

SERMON – PROPER 8

June 27, 2010

Kings

Psalm 16

Galatians 5:1, 13-25

Luke 9:51-62

Next year Trinity Church will be celebrating its 175th year as an Episcopal congregation in St Charles. This is quite a milestone for us, and plans are underway to try to have some kind of event every month so that the surrounding community can help us to celebrate this significant anniversary.

Trinity has been through many changes over the last 175 years. We are now residing in our fourth building; we have had various priests over the years; we are recognized in St Charles because we have reached out to the surrounding community with many programs; and we have experienced several 'ups and downs' along the way. As we move forward, with God's help and guidance, let us make sure that we are still here for another 175 years.

As we are about to venture on expanding how we do ministry, we must continue to live into our Mission Statement of Faith, Compassion, and Community as we are being called to be disciples of a Missional Church. I think this will be both challenging and exciting for all of us here at Trinity. Right after this Service we invite everyone to stay for a short while as we begin to talk about what it means to be a Missional Church.

As we heard in the gospel story today, being a disciple has its challenges. Two people approached Jesus to be followers, and Jesus invited a third person to Follow Him, and they each said they had tasks to do before they could come.

Jesus tells us that true discipleship requires instant action; it means total dedication, and not a half-hearted commitment. Being a disciple is wanting to change the way we live so that we can be transformed by the Love of God through Jesus Christ. However, there is a cost to following Jesus, and each of us must be ready to serve, even when it requires sacrifice. The people who wanted to follow Jesus in the Gospel story had other tasks to take care of before they could follow him, and you might well say, but isn't it important that they bury their father first and say good-bye to their family before following Jesus? I do not think that Jesus wants us to neglect our families; but what he wants is for us to put God first in our life so that every experience we have becomes so much richer, and so much more fulfilling. This is the decision we have to make to truly be a disciple - God must come first. Let's face it, you and I know that there will always be something else we need to do before we make that final commitment

to follow Jesus. But God wants to be a part of our life; he wants our love, just as we want his.

Being a true disciple will take us a lifetime to achieve, but we have to start somewhere. The very fact that we are all gathered together here means that it is a start for each of us. But it is more than just gathering here on a Sunday morning, it is learning about the life of Jesus and all that he taught us to be while he was here on earth; it is about being in touch with God every single day and making God a part of **ALL** our life, in both the mundane things as well as the big things that we do, so that we just do not call on him **only** when we need help. It is also being part of this community and helping each other on our journey; it is about visiting the sick and lonely, feeding the hungry, reaching out to pray with someone who needs help. All this is our seeking to make a place for God deep down in our hearts; as St. Augustine says, **“Our hearts are restless until we rest in thee, O God.”** When we can achieve all these things then we know that we will inherit the Kingdom of God.

Let us listen to what Paul is telling the people of Galatia, because this is so important for us today. **“It is for freedom that Christ has set us free. Stand firm, then, and do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery.”** Paul is saying that when we become slaves to sin and to the law that it can be very burdensome; it weighs us down, and when we let anger, envy, jealousy, drunkenness, strife, dissension among families, and yes, even in the church, when we let these things consume us, we are living by our own means and not thinking about God at all, and we end up living selfish lives, and our selfish actions often hurt the people we love. Instead, Paul is saying that we should remember that Christ died to set us free from sin, so that we can now be free to love and serve God.

We hear Paul declaring that the fruit of the Spirit brings us back to renewal with Christ and within our community, and the work of the Holy Spirit is to guide and transform us to be like Jesus. When we can live in **love, joy, peace** and learn to be **patient, kind, gentle, faithful** disciples who are able to practice **self-control**, then, we know that we are living by the Spirit and we will allow the Spirit to guide us.

I have made some bookmarks for each person here, and on the bookmarks are the Fruit of the Spirit to remind us how we should live and treat each other. I hope it will be helpful for you.

There will always be times when we stumble and fall and feel discouraged by things along the way, and I say this very sincerely to you, hold on, never give up, just remember that you are a beloved child of God, and that Jesus is close by to give you a hand to help you up again. If we stay close to Jesus, no matter what happens to us, our faith will be stronger, we will be comforted, we will

receive the Peace that passes all understanding, and we will be wrapped in love as the prayers of the community are sent heavenward on our behalf.

So as we free ourselves from the bonds of sin and learn to live in the Spirit of Christ, let us continue to build our community with faithful disciples of Jesus as we embrace what we have to do to become a Missional Church. This is an exciting time for us here at Trinity as we learn from our past, become excited about who we are today and look forward to the challenges and joys of the future. Remember that Jesus is the Center of Our Joy, and Joy is to behold God in everything. Let us be filled with the Love of God, and truly let the light of Christ shine through us as we go forth into the world rejoicing in the power of the Spirit.

Thanks Be to God.