

Chris Knight- 2/3/2019-4<sup>th</sup> Sunday of OT- Jer 1:4-5, 17-19, Ps 71:1-2, 3-4, 5-6, 15-17, 1 Cor 12:31-13:13, Lk 4:21-30

Each of us is called by God in a specific way to go out and proclaim the good news of Jesus Christ; today it's happening; for us all at every moment. What does God's call look like? Is it encapsulated in a beautiful sunrise or sunset? Is it in the hug of a loved one or a friend who might be encouraging us? God's love and majesty: his call comes in a variety of forms. We only need to be open to the possibilities.

Today, as we open our ears and hearts to God's call we have a couple choices. (We do have free will) We can say yes, let your will be done in my life; I choose to hear you Lord and to listen and obey. I freely choose to allow your teachings to be "fulfilled in (my) hearing."<sup>1</sup>(Yes, Lord I will go down to the Bridge and help during these cold days which are all around us. Yes, Lord I will go into my closet and take that jacket out (you know the one which hasn't been worn in years) and donate it to a person who not only needs it, but who has very little beyond it for warmth, yes, I will go down the block and sit with my neighbor who just needs someone to listen to them because they are alone for the first time in years.) We can say no. Sorry, but I really don't have any time to do that right now. Personally, I don't know how fulfilling that choice will be, but it is still our choice.

The situation we hear about today in the Gospel seems quite alarming. The people go from celebrating Jesus the prophet; to being filled with fury and wanting to cast him over the side of the cliff. Filled with fury, not a little bit upset or mad, but they become furious. Why? What did Jesus remind them of that set them off? He spoke about a couple challenging times in their traditions. He alludes to Elijah and the widow he helped during the famine; and to Elisha and how he had instructed the Syrian Naaman to be cured of leprosy. "Go wash in the Jordan, seven times and be cured"<sup>2</sup> Naaman was so indignant with the "cure" that he almost chose not to do it. These stories and messages were probably not something they desired to hear. These are stories which may not paint the prettiest picture of following the call especially when the help of the prophets was going to those who were different from them.

Reflect for a moment: how do we respond to messages and information we dislike hearing? Messages which don't give us that feel good feeling. We might block out the person. (A relative or friend doesn't like our stance on some issue and they want to debate it, nope, we just shut the conversation down, we go on social media and there are a variety of viewpoints of the same situation and they are all different, but where does the truth come into play?) (We hear a conversation which makes us irritated and we want to say or do something, and instead we brood over it and by worrying it places a strain on our relationship with others)

Sometimes the truth hurts and we become upset. We might get annoyed or agitated when someone tells us a truth we don't agree with or want to hear, and this could very well be part of the reason those in the synagogue became so angry.

In truth, Jesus declared God has no favorites, there are no privilege cardholders to receiving love and compassion, in fact we are all equal and we all receive God's love no matter who we are, where we come from, and whatever our socio-economic status might be. God's love and teachings, his Word, is meant for all mankind.<sup>3</sup> In the second reading,

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<sup>1</sup> Luke 4:21b; brackets mine.

<sup>2</sup> 2Kg 5:10

<sup>3</sup> Sacra Pagina; Luke

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St. Paul too speaks of the primacy of love. A primacy of the call for us to be ever faithful to God our father, which leads us to hope in Christ promise, and in turn because of hope we choose to be charitable/loving to others.

God's primordial; love is set within, it's throughout our very beings. It's a love so deep that we, at times, may love others and become the prophet we are created to be; without realizing that's what we are even doing. God has known us and loves us for eternity. Before he knit us in the womb he loved us. What an amazing gift. Love. Without love, what do we truly have? It is when we begin to love others, as we are loved, that we begin to be the prophet we are called to be. The prophet called and guided to witness to others throughout the nations. To love just as Jesus has taught us.

Love is at the very heart of Jesus teachings. The Church is constantly trying to live that love, even when we as humans get in her way. We might wonder how is the Church living out God's message of love, but what can help us is to remember the Church is founded by the Lord himself and the Holy Spirit is constantly moving within her. As the people of God we give body to the Church and she continues to grow in love. We see this love lived out throughout the world, and it is through individuals truly glorifying God by their very lives. It is the call to love others.

How do we do this though? Love those we encounter. We can do it by living as Jesus taught us to live through his very example. We heard it last week. It's in feeding the poor (both literally and figuratively) visiting the sick and imprisoned. It's in proclaiming the good news to all those we encounter. It's in how we live our very lives. Through our thoughts, words, and yes, definitely our deeds. It's in the mission of our Baptismal call as Christians to participate in Jesus' role of prophet, priest, and king. What a glorious challenge we are a part of. What an amazing journey we are allowed to experience.

Since the beginning of creation God has loved and guided us. He has set forth for us a beautiful message and a clear way for us to give him and resounding yes. Here I am Lord, I come to do your will. We hear it again today: "Today this Scripture passage is fulfilled in your hearing."<sup>4</sup> The message of Jesus and what he calls us to become is fulfilled in our hearing.

Ask yourself: today what have I done? Have we lived as we are taught and called too? If so: what a grace, and if not, why not? Also, let's ask ourselves what can I, and what will I do after leaving here today?

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<sup>4</sup> Luke 4:21b