

Rev. Timothy M. Crummitt

Third Sunday after Epiphany - Year B

St. Paul's Lutheran Church

Jonah 3:1-5, 10

Psalm 62:5-12

I Corinthians 7:29-31

Mark 1:14-20

01/21/2018

Gospel

The Holy Gospel according to St. Mark:

14Now after John was arrested, Jesus came to Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God, 15and saying, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has come near; repent, and believe in the good news."

16As Jesus passed along the Sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and his brother Andrew casting a net into the sea—for they were fishermen. 17And Jesus said to them, "Follow me and I will make you fish for people." 18And immediately they left their nets and followed him. 19As he went a little farther, he saw James son of Zebedee and his brother John, who were in their boat mending the nets. 20Immediately he called them; and they left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired men, and followed him.

The Gospel of our Lord.

Prayer

Let us pray,

Amen

Something New

Good morning! The morning of January 7th, 2012 arrived like any other normal morning. It was a Saturday and I woke up early, for me, at 9am. I did the normal morning things, drank some coffee, ate some breakfast, and then started getting ready for the day. I got a shower, put on some clothes and packed my bag. But everything was extremely significant that day. I got in my car, and drove to the wedding venue to meet my groomsmen to carpool to the church. It was Megan's and my wedding day, and things were going to change.

Things progressed as usual, on our way to the church we were called and told NOT to come to the church... the bride was still outside getting photos, so with no other option in sight, the male half of the bridal party was FORCED to go to a nearby bar and restaurant to have a drink or two while we waited. After getting the "all-clear" we went to the church, got ready, and waited for the ceremony to start.

My wife has always been beautiful, but walking down the aisle that day she positively glowed. And there, in the church where I was baptized, surrounded by family and friends, we said "I do." The joy and happiness that we both felt that day were incredible, the reception that night was a blast, and without any bias I can say it was the best party that I've ever been to. As we rode in the limo to the reception that night I can remember thinking that nothing could ever happen that wouldn't be possible for us to handle, that the joy and light of that day would

outshine any darkness that life decided to throw at us. And that's something that is important for anyone in a relationship to remember.

Now, while the joy of being chosen as a disciple was probably a little different than the joy I felt at my wedding, the point is similar and just as important. The disciples have no idea what will happen next, but the excitement and joy will be a reminder for them when things get dark.

After a brief time in the Gospel of John last week we jump back to Gospel of Mark for today. In fact, what we hear from Jesus is his very first sermon! "*The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has come near; repent, and believe in the good news.*" It's a little shorter than what I would have gone with but, hey, he's the Son of God. After a one sentence sermon, rich with meaning and significance, Jesus calls the first disciples in the Gospel of Mark. He chooses Simon, Andrew, James and John. Now, exactly one year ago for the Third Sunday after Epiphany, I gave a sermon about the Gospel of Matthew's calling of the disciples. I won't spend too much time on this, because I'm sure you all have it memorized, but I made the point that it was a joy to be called by a rabbi or teacher. We all remember those Sunday school lessons that focus on guilting us into thinking that it would be so hard for us to choose being a disciple. I told you last year, and I'll tell you again, that's wrong. Boys spent their early life training to be a rabbi. It was only the absolute best who were allowed to carry on in their training. But in all the gospels we have Jesus not choosing the other rabbis but instead going to those who flunked out.

That's good news if you had grades like mine. And it's a common theme for the Bible. Time and time again God picks those least likely to be chosen to be the instrument of God. God sends a man with a speech problem to tell the pharaoh of Egypt to free the Israelites. God picked

the youngest son, the one everyone else forgot, to be King. The story of God's people is the story of the lost and forgotten, the outcasts, and the weakest being chosen to do God's work.

And that's what I'm here to remind you about today. The world is full of people who think that they are the least likely to be chosen as a disciple. Believe me, pulpits across the world are full of them right now. If you're sitting there right now thinking you would like to serve in some way here at St. Paul's or in the larger church, I'm here to tell you that's God calling you. If you've been on the fringe, all the better.

As we sit on the other side of 500 years of the Reformation, I'm reminded that one of the greatest gifts the Lutheran church can offer is the gift of a true understanding of vocation. Nowadays, we most often hear the word "call" in relation to the "calling" of a pastor. This congregation issued a "call" to me a little over a year and half ago to be the pastor of this church. But what's happened is exactly the thing that Martin Luther wanted to stop. We've started to believe that a life of faith is something only cut out for those with fancy degrees and collars. In the 1500's the spiritual elite were holed up in monasteries and other church positions, put on a pedestal by the church. Luther famously argued that it was the priesthood of ALL believers that made the Church strong. Every aspect of our lives was rich with chances to live out our call. The Christian shoemaker didn't put little crosses on their shoes, NO! They made good shoes!

And this outlook extends to every part of our days, our lives. In fact, I would argue that you all have it harder than I do. My calling is to help train, to help equip all of you to go out and bear witness. I am able to surround myself with reminders of Jesus Christ. The collar is a dead giveaway when strangers see me. You all have it much harder to bear witness to your call. But that just means it's even more important that you realize that you've been chosen! Jesus has

walked along the shore, seen your work and decided that you can handle the challenge of the work that is to come.

Anyone who has been married for any length of time will tell you that marriage is a journey, full of challenges and rewards. And when we hit those walls, it's memories like a wedding day that help us remember why we made this decision in the first place. Today I am here to tell you that this journey as a disciple will not be an easy one. We're in the Gospel of Mark, and so we're rushing towards Jerusalem. There we will witness what some call the greatest love story ever told.

In the mean time, it's good enough for us to enjoy the moments we have now. The God who created human beings out of nothing, who fashioned the universe, the God who became incarnate and who called a few guys fishing in the Middle East some 2,000 years ago has called YOU to come, follow and serve. Do you really want to tell that God no? Amen.