

Crowd Control!

Luke 19:1-10

October 20, 2019

I am not a big fan of big crowds...well maybe I could make an exception for big crowds at worship on Sundays!

I am not one who likes being in a situation where crowd control is necessary.

We see the crowd control in force when there are riots and protests in the streets such as the recent Hong Kong riots. How about when a dignitary comes to town and the police and security go into action blocking access to certain streets in order to insure the safe passage of the special person.

In a month there will be crowd control in New York City for the Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade. I have heard of people camping out just to have a front row seat to the parade. People will be lined up 10 deep. Parents will hoist young children on their shoulders to see their favorite floats. Maybe that's why they started with the big inflatable character balloons...crowd control!

In a month crowd control will be needed for Black Friday shoppers! I did that once and that was it...one and done on the shopping frenzy crowds.

I don't do crowds well.

Shoulder to shoulder, shuffling along, pushing and attitudes start. And this is DisneyWorld where magic is to happen and happy memories are to be made!

How many of us enjoy going out to eat only to walk into the crowded lobby of the restaurant and be told its an hour wait for a table! Or you go to the store and there are more waiting to check out than there are check out cashiers. *"What I'm three deep and the person in front is waiting on a price check or is paying by writing a check!!!"* Crowd control on aisle 3 for me!

I don't like the crowds at National Parks. Photo opportunity people push you out of the way to get the perfect pic. I want the park to myself!

I think we get the picture of crowds and crowd control.

In our daily lives we have to deal with crowd control.

I want us to take a look at four crowd control scenes in scripture and see if they might help us with one of the biggest crowd control scenarios we all have in our lives...**crowd control over our time with Jesus.**

The first crowd control scene was read for us earlier. Many of us are familiar with this crowd scene and the lone figure, Zaccheus. Zach had a few things going against him in his desire to see Jesus the day he was coming through his city.

Zach was not liked by the people because he was their tax collector. No one liked paying taxes.

Secondly, Zach was not a tall man...he was vertically challenged! So the day Jesus comes to town, no one is going to let Zach have a front row seat along the parade route. Because of his physical stature he was not going to be able to see Jesus because those who were head and shoulders taller than him were not budging.

So not being a part of the popular crowd Zach had a choice on how to control the crowd.

He decided to climb above the crowd...the barricades that were set before him. He could have given up but instead he decided to get up to where he could see.

He climbed the tree. From his vantage point he could see Jesus. And here is the amazing picture of this rising above the crowd... Jesus saw Zach!

Not only did Jesus see Zach, but he invited himself to dinner at Zach's house.

Zach would end up having one on one, face to face, individual time with Jesus.

He rose above the crowd with a passion and desire to do what it took to see Jesus.

He didn't let the excuses about the barricades of his height or crowd dislike keep him from seeing and being with Jesus. By going above the crowd control Zach's being with Jesus changed his life.

Crowd control concern!

Are there excuses you make that can keep you from seeing and being with Jesus?

I'm not good enough! No one notices me...so why would Jesus?

Are you willing to give up or climb up?

Do you have a passionate desire or a lazy retire when it comes to seeking out Jesus?

How much do you really want to be with Jesus? Do you desire Him to change your life?

Climb above the crowd's opinion and your shortcomings and watch what happens when you realize Jesus does see you and desires to spend quality time with you.

The next crowd control scene involved a little boy. The crowd of over 5,000 had packed a hillside to hear Jesus. (John 6:5-15) Jesus noticed the crowd was hungry and he asked the disciples to feed the crowd. Right! All they saw was the crowd. However, Andrew, one of the disciples, saw a boy in the crowd who had his lunch bag with him. He asked the boy if he could show Jesus the small lunch and see what He could do with it.

Jesus took the boy's lunch and fed the crowd. One small boy's lunch, noticed by one who had eyes to see, controlled the crowd's hunger. The other disciples couldn't see beyond the crowd. The individual boy was lost in the sea of humanity. Jesus took a small boy's lunch and controlled the physical and spiritual hunger of a hungry crowd.

Crowd control concern!

Do you tend to get lost in the sea of humanity?

Can you see the "little boy" in the crowd and bring what he has to offer to Jesus?

Does the crowd overwhelm you to where you are barricaded from bringing the concern to Jesus?

Every Wednesday we face this crowd control concern here at the church's food pantry. How are we going to be able to offer 200 plus bags of groceries to the hungry crowd? We have to look beyond the crowd to Christ. He is the One who we trust to take our small offering and multiply it in a way that meets the hunger of the crowd.

Who do you look to in the crowd? The thousands or the One who can see one in the thousands? Jesus sees you in the sea of humanity. He calls you by name and not by a number. Look for the little boy with the lunch bag in your crowd. Jesus desires to use that which you bring to Him...no matter how small it may be.

