I am sometimes shocked to discover that despite great and terrible tragedies, despite disruption to our normal life, and despite in-your-face signs all around us, we can carry on as if God isn’t saying a thing to us. Jeremiah the prophet decried such stone-faced receptivity in his day. In the modern vernacular, he exclaimed, “*I’ve got something to say. Is anybody listening? I’ve a warning to post. Will anyone notice?*” (Jer. 6:10, *The Message Bible*). Could we admit that maybe God wants our attention?

Dear reader, I’m urging you today to know or *re*-know what the life of a Christian is all about: *you* following *Jesus*. When we swap these roles, Jesus becomes a distant rumor not to taken seriously or a mere object good for studying – if you’re interested in that – rather than the Master to be heard! He graciously seeks to get our attention, to remind us who He is and who we are. But have we stopped to consider *our* response in the mess? We are very good about justifying bad things happening to “bad” people, but isn’t that just skirting around God’s admonishment to us personally?

There is a children’s game that describes this all-too-typical skirting of my relationship to Jesus. It is called “Red light, Green Light.” On one end of a room a leader calls out “green light,” and kids run to be the first to reach him, but don’t go too fast – if “red light” is called all must stop, and if any are seen moving, they must return back to their starting place. Now when that “red light” gets called, is it normal for kids to sit down, relax, or even tie their shoes? Goodness – I wonder if some are even breathing! They are ready to leap back into action the moment they are freed by the “green light!”

I find that all too characteristic of myself when God call a “red light” on me. Rather than pausing to breathe and know my God and His will for me today, I have too much to accomplish or worry about to sit still: I halt – like a racehorse at the gate – ready to spring into action. **But doing, *even doing things for God*, is no replacement for being with God.** Jesus knew this.

*And rising very early in the morning, while it was still dark, he departed and went out to a desolate place, and there he prayed.* Mark 1:35

Jesus’ day was full of meeting needs, but what set the course for each day was not those needs, but the will of His Father, whom He met with in the quiet. Jesus is teaching us by example that such an undistracted, unrushed moment is needed for us to walk faithfully, not frantically, throughout our day. This will take discipline, but do you love Him? Then what more need I say?

Maybe God’s “red lights” in the present times are warning signs - indicators that something isn’t right between you and God. If you want the check engine light in your vehicle off you need someone who can look beyond the surface, find the problem, and know how to fix it. God alone sees beyond our surface. He sees right through me to the heart of the issue (which is the heart!), and He offers us His ability to get in and set it right. With every “red light” God is reminding us that He is the fuel in our tanks, He is the spark plug of our hearts, He is our GPS. I could go on with the metaphors, but the point is the same: I am lost without Him. What good is endless “going” if you have lost all sense of where, why, or how you’re even moving?!

Don’t just keep carrying on and think things will change. Make the right move and get alone with you and God. That means just you and Him with His words before you. Pray them. Ask forgiveness for the wretched in you, experience His steadfast love again. And notice the difference to the trajectory of your day and your life.