

February 10, 2019

Is 6:1-2A, 3-8; 1 Cor 15:1-11; Lk 5:1-11

We all have many stresses in our lives, we have conflicts with other people, we have many ways that things aren't going how we want them to go. Our usual response is to keep plugging along, spending lots of time and energy to figure out how to fix the situation or just want to give up. This is where Simon and the other fishermen were at in the Gospel. Hard working guys they had tried everything they knew all night long to catch fish, with no success - but it was a lesson they learned in their contact with Jesus that finally got them results.

The main thing they learned was to simply do what Jesus told them to do. Now doing what Jesus tells us to do is both easy and can also be complicated. The easy thing to do is to follow the simple instructions and not over think it. Picture a person who is trying to open a door to go into a store. He pushes the door and gets bounced back, he leans his weight on the door ... no luck, he try jiggling the handle and giving it a little kick ... it won't budge. Then someone behind him reaches over and points to the sign not he door that says "Pull." He gently pulls on the door and it opens. We too can miss the simple signs, we too can say that what Jesus asks of us seems too basic and simple to have any effect on the situations of our life. Look at Simon in the Gospel when Jesus tells him to go back out to deep water and try fishing again. Simon says: *Master, we have worked hard all night and have caught nothing.* Maybe you can picture this. A seasoned and experienced fisherman is being told by this guy who never fished before to do something that was just to simple to work . He could have said "Hey Jesus, I know you are a good carpenter and all ... maybe you should stick to building chairs - I've been doing the my whole life, I think I know my business." Instead he says: *at your command I will lower the nets.* It's the same as the guy pushing the door saying "I've opened a lot of doors before - kinda think I know what I'm doing - but I guess I'll try pulling it to humor you and see if it opens." It is amazing how many doors may open by just following the simple teachings of Jesus and be willing to put aside our own beliefs that we know better than he does.

The great catch of fish makes Simon realize that he does not know it all, and having heard some of Jesus' teaching, he may think that Jesus wants more. He just wanted the fish, he's a simple guy he can't do this other stuff Jesus was talking about: *Depart from me, Lord, for I am a sinful man* - in other words "I'm such a screw up just pick someone else." We also may feel

unworthy of Jesus, we may just want to get him to do a miracle or fix something and not want to accept the more complicated part of doing what Jesus says. It's not just about reading the "pull" sign, its not just about where to find the fish - there are more things he tells us to do. We can't just pick and choose only what we think will get us what we want. Discerning what he is telling us to do individually is complicated. But in the big picture, so worth it!

How do we do the simple and the complicated - how do we follow the straightforward precepts "love your neighbor as yourself," "do not harm," "seek justice and peace," "come to me"; and also the more complicated ones that take time to figure out such as what he tells Simon: *Do not be afraid; [follow me] from now on you will be catching people.* What to do here is more complicated and we may need some help to figure out what Jesus is calling each of us to do. But following the simple and diving into the more complicated actually requires the same attitude. Both of these come from the lesson that Simon learned: Do what The Lord tell you to do. In the first reading, Isaiah is seeing the glory of God hearing the hymn of the angels that we join into at each Mass: *Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts! All the earth is filled with his glory!* He is afraid of not being worthy - God heals him by taking something from the altar and touching his mouth to cleanse - a clear Eucharistic reference. God proclaims him worthy and very passively asks *Whom shall I send? Who will go for us?*. In other words "who will not only pull the door open, but walk inside, who will not only cast the net but pull them to shore and call others to help in the work? Who will dispute fear, despite feelings of being unworthy, despite doubts - resolve to do what the Lord asks whether it is simple or complicated?" Isaiah does not hesitate: *Here I am, ... send me!*

Jesus wants us to follow not just look for the minimum we have to do to get what we want. Not to just the instructions that seem to be easy and uncomplicated - he wants us to set out to the deep water, he wants us to call out "Here I am" - even if you're not sure what he will ask next. Sound a bit hard. He is there to help. Paul says the in the second reading: *I have toiled harder than all [the others]; not I, however, but the grace of God that is with me.* He realized that all that he accomplished, all the things that came as successes, all the doors that opened, all those he led to the Lord were a result of Jesus who was with him as long as he followed. As long as he continued to listen to Jesus when things were going wrong and it seemed, in his vast experience, like the carpenter didn't know his business. Jesus was really there the whole time supporting

him, and helping to know what to do. The same help and promise is offered to us who will follow - whether simple or complicated - calling out: Here I am Lord!