The next crowd control scene involves another young boy. (Luke 2:41-52)

He was with the crowd who traveled to Jerusalem to celebrate a high holy day. After the celebration the crowd was leaving in a caravan out of town. The next day his parents realized their 12 year old son was not with them...they thought he was with some other family member in the crowd. They went back to Jerusalem and found their son, Jesus, in the temple. His parents were furious, but relieved they found him.

Crowd control concern!

Have you ever lost a child or family member in a crowd? It is terrifying! You freak! What a relief when you find them in the crowd. God, our Heavenly Father, sees us and knows where we are in the crowd. Others may assume we are there till we come up missing...even family.

How much concern do you have for your family?

Can they go missing, even emotionally, and you don't notice?

Notice the missing in the crowd of your family and friends.

The next crowd control scene is a woman who had battled a hemorrhaging disease for years. (Mark 5:21-34) Because of her condition she was considered unclean and was not to be in a crowd. She was an outcast. No one wanted to be near her.

Jesus comes through and the crowd is all around him. There is the pushing and shoving to get near him.

This woman believed in her heart that if she just touched Jesus she would be healed. With perseverance she did get to Jesus and touched the hem of his robe. He felt it! Power left him and she was healed!

He confirmed this woman's faith to the crowd. The one the crowd rejected, Jesus accepted and healed and held up to the crowd as a person of amazing faith.

Crowd control concern!

Are you willing to break through the barricades of the crowd's pushing and shoving to get to Jesus. What crowds are trying to crowd you out? Are you willing to break through the stigmas and stereotypes of others to get to Jesus to receive your healing? Do you have a faith that is willing to push through to touch Jesus?

The final crowd control scene involves 4 friends or family members and a sick friend. (Mark 2:1-12)

The sick family member was paralyzed. Jesus was in his hometown of Capernaum. Many heard he was home and crowded in to see him. They were lined up out the door. The four family members brought the man to see Jesus on a stretcher. The barricade of the crowd blocked them from entering the house through the door.

They rerouted their desire to get to Jesus by going through the roof. They lowered their family member or friend down through the roof to where Jesus was teaching. What a surprise! Jesus must have been moved with deep heart-felt emotion at the desire of the friends or family for their friend. Jesus healed him. The crowd was amazed!

Crowd control concern!

How supportive are you of your family and friends? It could be simple as an encouraging text.

My grandson, AJ, runs cross country and track for his high school. On the morning of his meets I send him a simple text of encouragement and confidence. I let him know I love him and believe in him to run with confidence and finish strong. I rarely get any return text, which I admit hurts a little till.....

This past Tuesday I sent the text before his meet. Within an hour I got a response that literally brought tears of joy to my heart and eyes.

*"Thanks for all the support, I really do appreciate it. This season has been tough for me mentally but **knowing I have some family behind me helps tremendously**. Hopefully these next few weeks will be some good ones with high accomplishment/performance but if not I'll hold my head high for track. Love u guys and thank you!"*

Wow! Who would have thought simple texts would mean so much. I share this with you to challenge you to be there for your family and friends. Bring them to Jesus with words of encouragement, support, accountability and love. They may not acknowledge your concern. Keep at it. You never will know what impact it will have on them.

Crowd control concern!

The Apostle Paul offered these crowd control words of wisdom to the Christians in Rome dealing with a lot of barricades to their faith in Jesus. May they be heard by you and me as Jesus' crowd control followers today:

"So here's what I want you to do, God helping you: Take your everyday, ordinary life---your sleeping, eating, going-to-work, and walking around life---and place it before God as an offering. Embracing what God does for you is the best thing you can do for him. Don't become so well adjusted to your culture (the crowd) that you fit into it without even thinking. Instead, fix your attention on God. You'll be changed from the inside out. Readily recognize what he wants from you, and quickly respond to it. Unlike the culture (crowds) around you, always dragging you down to its level of immaturity, God brings the best out of you, develops well-formed maturity in you."

---Romans 12:1-2 Message bible.

Crowd control!

What crowd is crowding you from seeing Jesus?

Work, family, laziness, busyness, apathy, pride, self-pity...?

Go out on a limb in life!

Don't give in but get up!

Make the effort to make the time to see Jesus in your daily crowded life.

Don't retire but have the desire to push through to see Jesus.

Look for the "little boy lunch bags" in the crowds you find yourself a part of. See them as Jesus sees them...someone He loves.

Crowd control in the daily living of life is a challenge given to all who desire to see Jesus.

Don't be surprised when He desires that one on one time with you!

Control the crowds in your life so you can see Jesus and He will see you!

