

... all the time in the world ...



One morning, years ago, when I was a self-employed musician, I looked at my diary and was overwhelmed; stressed by the number of entries in it. But off I went to my first engagement of a massive day's work – a morning carol service with an equally busy colleague, and brother in faith. At the end, heading off to his own next appointment, he interrupted his exit to take time to say to me, cheerily, "how are you?" – "hmm", I said, "a bit overwhelmed by the demands of life".

He stopped still and looked straight at me, as if he had *all the time in the world*, ... and said "That won't do... just look at the one thing you are doing next, as if each is the only event in your day". I took him at his word, and have done ever since. We can only be present to one thing at a time, but if we are fully present to it, even to the unexpected, one lives only one moment at a time, rather than trying to live a day-full simultaneously. And Love takes stress, and breathlessness, and breathes the free air of the Spirit.

I remember the first time I walked into Liverpool Anglican Cathedral. I brought – as we all do in our different ways, and especially from time to time – a lot of baggage.

The Cathedral is a vast space. There is a sense of time stopping, a sense that the smallness of you is held in something much much bigger. And it is often, and was this day, full of crowds of people.

People like those crowds in our gospel today, all with different stories and baggage and joys and sorrows. Gathered into that holy place for so many different reasons – as they would have been in our gospel – but finding themselves in the presence of God.

They were walking with Jesus. As we are too, today and every day.

One walks around the Cathedral with Jesus in many ways, but it is as you turn to leave the Cathedral, you are sent on your way with a last gift. There is the great west window. 52 foot of stunning glass depicting the great song of praise of all creation¹ sending you out in thanksgiving, and there...

..... underneath it,

.... - interrupting it, almost -

is Tracey Enim's art installation:

a 20ft pink neon sign in her own handwriting which reads simply

I Felt you And I Knew You Loved me.

When we walk with Jesus, we walk with love. And it will touch us.

A spiritual warmth, a guiding hand, a life-giving breath? It will be many things, to many people, for Jesus touches us all with his love and as Tracey Enim herself says "it depends how you want to be touched by something²".

But.. for me.. it was the immensity of God, come down close, letting the world stop while he made time for me, and held me in the sheer embrace of love that would transform all previous experience with the healing touch of intimate love. The sort of love that interrupts itself – or us, if need be – that takes time – that disregards the pressures of the world. And just is. For you. For everyone.

That invites us for the moment to step into eternity, and step out, renewed.

I reckon there's something there about how the woman in today's story must have felt. Carrying years of pain, shut out of the temple worship, untouchable by the righteous, she saw Love and Life walking amongst that crowd and some long-buried part of her had dared to reach out and touch it, and claim some part of it as her own.

Because it **is** her own. As it is ours.

¹ Liverpool's Benedicite window, unusually situated in the West end (as you leave) rather than the more normal place in the East (as you enter) – go forth in praise!

² Tracey enim [Message of love to Liverpool from Tracey Emin - Liverpool Echo](#)

And the world stops.

I love that about this story. Up 'til now the narrative has been fast paced and dynamic – the calling of Matthew –interrupted in the middle of the demands of his day's work – laying them all aside to follow Jesus. Jesus himself, interrupted in his attempt at a meal, walking through the crowds to a little girl on the brink of death. There's a sense of urgency, there is a crush of people – the dust and noise and heat.

But when she touches him, time stops.

Love takes time, and love is ready to be interrupted.

The prophet Hosea reminds us that

*the Lord desires steadfast love and not sacrifice,
the knowledge of God, rather than burnt offerings*

In this world where so many are burnt out, carrying so many burdens, trying to be so many things, caught up in the rush and pressures of modern life...

God says, 'do not be afraid to be interrupted by love'. How you love is so much more than what you do, so much more than productivity, and activity. It's about breathing, being, taking time for each other, going with the flow of the Spirit in trust.

We love in God's love. There is.. in love.. somehow always enough to go round.

I always imagine him kneeling down, sitting down with her in the dust, as he talks with her, Mark's gospel tells us she pours forth "the whole truth" to him... telling her story, feeling his healing already in her body, now meeting her spirit and lifting her up. Giving her back her self-respect, taking time to listen.

There in the dust of the road, she entrusts her hurt and pain to him, and he takes it, holds it and gives back life and goodness, hope and healing. Always. Because that's what Jesus does.

Because ... *God loves every one of us, as if there was only one of us to love*³.

I wonder in the busyness of the crowds that day there in Liverpool Cathedral, how many people's gazes and hearts were interrupted amongst the holy beauty, and the day's tourist sight-seeing, by the garish pink neon of Tracey Enim's installation.

It's so easy to miss interruptions in our rush, or to greet them with resentment, rather than grace. I wonder how often we allow ourselves to be interrupted by taking time to breathe with God, and with each other. And offer each encounter – each moment

³ S. Augustine of Hippo

– with all our attention, being present in a world that rushes, and scrolls, and multi-tasks... and feel God touching us, and us, him.

I Felt You And I Knew You Loved me

I wonder how often we are interrupted in our busyness and meet that with grace ... and leave changed by our encounter with love.

I love that in the gospels we walk. At walking pace. Jesus never runs, and although there would have been horses and donkeys we only ever see him riding on Palm Sunday. I recently got a speeding ticket – racing to S. Peter's, not leaving enough time for the journey. I've stopped speeding (I never used to when I was younger)... and I love it. Slowing down, seeing more, having to take – and allow – time.

I must start walking more too. Both literally, and in heart.

The Holy Hour on Thursday was such a blessing. To see people slowly gathering, slowing down, breathing.

We all need to take time. To breathe.

In all that life asks, and all that we demand from ourselves – we walk with the One who assures us that even in the jostle of needs,.. his Love will be utterly there for us, have all the time in the world for us, and breathe it through us.

You are enough, just as you are. Take a moment. Breathe... for God seeks not burnt-out offerings, but steadfast love.

just reaching out, touching the edge of his cloak .. is enough.

And remember –

At God's heart-rate..... There's all the time in the world.