

Summoned and Sent

Exodus 19:2-8a; Romans 5:1-5; Matthew 9:35-10:23; Psalm 100 6-15-08



There are some people we encounter in life who are so compelling and inspiring that we discover we will do anything for them. Through thick and through thin we respond in a positive way to their suggestions and work hard to accomplish what they need to have done. Sometimes this person is a friend, other times a mentor or teacher. I am sure we all can recall a teacher or two who inspired great devotion in us and who moved us to become all we could become. There is something about such a person that encourages us to do our best for him or her. Jesus must have been such a person.

Somehow he gathered a group of people around him that believed in him and his message so completely that they were willing to go out into the world and try to make it a better place. Perhaps, these people accepted what he asked of them because they were simple people without all the worldly sophistication we believe we have. Perhaps, they were sincerely looking for a new way to live life and, when it appeared before them, they

embraced it heart and soul. Whatever their motivation, his disciples did not hesitate to do what he asked even though he warned them, when he summoned them, what some of the difficulties were that were before them.

He told them that they would encounter problems, people who would reject them and refuse to hear the message of new life they carried with them. If this happened, they were not to persist in the places that could not and would not receive them-- they were to shake the dust of those places from their feet and move on. They did not have the time to waste among people who closed their hearts and minds to the good news and how to reveal it through their lives.

They were to go to the Jews, not to others. The Jews, although summoned by God, had fallen away from their mission, in Jesus' eyes, and needed to have it restored. Later his message would be broadened to include the gentiles.

The disciples were to remember to be cautious and thoughtful in their work. They were to be as gentle as doves yet as wise as serpents. This would give them the discernment they needed to understand how to approach people and win them over.

They were to take no pay for their work. If they were appreciated enough they would find that they would be fed and provided for by those whom they healed physically and spiritually. The greatest reward they could garner would be the acquisition of new followers and embracers of the Way they showed them. It was a tough way to live and yet those who were summoned agreed to be sent out because they believed in their cause wholeheartedly and they knew they had a responsibility to lead others to it. Jesus knew that even though they might suffer, they would develop endurance, character and hope and that they would never be disappointed for the love of God would sustain them.

We are in a long line of people who have been summoned by the words and concepts of Christ. For that reason we come to this place to hear a bit more and to see how it fits in with our lives. We differ

from those early followers who made the gospel of Christ their lives. Instead, we often try to see the way we can integrate the teachings we find manageable into our daily existence.

Because of our day and age we cannot pick up and leave everything, as they did, to follow an itinerant preacher. But, while we cannot do this physically, we can adjust the way we think and relate to the world around us to bring us more into line with the message we have before us. It is necessary we try to do this because we are the ones who need to sustain the teachings that have come to us through time and space if they are to remain viable. We know what it is we have to do. It is up to us to do it.

Remember what Jesus taught us? It really is quite simple. It is to set aside our selves and our own desires and to put God and others first. Even Mr. Spock in Star Trek understood that the greatest good for the greatest number was to be served. Being selfish people is not what life is supposed to be all about. When we can learn to be unselfish with our time, our talent, our treasure, we discover that we begin to change our little corner of the world a bit at a time. We discover that we begin to love one another and life far more. We accept other people where they are in life and give up on trying to change them into what it is we think they need to become. If we accept the claim our faith has on our lives we will find ourselves adjusting and adapting to new ways of seeing and doing things. Jesus sent out his disciples to share the simplicity of this message.

There is a song called "The Summons" that sums this all up. The words are these:

Will you come and follow Me If I but call your name?

Will you go where you don't know And never be the same?

Will you let My love be shown, Will you let My name be known,

Will you let My life be grown In you and you in Me?

Will you leave yourself behind If I but call your name?

Will you care for cruel and kind And never be the same?

Will you risk the hostile stare Should your life attract or scare?

Will you let Me answer prayer In you and you in Me?

Will you let the blinded see If I but call your name?

Will you set the pris'ners free And never be the same?

Will you kiss the leper clean, And do such as this unseen,

Will you admit to what I mean In you and you in Me?

Will you love the 'you' you hide If I but call your name?

Will you quell the fear inside And never be the same/

Will you use the faith you've found To reshape the world around,

Through My sight and touch and sound In you and you in Me?

Lord, Your summons echoes true When you but call my name.

Let me turn and follow you and never be the same.

In your company I'll go Where Your love and footsteps show.

Thus I'll move and live and grow in You and You in me.

These are questions each of us needs to ask ourselves. In our answers we will learn the depth and breadth of our faith, as did those early followers of Jesus.

-- Amen