

## “Where Are You Going?”

Mark 1:14-20

By Pastor Gary Walters

Our scripture lesson this morning comes from Mark, 1st chapter, versus 14 through 20 and this is the calling of the first disciples. "After John was put in prison, Jesus went into Galilee proclaiming the good news of God. The time has come, he said, the kingdom of God is near, repent and believe the good news. And as Jesus walked beside the sea of Galilee he saw Simon and his brother Andrew casting nets into the lake, for they were fisherman. Come follow me, Jesus said, and I will make you fishers of men. At once they left their nets and followed him and when he had gone a little further, Jesus saw James, son of Zebedee and his brother John in a boat preparing nets. Without delay he called them and they left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired men and followed him." The word of God for the people of God, Thanks be to God!

Well, as this is Boy Scout Sunday, I'm going to start with a scouting story of my own. I have to qualify this by saying I had a lot of great memories from Boy Scouts, but this wasn't one of them. I was out at Medicine Mountain, which is the Boy Scout camp in the Black Hills, and it's in a more remote area of the Black Hills. There was a group of us who were still in Middle School, so we were just kind of getting started with this whole Boy Scout thing, and so imagine a pickup truck full of 7th and 8th graders, bouncing our way up a fire trail, out into the middle of absolutely nowhere. I think we'd had a day or two of lessons on Orienteering, or how to read a map and compass and make sense of all that and this was kind of the final exam. We got out to who knows where and our counselor he told us to get out and we got out and he said "your here, you need to be there, have at it" and he drove off and left us. It was the middle of July, it was about 10 in the morning and probably about 90 degrees out already. We had our canteens and sack lunch and we had most of the day to get back to camp, in theory.

I think we were doing okay, I have to emphasize "I think" we were doing okay, until we ran into one of my fellow troopmates, Thad, actually he was a few years older than I was, he lived up the street, I knew him pretty well, and I figured well, jeez, Thad's probably been through this before and he knows where he's going and besides he got out here somehow, he wasn't just driven around in circles in the woods and then dropped off, so we asked him for help. He said "Oh, you don't need that stuff, just follow me." Well, after our lunches were gone and our canteens were empty and were about four hours into this shortcut, we figured out that we probably should have just stuck to the plan.

Fortunately, we wandered out onto the road that winds its way back to Medicine

Mountain and so we recognized where we were at. The problem was that the day was wearing on, we were about to miss dinner and we were several miles from camp and we were hot, we were tired, and we were wore out. As we stood there looking at each other, wondering what in the heck we needed to do, or how we were going to get back to camp, that pickup truck came bouncing up the road and the counselor hops up and he said "Where are you going?", well back to camp, duh. He was so amazed were that far off course. Well, needless to say we didn't get our merit badges on that go around, but he was nice enough to give us a ride back to camp.

Well there is a little bit of that going on in today's lesson and we'll get to that. Jesus is just starting his ministry and the first thing he does, he sets the course, he gathers around him this kind of band of like-minded souls who will help him in this task. In kind of a classic understatement, the scripture says Jesus saw Peter and Andrew. Now Jesus' eyes saw what our eyes would see too, two men in the boats working their trade. But, his eyes saw so much more because he saw the potential and the possibility of what these two could become. And, not just these two, but as he went on further down the shoreline he saw James and John and likewise he saw them and he saw the potential, the possibility of what they could become and of the impact that they could make for the kingdom of God.

The thing that Mark emphasizes in all of this isn't that they were so poor, or so rich, or so extraordinary, or anything about them, but just that they were so extremely ordinary. These were us. It was Abraham Lincoln who said "God must love the ordinary people because he made so many of them." And Jesus calls these ordinary men to help him in this extraordinary task. But in the way that the invitation to them is phrased, it's clear that its not about who they are but its about what they can become. So, the only thing that distinguishes these men is their willingness to go with Jesus.

We have to assume that this isn't the first time they heard Jesus. They heard his preaching, they've heard him teach, their hearts have been stirred, they've been touched, they've heard him but they haven't received the call until now. It doesn't just happen in a vacuum.

But, we're like that. We are all here this morning because at some point and at some time we've heard the call too. We didn't just wander in off the street, "Oh, look there's a bunch of people, lets have a seat and join in." We are here to seek Jesus, to find Christ, to receive that encouragement, and receiving that encouragement, follow up on it and act on it.

Well, to act on it, this task that the disciples are given. First there is the invitation, "Come follow me" but then Jesus says "I will make you fishers of men, fisher's of

women" you will be those who will go out to draw others to me. It's not about who they are but about what Jesus can do in them, kind of crafting them into the type of people for whom the kingdom work will become second nature. And the "come and follow" and the "I will make you fishers of men and women," those two are inseparable. They come and follow Jesus and receive his teaching, his instruction, they see his example. They come to know his love and his grace and his truth. But, having received that, they also are then challenged to go out and do likewise. It's interesting in the Old Testament, there is that fishers of men and women image that comes up in the prophets. But, in the Old Testament it's God who does the fishing. But now God is inviting these others to join him in this task, its incredible. The disciples must have thought so. Yet, they answered that call.

It kind of challenges us with that idea of where are we at on that journey because we've heard that call and yet, well, it's a little bit like trying to figure out the map and the compass. We took a few wrong turns and more than once we sat down along the trail and eventually we just took the easiest course of action and went downhill and downhill and downhill until, thank God, we found that road. Life can be like that too. There is enough in life to keep us busy and to keep us distracted so that we wander off course or we just kind of go with the flow, the easiest path of resistance, and we forget that we have been called, that we are disciples, that we are not just wandering aimlessly, but that we have been called to a destination. The destination is Jesus, but we've been called to bring others with us. So, come and follow and I will make you fishers and the two are inseparable. Because, the more we learn the closer we draw to Christ, the more that our lives reflect Christ and the more that we draw others to Christ, and the more that we draw others and offer that to them the more we realize that we need more of Jesus so we can offer more of that to others and it just goes around and around and reinforces one another.

It's great in abstract, but how does that work practically. Here are just a couple of quick ideas. A few months ago we had the challenge here of McCabe that everyone had a new growth opportunity and that everyone had a place where they would serve, and how are you doing on that? I bring it up because if you are in a place in your spiritual walk where you are not growing, then chances are, kind of using that metaphor, that you've sat down along the path or you've wandered off, you've forgotten, or you need that reminder, that you are a disciple, that you are called, that there is a destination that you are heading for, that your life has a purpose, beyond just getting by each day. So, where are you growing? Where are you growing? That challenge is before us with "The Three Simple Rules" or the host of activities that we offer here through McCabe where we have the opportunity to nurture our souls, to learn more about Christ, to be drawn closer to him. But, then, not just leaving it there, but being drawn closer to Christ we would give an outlet or event for that blessing that we have received. That

we might serve in or through McCabe so that our lives also are being spent and used to draw others to Christ, because we are those ordinary people. But, on the other hand, God can do extraordinary things through the ordinary, and that's us. The invitation is before you. Come follow, come follow Jesus, that he may make you fishers of men, fishers of women. Where are you going?

Would you pray with me? Lord, we thank you for the invitation that you've given to us but remind us that we are indeed on a journey and so help us to focus on that destination and to answer that call. In Christ's name we pray, Amen.