

MEDITATION 8

Mark 1: 16-20

¹⁶ As Jesus passed along the Sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and his brother Andrew casting a net into the sea, for they were fishers. ¹⁷ And Jesus said to them, "Follow me, and I will make you fishers of people." ¹⁸ And immediately they left their nets and followed him. ¹⁹ As he went a little farther, he saw James son of Zebedee and his brother John, who were in their boat mending the nets. ²⁰ Immediately he called them, and they left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired men and followed him.

"As Jesus passed along the Sea of Galilee"...

Galilee is the region in northern Israel where Jesus grows up and from where he begins his vocational journey as messiah. How much will Jesus' home rooted in a particular community, land and family, shape the way he sees the world with its challenges and possibilities?

How much have your formative years, rooted in particular communities, a culture, a family, for better or worse, shaped how you see the world and experience its challenges and possibilities?... As human beings we are rooted in particular times, places and families... We cannot escape this even if we wanted to... How may we engage our roots and our root experiences?... How may we confront it all?... How may we give thanks where thanks is merited?... How may we forgive and make peace with it all and those who, whether they tried or not, hindered more than helped our greater flourishing?...

Prayer: Come to me, O Spirit of God... Give me gratitude of heart, especially if gratitude is hard... Give me peace of heart, especially if peace is hard to locate and hold on to... May gratitude not cover up pain and hurt that needs to be named and surrendered to you... May peace be something that comes and keeps coming upon me despite the hurt and the pain... And if pain, hurt and disappointment are not my experience, thank you... Thank you for the gift I have received from where I have come from which is a gift many have not tasted or known...

"He saw Simon and his brother Andrew casting a net into the sea, for they were fishers."...

Fishing was a primary industry in Galilee, as it is for many communities around the world near water, and this includes our own Canada... Pay attention to how this reality will shape how Jesus calls Simon, Andrew and the others...

"And Jesus said to them, 'Follow me, and I will make you fishers of people.'"...

What is it that Jesus saw in Simon and Andrew, and further down, James and John, to call them to follow him?... Had he already interacted with them or observed them in a way that gave him insight into their characters and possibilities?... Throughout the story as we will follow it, it will

be challenging from the outside to see what it is that Jesus sees in these fishermen to invest so much of his hopes in their discipleship under his mentorship... And yet...

What does God see in us?... What does Jesus see in any person which includes each of us so that we have received this stirring within us to want to follow him?... What is the Spirit up to in and through us?... Is it worth the investment given the ups and downs that have been and are our lives and our faith with its seasons of struggle and doubt?...

And what does it mean to be "fishers of people"?... What will draw people to Jesus? And what, then, will draw them to his disciples and followers?... What is it in us that draws people to us?... And for what purpose are they drawn?... Is it to get something from us of tangible benefit to them? Is it something else?... The story still needs to be told, but at this point we are intrigued by Jesus' mission. It's not just about him, but about them... It's about us, then, too...

"And immediately they left their nets and followed him." ...

They followed him... Wow!... Just like that!... What is it that they saw?... What is it that was stirred in them?... What is it that may be stirred in you to leave whatever it is you're doing and just follow with an open heart?... That is what you are called to do, just like Peter, Andrew, James and John 2000 years ago. Follow with an open heart and see where this story will take you...

There is good news to be had... And maybe there also needs to be some dying before there is new rising to happen... But we're getting ahead of ourselves. That will come later... For now, we are simply called to follow with the promise that we can and will become fishers of people just like Jesus will be... They left whatever they were doing and followed him... Whatever you are engaged with in your life right now, are you ready to follow anew this Jesus with an open heart? Let's see where that may take you and me and us...

PRAYER: We come, O God, and we are ready... Are we ready?...

To follow... to follow wherever you, in Jesus, may lead us?...

Where is it that we have already been, O God?... Where is it that we are just now?... Where is it that we have yet to go?... What choices are available to us?... What has, is and will happen to us beyond our choosing?... How may we find our way through all that?...

Clear the way for us, O God... Help us to see... Help us to hear... Open our hearts to feel, to trust, and to believe that you have a plan and way for us no matter where we are in our lives right now... Are we seeking greater peace?... Are we seeking greater purpose or a better focus?... Are we needing greater assurance?... Are we struggling with a sadness, a bitterness, or a worry that is taking up too much of our best mental and spiritual space?...

Come to us, O Christ... Call us anew... Give us the desire and will to follow... In your name we pray... Amen.