



That Friday morning we met athletes at the Sump Coffee house in St. Louis for a chapel gathering before the racing started that night. We sat outside, in the midst of all the noise from traffic, passerby's, and construction chaos across the street. One might think that a quiet, non-public place for a 'religious' gathering might make more sense. A place where people can focus, listen, and not have to fight the constant distractions of a moment where real life is happening. That wasn't the case for us that day.

I'm not saying those moments of quiet meditation or listening prayer aren't useful; they are incredibly impactful and necessary for a thriving relationship with God. And yet, far too often we don't practice listening, spiritual awareness, and prayer in the midst of the noise and chaos of everyday life. I generally am far too concerned with the storm than to focus on the Calm One standing within it's waves.

Bike racing is no different: the media, the pressure, the speed, the potential for injury. It's all there. However, Jesus seemed to always be at rest even in moments like these. What would it look like to be at rest in the middle of a crisis? What does it mean to "abide in the vine" in a race week riddled with the stress to perform or fear of failure?

In an apprenticeship to Jesus, the Master calls us to an art form of listening and of presence. Art isn't something that's perfectly calculated and always carried out to the fifth decimal point. It's more like Jazz where notes meander up and down the scale and generally land within the key that's being played. There's a plan, but it's not a straight line from A to B. The walk with Jesus is a circuitous route that takes you in and out, up and down, until you step back from the canvas and see all along God has been painting a picture of what it means to be faithful.

Mark Nepo once said, "The glory of God is the human being fully alive." Being fully alive doesn't mean hiding in a monastery away from the world to make sure you live a faithful and pious life. Being fully alive means listening to God's voice and learning to be at rest in his presence regardless if the noise is there or not. Take a lesson from St. Ignatius, the dude lived this out in a way that rivaled the faithfulness of Paul, and yet was almost killed by people that didn't understand that faith was a plunge *into reality, not a withdrawal from it.*

We modeled this sort of living that Friday. On the patio of an obscure coffee shop in Saint Louis, a group of men and women

professional cyclists gathered in the midst of all the noise and chaos and had a go being faithful. May we all take those risks.

*Jesus, grant that we may all learn to listen to your holy and human voice within us. Guide us and give us faith even when your voice is drowned out with jackhammers and dump trucks. Teach us an adult faith that isn't dependent on our environment or emotional state. Help us to trust in you even when we can't feel your hand guiding us.*

