

2nd Sunday After Pentecost
 June 18, 2023
 St George Albany

Mt 4.18–23 *The call of Peter, Andrew, James and John*

In the name of the F, S, HS—One God. Amen!

I want you to imagine that Jesus knocks on your door and asks to come in to your house...

Of course you give Him the best hospitality.

You cook a wonderful meal for Him, you ask Him to bless the food.

You are on your best behavior.

All your family are present

You are overcome with the Grace of His presence and there is a burning desire in your heart to remain with Him—for Him to never leave

You have wonderful conversation and you listen as He teaches

He is kind and gentle

Funny and He is interested in you

You ask Him questions and you accept His answers as law

As He rises to leave your home you beg Him to stay so that you can show more hospitality

When He sees this burning desire in your heart He says to you—follow me...

You respond—where Lord, I will follow you to ends of the earth, I will go into battle with you, I will do whatever you ask, but please do not leave me. Allow me to stay with you.

Sometimes it is easy to imagine that if we lived 2000 years ago when our Lord walked on the earth in the flesh we would have stayed with Him. We would not have been like the pharisees who were always questioning Him

We would not have been like Peter who denied Him (Lk 22.54–62)

We would certainly not have been like Judas who betrayed Him (Lk 22.48)

The fact is when our Lord walked the earth in the flesh those 2000 years ago it was difficult for the disciples to see and understand who He was (Mt 16.11, Mk 8.21, Mk 8.27), let alone those who were not close to Him—like the pharisees and the crowds

And this difficulty did not go away after our Lord's resurrection. When our Lord walks on the road to Emmaus with Luke and Cleopas after His resurrection these two disciples do not recognize Jesus. They have trouble seeing Him for who He is. (Lk 24.16)

And it is not until they show Him hospitality and share the Eucharistic meal with Him that they recognize Him. (Lk 24.30-31)

And so it is for us still today.

We have trouble seeing Christ when He shows up in our lives. It is like we do not have the right glasses on.

Things are blurry for us and this makes so many of our decisions in life difficult

What should I do about this situation with my family?

How should I use the money that God has given me to take care of for Him?

When should I be firm with my children and when should I be merciful?

When should I walk away from a situation and when should I remain and work it out?

These questions are difficult for us because it is difficult to see our Lord Christ in these decisions

Or worse yet, we think that there are some parts of our lives that don't concern Him.

The fact is though that every moment of our lives we have a crucial decision to make

Because every moment of our lives our Lord is calling to us and saying to us—follow me

Every moment our lives our Lord stands before us calling us to Himself because every moment of our lives is an opportunity for an encounter with our Lord

And what is our response when our Lord says to us—follow me?

Today we hear that Peter and Andrew were casting their net into the sea and that James and John were mending their nets.

When they heard the call of the Lord they responded—they left what they had and they followed the Lord (Mt 4.18-22)

And this is the response that we desire also.

We want to do what our Lord asks us because we love Him

The only thing is that often what our Lord asks is not what we might imagine because our Lord works through paradox

As St Paul tells us...

What seems like strength to us is weakness in the eyes of our Lord (2 Cor 12.9)

What seems like wisdom to us is foolishness in the eyes of our Lord (1 Cor 1.25)

And what seems like life to us is death in the eyes of our Lord (Rom 6.4)

And the ultimate Paradox of Jesus Christ, the Son of God dying on a cross.

Why would the Author of Life go to death on a cross?

It is to show us and teach us how we are to look at the world (1 Cor 1.23)

And how we ourselves are to act in the world

Our Lord going to death on the cross is the key for us to be able to see the world in the proper way

It is the right lens for our glasses to take away the blurriness and to make clear what was fuzzy before

When we look at the world through the lens of the cross we see the deeper reality that underlays everything.

And this is available to everyone

This message of the cross is preached to everyone (Acts 2.7-11)

It is taught in the Churches of God

And the fruit of this message is a change of life. (Gal 5.16-25)

We heard today that after our Lord called Peter Andrew James and John that He went about Preaching and teaching and healing every infirmity and disease. (Mt 4.23)

When we answer the call to follow Christ and we hear the preaching and teaching of our Lord through the Church—what follows is healing and miracles.

And it is not only the healing of others but the healing of ourselves

Our eyes are healed so that we can see and we become as ones that can see things as they truly are

Our minds are healed so that we can speak truth with our mouths

Our hearts are healed so that we can hear and listen with compassion and tenderness

Our hands are healed so that we can do the work of Christ in the world through the touch of our good works

And our intuition is healed so that we can follow the fragrance of Christ in whatever situation we find ourselves.

And so, when our Lord rises to leave from our homes after He has spent time with us

And we tell him not to leave us and He see our desire for Him and says to us—follow me

And we respond and we say—where Lord, I will follow you to ends of the earth, I will go into battle with you, I will do whatever you ask, but please do not leave me. Allow me to stay with you.

Then our Lord responds and He says to us—treat every person who comes to you like you have treated me. Read my words in the Scripture and listen to me teach you. Go to Church and partake of my Body and Blood and so receive anew the Grace and strength that I have given you now. If you do these things you follow Me and you will always be with Me.

My beloved faithful, these are truly Christ's words to us today—to follow Him

But in following Him we are to recognize that it means a change for us. He is the same, yesterday, today and forever. (Heb 13.8)

And so it is not He who changes for us but we who are transformed in being more like Him when we follow Him.

Glory to our Lord Jesus Christ, His unbegotten Father and the all-holy and good and life-giving Spirit—Amen!

