



Links Players

What Was The Question Again?

And a leper came to him, imploring him, and kneeling said to him, “If you will, you can make me clean.” (Mark 1:40, ESV)

A friend asked me recently, as we were walking down the 9th fairway, why I keep playing golf. Perhaps a dozen possible responses rushed through my mind, yelling, “Pick me! Pick me!”

One of them was a little bit snarky, and I sent it away immediately. “The question was genuine,” I responded, “you would not be appropriate.”

Within a nanosecond, I had also rejected a self-deprecating answer that might have sounded prideful and another answer that would have been a delaying tactic, which I didn’t need.

I had heard the question and knew that it wasn’t mere curiosity. A clear and honest response was needed, and I gave it.

One good thing about that exchange was that I actually listened to the words spoken and the way they were spoken. Together, they revealed something about where he was and what he needed, and I tried to give him an answer to his real question (Why should I keep playing golf?) with my answer.

I haven’t always done that. When I was a young teacher, I often made the mistake of assuming my students – whether in golf, tennis, or the Bible – needed to “know something” I knew. In fact, they almost never did, but I told them anyway. Jesus didn’t do that, so I don’t recommend it for us, either.

What I was doing, as I phrase it now, was telling people where they should be rather than learning where they were.

When the leper came to Jesus, Jesus didn’t say, “Let me tell you about a blind man I healed,” and he didn’t say, “Let me tell you about the sinner’s prayer.” Jesus found out what the man needed and met him there.

A great golf instructor will not try to cure your slice if you don’t have one. She will find out where you are and move forward with you.

If you talk to people about faith, resist the temptation to tell them where they need to be. Help them where they are, and they may just come back for more.

Prayer: Father, you meet us where we are, and we love you for it. May we do the same for those we interact with about matters of faith. Through Jesus our Lord, Amen

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