

Those Not-So-Ordinary Times

Luke 5:1-11 we find Jesus speaking to a crowd of people. Jesus has gone out on the lake of Gennesaret in a boat with a fisherman named Simon. After speaking with the crowd Jesus instructs Simon to go further into the lake and release his nets.

Despite an unsuccessful night of fishing, Simon does as he is asked, and he casts his nets into the water. To his astonishment the nets are filled in abundance and he is filled with fear and reverence. But “Jesus said to Simon, “Do not be afraid; from now on you will be catching people.” When they **brought their boats** to shore, they left everything and followed him.” Simon, James and John left everything and followed Jesus.

(Now) I have a confession to make. When I chose the topic of ordinary times for this sermon it was out of frustration and for purely selfish reasons. Truthfully it was not a topic I had given much thought to nor was it chosen out of some deep desire to learn more about the significance of the Ordinary Times of the church. You see I was all set to give a sermon at Auburn **Correctional Facility** on December 23. Unfortunately, I was unable to get into the prison. I would not be able to give the sermon I felt I had worked so hard on. I had specifically written the sermon for a time of reflection on Advent. What would I do with the sermon now? I can only use it for a specific time and purpose. I was frustrated so I decided that my next sermon **would be on** the Ordinary Times of the church. There are plenty of Sundays that fall within the Ordinary Times of the church.

There are two distinct periods of Ordinary Times on the **liturgical calendar**. The day after, Epiphany (which is January 6th) until the day before the season of Lent/Easter/Pentecost marks one period of Ordinary Times. The time between the day after Pentecost to the day before Advent starts marks the **second period of Ordinary Times**. **This period between Pentecost** and Advent is a significant amount of time on the liturgical calendar. (Now) It would be easy to fall into the thinking that these times are just as their names suggest, ordinary, common, or uneventful, as I had. After all, **the season of Advent/Christmas/Epiphany** is a time to celebrate the preparation, arrival and acknowledgment of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ; the light of the world. And the season of Lent/Easter/Pentecost is a time to reflect on and remember the love of God and the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross. Although the birth and death of Christ mark key events in **the life of the church** it would be a detriment to the church if it was to forget that Jesus lived.

Jesus lived. Jesus, born of the virgin Mary, lived. Jesus, who died on the cross, lived. Jesus lived life much like you and I live life today. In his living he studied the Torah and the writings of the prophets and attended the synagogue with his family. As **he grew into adulthood**, he learned the trade of carpentry. Fully divine, yet fully human Jesus could not escape the cultural, social, political and economical influences of his day. **When Jesus began** his ministry, it was as a man, in the flesh, who had lived, working and worshipping within his community.

As I reflected on the living Jesus, the Jesus who in Luke 5 **told Simon not to be afraid** and that he would be a catcher of people I seriously started to consider what does it mean for the church to worship in Ordinary Times. The Ordinary Times of the

church is a time set aside to reflect on and celebrate the call to **discipleship to follow Jesus** daily.

“Do not be afraid; from now on you will be catching people.” In his living Jesus taught those who sought to follow him what it meant to be a disciple. He taught them how to pray **and what it meant to rely** on God and God alone. He gave them the tools to reshape their lives around the kingdom of God. A kingdom that was built around God’s good grace. A kingdom not like the cultural, political, social or economic **culture in which they lived** that was based on hospitality and reciprocity. Jesus taught his disciples how-to live-in community and to defend the oppressed, care for the sick and to remember the widow. In these days of Ordinary Time, we read the **parables that teach** us life lessons, stories of healing and hope, and of renewal, transformation and restoration. In these days of Ordinary Time, we come to **learn and understand how Jesus prepared the** disciples for the time when he would no longer walk this world in the flesh, of the saving grace of God’s redemptive plan for us through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ and promise that Jesus would be **with his disciples until the end of the age. The** Ordinary Times in the life of the church present us with continual opportunities to witness a risen Savior who makes all thing new.

As I mentioned I picked the topic of Ordinary Times for purely selfish reasons. I had not given a thought to what these times in the life of the church meant for me or my life in the **church. But** as I reflected on what it means to worship in these times, I have come to realize that in preparing that sermon to deliver in the Auburn Correctional facility was not about me; it was **about obeying** the will of Christ. Would I be willing to follow where Jesus leads me? Was I willing to step out of my comfort zone and say yes, I will do your will?

Jesus **said to Simon** “Do not be afraid; from now you will be catching people.” Although it is not written in the text, I can imagine Jesus saying to Simon “come I will show you how.” **These not so Ordinary** Times in the life of the church are times to reshape our lives and orient us toward the kingdom of God. It is in these not so Ordinary Times where we learn to walk in the Light of the world and to live in remembrance of his sacrifice on **the cross. If in these Ordinary Times of the church, we stop to listen for the voice of Jesus we too will hear Jesus saying** “Do not be afraid: come and follow me. I will show you the way. To God glory. Amen.