

February 8 2015

**Scripture Lessons ~**

*Psalm 147:1-11*

*I Corinthians 2:1-12*

*Matthew 5:13-20*

**Sermon**     *A Big Responsibility*

I am forming a line up here in front and my question is “Is anybody here looking for more responsibility?” The line forms here. Is anybody looking for more commitment? The line forms here. Where, as in some generations past, many of our parents and grandparents considered these things; responsibility and commitment, to be a part of everyday life, which probably meant hard work and very little mobility up the income scale or mobility beyond the shops, farms and homes of their youth.

In our present day these things are not so, because we live in a mobile society. We have more options than we can count about what to buy; where to live, and what to spend our time on, that sometimes it is pretty hard to settle down. It is pretty hard to focus on what is really important in life and what is truly meaningful that we could be doing with our time, with our resources and the very lives which God has given to us as a gift. We don’t want to be tied down; I hear that a lot, any more than we have to. We don’t want to be tied down with work or school or friends or family or even church and faith, and the various commitments that all these things involve. You know what? I don’t blame you one bit. Life is short. I like to go. I like to do, and I like to be as human as I can possibly be; as human as God wants me to be and as much as I can and as often as I can with all the places; with all the experiences and all those people that we meet in the process.

But then, in this theme in which we human beings don’t want to be burdened, we don’t want to be tied down. We don’t want to be committed. Watch that kill joy, Jesus. I tell you, Jesus not only wants a piece of our pie; he wants the whole darn pie. And I say, kill joy because that is what Jesus means, that’s what Jesus becomes when he calls us to do for us, is just one more add on to life.

How are we going to make the time? I’ll be gone these weekends and busy these evenings. How will I have the money because I have this, this and that that I need to pay for? How can there possibility be enough of me to go around when I have so much of my emotional, my mental, my spiritual, my physical self committed to places other than my faith? Other than the ultimate things of God, of Jesus, calls us to have at the very core of our lives I say, kill joy and I say add on it again because that’s what Jesus, that what’s God, that what’s faith can become when life is sort of distorted when all our calendars and all our schedules our

brains and even life itself is full of everything else long before God ever arrived on our doorstep.

What if, what if, we looked at things as Jesus does? What if, we would see from God's perspective? I know that is a kind of dangerous thing, but let's try it for a minute, what if, life was all about and what makes it truly human, is getting first things first in life. Starting with God at the center and the purpose for which God created us and then all else, family, friends, work, school, even fun sort of radiated out in healthy waves from that central core of our being.

I want you to listen to Jesus' words from the Sermon on the Mount Matthew five, which is our gospel lesson for today, about the purpose of our creation. In verse 13 Jesus says, we were created, we were called as followers to be salt of the Earth and in verse 14, he says we were created and we were called to be light of the world and then the punch line comes in verse 20 we were created and called to have a righteousness not a self righteousness, as I would define it, the intention for good living, that would far out strip even the most law abiding of the Pharsees. What a calling! What an awesome responsibility that is! It is scary! It is frightening! How could we possible live up to it?

And so what do we do? We squelch our saltiness, we squelch our spiciness. We squelch our enthusiasm for our faith and we hide our light, our gifts, and our talents under a bushel as Jesus puts it for fear that we might have to use them. We cloud our intentions sometimes fearing if we don't take care of us. If we don't take care of our own nobody else will. We withdraw, we hide like Adam in the garden and we hope that God will not notice how out of kilter our lives have become.

What if, what if, as I suggested, what if, we get the horse before the cart this time. See our birth, see our baptism, and see our calling by God as the center point which all of other things in life would sort of radiate out. What if, being a salty spicing Christian out in the world was really the purpose of life? Our life for God would be to fulfill that very purpose, then maybe our intentions, maybe our focus, our expectations in life would somehow be clearer and more focus and not really a burden at all with the help of God's Spirit. So much so that all of these joy, peace, mercy, goodness, and all of those other fruits of the spirit would truly out strip the righteousness of those same Pharsees. You know, we everyday Christian are called by Jesus to be God's salt, we are called to be God's light in the world. We are put here on this earth to show others only the tip of the iceberg where God's love is concerned,

It is a really big responsibility! We are God's walking object lesson in the world but does it have to be a burden, drudgery, a cross to bear. I don't think any more than giving your food a little salt when you eat it. Nor any more than flipping the light on to read a book because as St Paul quotes the prophet Isaiah in First Corinthians, "No eyes have seen, no ears heard nor the human heart has felt

what God has prepared for those who love God.” That is a pretty wonderful promise; I want to say AMEN to that!