



Daily Reflections

November 30, 2020

Scripture

Matthew 4:18-22

As Jesus was walking by the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers, Simon who is called Peter, and his brother Andrew, casting a net into the sea; they were fishermen.

He said to them,

“Come after me, and I will make you fishers of men.”

Immediately, they left their nets and followed him.

He walked along from there and saw two other brothers, James, the son of Zebedee, and his brother John.

They were in a boat, with their father Zebedee, mending their nets.

He called them, and immediately they left their boat and their father and followed him.

Our Scripture Reflection

Jesus calls His first disciples. They are two sets of brothers who are fishermen -- Peter and Andrew as well as James and John. The scene is dominated by urgency, most obviously with the repetition of "Immediately" in verses 20 and 22. Reinforcing this are the accompanying verbs "left" and "followed". A closer analysis of *ajihmi* (=left) indicates a kind of leaving behind that involves a forceful sense of removal or separation, on the order of making a clean break from something. The meaning of *akolouqew* (=to follow) corresponds plainly enough to the understanding of following as a disciple or companion. But the brothers falling in line so quickly with a complete stranger suggests the compelling authority of Jesus to prompt them out from what is familiar and cherished to them -- livelihood, property and family -- to navigate uncharted territory. What a shift in focus which resulted in a profound life change!

Food for your Journey

The problem does not seem to be that churches are teaching young people badly, but that we are doing an exceedingly good job of teaching youth what we really believe; namely, that Christianity is not a big deal, that God requires little, and the church is a helpful social institution filled with nice people focused primarily on "folks like us" -- which, of course, begs the question of whether we are really the church at all. What if the blasé religiosity of most American teenagers is not the result of poor communication but the result of excellent communication of a watered-down gospel so devoid of God's self-giving love in Jesus Christ, so immune to the sending love of the Holy Spirit that it might not be Christianity at all? What if the church models a way of life that asks not passionate surrender but ho-hum assent? What if we are preaching moral affirmation, a feelbetter faith and a hands-off God instead of the decisively involved, impossibly loving, radically sending God of Abraham and Mary, who desired us enough to enter creation in Jesus Christ and whose Spirit is active in the church and in the world today? --Kenda Creasy Dean, *Almost Christian: What the Faith of Our Teenagers Is Telling the American Church* (Oxford, 2010), 12.

A Prayer from the Heart

Dear Jesus, Peter and Andrew, James and John left everything IMMEDIATELY in order to follow You. They recognized the love You had for them and it changed them forever. You love me as well, Lord. Help me to show my gratitude for Your love by dedicating my life to You.
Amen