with a fellow dog walker as we passed each other with our respective dogs. They observed that: “We walk at the pace of a sniff”

It always seems to happen when I only have a fixed amount of time, the dog decides to sniff everything in sight, and instead of a walk, it’s a wait.... For those of us with dogs, I wonder whether you have experienced this?

And so that morning, I didn’t walk as far as I was hoping to. But I did become more aware of my surroundings. I did hear the melody of a song thrush. I did see the sun steadily rise over the frosted countryside, and I did notice the snowbell carpet as I walked along a wooded track, things I probably would have missed.

As I continue to ponder on these words, several things have come to mind....

I am reminded of the events that led to the gospel story of the healing of Jairus’ daughter (Luke 8:40-56). Jairus’ daughter was dying, and a message was sent to Jesus. If ever there was a time for Jesus to go straight to somewhere fast, now was the time. But we also read of the second healing, the healing of the woman who had been ill for as long as Jairus’ daughter had been alive. This woman, defied all convention, intentionally reached out and touched Jesus, as he passed by. Jesus noticed the difference between the touch from a crowd jostling with him and the desperate touch of someone in need and stopped where he was going. Jairus’ daughter’s healing could wait, there was healing to be had, now.

And it’s caused me to consider what are the interruptions to my daily plans trying to say to me, is the Holy Spirit trying to get my attention, now, about something?

I have been reminded of what the psalmist and the song writer have said.... “Be Still and know that I am God” (Psalm 46:10) and “Be still, for the presence of the Lord, The Holy One, is here..... Be still for the glory of the Lord is shining all around..... Be still for the power of the Lord is moving in this place”. (Singing the Faith: 20). The common theme appears to be that when we still ourselves, we become more likely to be aware of who God is and all that comes with this, the presence, the glory and the power.

And finally, myself and Maggie are currently participating in a Rural Missions Course with the Methodist Church. In the first week, we were encouraged to bring to mind the community engagement activities of the Church and then to pause. And to reflect. And to spend some time discerning and asking the questions of “Where did you notice God?” and “Where did you miss God?”. I learned something new when they said that. To be honest, this hasn’t been a practice that I have done in the past, usually we do things, and then we move onto the next thing.

Maybe, our dogs are reminding us to do something new.

As we begin our journey through the Lent season, for us to be aware of our surroundings, the here and the now, and for us to pause, to be still, and recognise God walking alongside us and sometimes, interrupting us.

And through all of this, for us to listen to what God is trying to say to us.

Blessings, Jimmy