

3<sup>rd</sup> Sun OT – Jonah 3:1-5,10; Corinthians 7:29-31; Mark 1:14-20

Three great readings this week from Book of Jonah, Letter to Corinthians, and Mark.

Jonah is called by God to give his message to the city of Nineveh that unless they repent they will be destroyed. And he did, after he tried everything he could to get out of God's mission. If you continue the story, in the end, Jonah was sorely disappointed that Nineveh repented and now God would not destroy it. I think he was hoping for the fireworks, but most probably the revenge of God on someone who doesn't do his will. You would think that Jonah would have included himself with those who try to escape doing God's will.

In Paul's letter to the Corinthians, he warns them that the time is running out, "For the world in its present form is passing away." This was passionate hope for Jews at the time of Paul, that the end was coming and the new reign of God will replace it, the Jewish version of the End of the World. Guess what? It didn't happen, at least as Paul was hoping it would. In his letter to the Thessalonians, he has to explain the new version of the End of the World when it still didn't come in Paul's time, an End that even Paul is not so sure of.

And in Mark's gospel we have the "Calling" of the disciples, beginning with Simon and Andrew, and James and John bar Zebedee. They just dropped everything and followed Jesus. However, there were some who didn't just drop what they were doing and followed Jesus. The rich young man was one what Mark recorded in his gospel. "And Jesus looked at him with love and said, 'Go sell what you have and come and follow me.'" Jesus can love us all he wants, but if we love our money more, guess who or what is going to win?

These "Calling" stories are important for us because Jesus continues to call us, to come and follow. Coming to the Eucharist every Sunday is not the same as following Jesus, since even Jesus and his disciples continued to attend the services at the synagogue. The Rabbis, Sadducees, Pharisees, and Elders didn't drop everything and followed Jesus. OK, Nicodemus did, but he had to sneak around at night so as not to get caught by the others.

So, what does come and follow mean?

By the way, sheep is not a good example, since they are dumb, almost as dumb as domesticated turkeys. Yes, they dutifully follow their shepherd, but even

the shepherd's family has lambchops at Passover. In other words, we are expected to follow the Lord not as dumb sheep, but as people with gifts that can be shared with others. The gifts will vary as much as people do, and each gift is important for the Lord to use to further the Kingdom of God.

So why go to church? First to hear the word of God and learn what the Lord has for us to do and what to do. And second, but just as important, to grow as the Body of Christ to be a corporate witness to love and truth and every other aspect of God, like beauty and goodness, justice and right.

The Eucharist also does something else for the Church, the Faith Community, the Body of Christ here at Gov Island Chapel and everywhere else in the world. The Eucharist that we celebrate each Sunday brings us to a deeper awareness of Christ's presence within us so to empower us to carry our God will for us in building up the Kingdom of God on earth through the Body of Christ, the Church. And this is our "Calling."

**First**, we remind ourselves that we are called by our Baptism as Priest, Prophet, and King, each time we bless ourselves with Holy Water, simple! This blessing reminds us that the Trinity continues to reside within us. Usually, a parish will have Greeters at the door, but in small chapels we greet each other. Before the Eucharist even begins, this important aspect as the Body of Christ reminds us that when two or three are gathered, there Christ is present in a deeper and more special way because of our gathering for Eucharist. Sorry, that is something that a Zoom Eucharist can't do.

**Second**, we hear the Word of God, which can be so powerful that we can, like Saint Francis of Assisi and Saint Anthony of the Desert, drop everything and go and follow the Lord. OK, not yet! The Word of God awakens us to the movements of the Holy Spirit within us. Like a two edged sword it can cut us to the quick. It is left up to us to come and follow, but at the least, to let the Word of God grow within us. On the road to Emmaus, the disciples realized how their hearts burned within as they heard Jesus pointed out in the Scriptures all that would happen to him.

**Thirdly**, this presence of God culminates in the celebration of the Meal, and when we receive the Body and Blood of Christ, we are made aware that we are tabernacles of flesh ready to re-enter the world and bring God's presence to all those around us, in the flesh! That is our Calling.