LORD OF LIFE LUTHERAN CHURCH GARNER, NC 2/10/19

Leaving the Net of A Great Catch Behind

In the Name…

Let us pray….

After pulling in a net full of fish, Peter, James, and John leave that great catch, leave their net and follow Jesus, Who tells them from now on they will be catching people

What if any one of us had worked all our lives on one job, and then had a bonanza day at work whatever that might email and then someone from the outside comes in and tells you to follow her. You might, if you knew what you were getting into. You might if you saw a good opportunity for you and your family. What if your bonanza day was great profits, would you leave that behind and follow her? And this person tells you little about the reason why you should follow her. Jesus only told His disciples that instead of catching fish, they would be catching people.

That is probably a concern for you. Am I going to be saying that Jesus wants us to be catching people. We talked about this in our retreat yesterday. We are not looking to go door to door. My theologian and preacher of note the last two years is Barbara Brown Taylor and she describes in her book, “Leaving Church” when she was in undergraduate school, two Missionary Alliance Church girls knocked on her dorm door. In her mind, they knew Scripture backward and forward and they were certain of where they would be after they died. She as a freshman felt very inadequate. However, looking back she thought, they did not show love, just their agenda. Instead through her life, she would show love.

Nadia Bolz-Weber founder and former pastor of House for All Sinners and Saint has stated that the Ten Commandments are about more than the mere absence of bad behavior, they are also about the presence of good.

For example she says, the fifth commandment would be like the middle square on a bingo board, like a freebie. But Luther teaches in the catechism that the fifth commandment requires more than just not killing someone. “We got that right?” Luther says Pastor Nadia says, “we shall not kill means, we are to fear and love God so that we neither endanger nor harm the lives of our neighbors, but instead help and support them in all life’s needs. Do no harm AND SUPPORT THEM IN ALL THEIR NEEDS. A whole new perspective, a broadening of what “not to kill” means. By the love, help and support we show, then we are out there “fishing for people.”

In the documentary “We Shall Not Grow Old”, British men left their net of comfort in England and joined the fight of World War I, leaving family house and surroundings in a situation in which they had no choice or at least they felt that way. Like the disciples they had little notion of what they were getting into as they left their nets. As we left the film we could not help those whom we fought against in the Second World War Germany and Japan are our best allies now. And sure enough in the documentary a captured German soldier was getting along splendidly with his british counterparts.

The play “Ashe in Johanesburg” has Arthur Ashe literally leaving his tennis NET in the states to travel to Apartheid South Africa in an attempt to show the blacks of South Africa that they were equal to their afrikaner counterparts.

I thought I was leaving my net behind when I left the church I was serving in Vermont and came to North Carolina in 2000 to teach. Within months I was supply preaching then nonstipendiary associate pastor at Holy Trinity and as soon as that happened, 3 times a month to Atlantic Beach, 2-3 times a month in Rocky Mount, interim at Lord of Life, and interim at Little Washington so the time merely teaching did not last long. When the disciples saw their Lord die on a cross, they thought being fishers of people was over and they went back to being fishers of fish, until they saw their Lord risen.

Then they went back to the reason they left their nets in the first place being fishers of people. We have just installed our 2019 council and officers. They have taken on the challenge of modelling what it means to serve our Lord and His people, May we all leave the comfort of our nets and serve our Lord and His people with the help of the holy Spirit.

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