

January 27, 2008

Guess Where You're Going

How in the world did I get here? For that matter, how did you get here? And no I'm not talking about did you drive here today or did you walk or did you take the bus? I'm asking how is it that you find yourself sitting in a pew on Sunday morning? How is it that I find myself standing in a pulpit on Sunday mornings tasked with the job to bring you the very words of God? Because in all honesty I never dreamed of being a pastor and if I had I can guaranty you it would have been considered a nightmare. What caused me to ask these questions to take a journey down the road called introspection Drive? Our gospel this morning did. Though I've read or heard the story probably hundreds of times something caught my attention this week; something that I found fascinating.

In our gospel Matthew writes, "As Jesus was walking beside the Sea of Galilee he saw two brothers, Simon called Peter and his brother Andrew. They were casting a net into the lake for they were fishermen." Peter and Andrew were in their boat; they were casting their net out to catch fish. Again in verse 21 Matthew writes, "Going on from there Jesus saw two other brothers, James, soon of Zebedee and John. They were in their boat with their father Zebedee preparing their nets." James, John, like Andrew and Peter were in their boats and in this case they are obviously on shore, they are preparing their nets to go fish with their dad Zebedee. We have four grown men going about their business. They are searching for only one thing; fish. There is no indication that they were looking for or preparing for anything more. Fishing was not the step in some plan or journey on how to become aware of who you are or what your mission in life is. Fishing 101 was not a prerequisite class required of all those who were in the discipleship seminary. They were simple fisherman going about their daily business when Jesus intrudes into their lives and says, "Come, follow me and I will make you fishers of men." Now, it should be noted that their response is to be commended. Matthew writes in 4:20 about Andrew and Peter, "At once they left their nets and followed Him." And again in verse 22 about James and John, "and immediately they left the boat and their father and followed Him." But what really caught my attention was the sudden intrusive unprepared for call of Christ.

Today we encounter one of the strangest yet most beloved and most challenging aspects of God. He calls us, regardless of our background, education or skills He calls us and in affect says guess where you're going, yet, we should not be surprised. This is God's M.O. He's always done this. Consider in Exodus 3 there was a man who was raised as an orphan. The poor boy had a speech impediment. Maybe because of this speech impediment he was teased and as a result he had a bit of a temper. Whatever, one day he lost his temper and he killed a man. A warrant was put out for his arrest so what did he do? He ran away he ran across the border and went into seclusion, living out in the desert. While in the desert he did find a girl who was working for her dad. Well its a love story, they got married and the murderer became a shepherd and began working for his father-in-law but he was always looking over his shoulder for the authorities. One day, as he was looking over his shoulder he turned back to look back at the sheep and there before him was this burning bush. A bush that was burning yet didn't burn and top of it this bush talked and it said, "Moses guess where you're going." You're going to Egypt right where there's a warrant for your arrest and you're going to go and tell Pharaoh the one who issued that warrant to let my people go. Now who in their right mind would call a tongue-tied murderer to do a prophet's work?

Consider 1 Samuel 3 where we find a young boy sleeping in the Tabernacle. He was a servant boy, given up by his mother, who had a special job to do; make sure the lamp in the Holy Place doesn't go out. He's in their at night and he's starting to get tired and he falls asleep and God calls to him. In fact this young boy is so confused by all these things it takes God three attempts before the boy realizes what's going on. He's' a child I guess its to be expected yet who would expect a child to do a grown up's job. The voice says, "The house of Eli will be cast down", Eli was the high priest and the voice of God will be spoken to a new generation. Now Samuel, guess where you're going and Samuel went.

Consider Isaiah 6, Isaiah was given a vision of heaven and he realized when he saw this vision and he was there in the presence of God he realized what a sinner he is. Seeing God he exclaims, "Woe to me! I am ruined! For I am a man of unclean lips." To which God responds and basically says great just the sort of honesty I need guess where you're going.

You see, many of you think that you are here because you chose to be here or your parents made you or whatever your story is but the reality is you are here because God called you. He put you here in this church, in this faith. You are here because God said guess where you're going, you simply said okay. Jesus was walking along the shore of the Sea of Galilee. He simply said follow me, guess where you're going, I'm going to make you fishers of men. Those disciples simply followed and Jesus took them to places they never imagined they would go and they did things they would have thought were totally impossible. As I considered the calls of the Bible, the call of Moses, Samuel, Isaiah, Peter, Andrew, John, James I realized something. None of them said I invited God into my heart or I decided to follow God, God just bust right into their lives and he said guess where you're going. Moses didn't; ask to be the leader of Israel, Samuel didn't ask to be a prophet and Isaiah didn't; ask to be a prophet, Peter didn't; ask to be a disciple. I never asked to be a pastor because well in all honesty I myself in my own words could ever express the woeful deficiencies that I see in myself. I never thought I'm going to lead seminars some day, I never thought I would be preaching sermons someday but along the normal course of life, God said Matt, guess where you're going. This is what he says to all of us, this is what he said to the great prophets, to his disciples. It's not easy work to just faithfully go. In our humanness we are prone to failure but thank God he doesn't call us to be successful, he does just call us to be faithful.

The really good news is that just as Jesus had a mission and was going places when he called those disciples he has a mission today and his ministry is still on the move. He's calling all of us to follow him and with a little excitement in his voice he's saying Matt, Brian, John, Cindy, Zion Reformed Church guess where you're going. Will you faithfully follow him?

In our Savior's name, Amen.