

Third Sunday after the Epiphany

Year B
RCL

The Collect

Give us grace, O Lord, to answer readily the call of our Savior Jesus Christ and proclaim to all people the Good News of his salvation, that we and the whole world may perceive the glory of his marvelous works; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. *Amen.*

Old Testament

Jonah 3:1-5, 10

The word of the LORD came to Jonah a second time, saying, "Get up, go to Nineveh, that great city, and proclaim to it the message that I tell you." So Jonah set out and went to Nineveh, according to the word of the LORD. Now Nineveh was an exceedingly large city, a three days' walk across. Jonah began to go into the city, going a day's walk. And he cried out, "Forty days more, and Nineveh shall be overthrown!" And the people of Nineveh believed God; they proclaimed a fast, and everyone, great and small, put on sackcloth.

When God saw what they did, how they turned from their evil ways, God changed his mind about the calamity that he had said he would bring upon them; and he did not do it.

The Psalm

Psalm 62:6-14

- 6 For God alone my soul in silence waits; *
truly, my hope is in him.
- 7 He alone is my rock and my salvation, *
my stronghold, so that I shall not be shaken.
- 8 In God is my safety and my honor; *
God is my strong rock and my refuge.
- 9 Put your trust in him always, O people, *
pour out your hearts before him, for God is our refuge.
- 10 Those of high degree are but a fleeting breath, *
even those of low estate cannot be trusted.
- 11 On the scales they are lighter than a breath, *
all of them together.

- 12 Put no trust in extortion;
in robbery take no empty pride; *
though wealth increase, set not your heart upon it.
- 13 God has spoken once, twice have I heard it, *
that power belongs to God.
- 14 Steadfast love is yours, O Lord, *
for you repay everyone according to his deeds.

The Epistle

1 Corinthians 7:29-31

I mean, brothers and sisters, the appointed time has grown short; from now on, let even those who have wives be as though they had none, and those who mourn as though they were not mourning, and those who rejoice as though they were not rejoicing, and those who buy as though they had no possessions, and those who deal with the world as though they had no dealings with it. For the present form of this world is passing away.

The Gospel

Mark 1:14-20

After John was arrested, Jesus came to Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God, and saying, “The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has come near; repent, and believe in the good news.”

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

The Gospel of the Lord.

SERMON

In this morning's gospel two fishermen, Simon and his brother Andrew was casting a net into the sea. Every day it was the same thing, the same sea, the same net, on the same boat. Day after day it was the wind, the fish, sore muscles and tired bodies. They probably came from generations of fishermen, watching their dads and grandfathers, and seeing what their future will look like. We all know those days.

We may not be fishermen, but we know about all our days that seem the same. One day looks like the other. Life has become a routine. Nothing ever changes and we don't expect much to happen. This is just our life. We work to make a living, feed our families, pay the bills. We save to go on vacation, or buy things from Amazon, or try to keep our families together, as we cast away another day of loneliness, sadness or illness.

These are the realities of our lives. These are also the circumstances we are in when Jesus comes to us, the place where we are changed and the ordinary becomes extraordinary.

Simon, Andrew, James and John were not looking for Jesus. They are too busy with their nets. It is another day of casting and hoping for fish. They probably didn't even notice Jesus, they were too busy wondering how much they would get paid today, but Jesus not only sees them, but he speaks to them.

You see, Jesus has a way of showing up in our normal, everyday lives and interrupting our daily routines. That's what he did to the lives of Simon, Andrew, James and John. And that's what he does to yours and mine.

“Follow me” is Jesus' invitation to a new life.

And these four fishermen did just that. No discussions, no questions, no goodbyes. They simply “left and followed him.”

If we had been one of the disciples, we would have a lot of questions.

Where are we going? What will we be doing? How long will we be gone? What should we take? Where will we stay?

And this is the hard part for most of us. We’re very good at accumulating and holding on to things, but not so good at letting go. We will never get anywhere new if we’re unwilling to leave where we are. We accept Jesus’ invitation to follow, not by packing up, but by letting go.

We let go so we can refocus our lives and be open to receive the life with God anew. God is calling us. And our call from God could be earth shaking, or it could be a whisper. It is near to us and it is life changing. It could be as quiet as a prayer.

Or it could be an invitation to be on the Bishop's Committee or attend the General Convention!

In those words, those invitations, God is speaking to all of us. We just need to listen. For good or bad, and whether we like it or not, the world is changing rapidly and we are called as disciples into the unknown. And we should follow, without fear, because we are called by God.

Remember, during the happiest moments of our lives, or the worst, Jesus shows up and calls us into a new way of being and our world will change. It happened for Simon, Andrew, James and John, and it can happen for you and me.

E pule kākou, let us pray.

O God our heavenly Father, you have blessed us and given us
dominion over all the earth: Increase our reverence before
the mystery of life; and give us new insight into your purposes
for the human race, and new wisdom and determination in
making provision for its future in accordance with your will;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.