



St. Michael's Church
CHARLESTON, SC

SUNDAY, JANUARY 22, 2017

ISAIAH 9:1-4
MATTHEW 4:18-23

PREACHER: THE REV. AL ZADIG, JR.

HELP US LORD TO BE SO CONNECTED TO YOU THAT WE MIGHT BECOME THE SERVANTS OF OTHERS.

TAKE OUR LIPS AND SPEAK THROUGH THEM,
OUR MINDS AND THINK THROUGH THEM,
AND TAKE OUR HEARTS, AND SET THEM ON FIRE.



This morning I want to take you to a place you may never have heard of,
a bone chillingly cold place on the border of Minnesota and Canada.

This colder than cold place is called: Lake of the Woods

and for many years my Uncle Terry and his family would go there to vacation and dare I say **Ice Fish** in the winter.

Now, I know I'm talking to low country pluf mudders,

So the thought of fishing through ice is probably not palatable to you.

But here is how ice fishing works.

When the lake ice is frozen, you drive your truck hauling a small cabin out onto the lake.

Once there, you find your fishing area, and park the cabin.

The cabin is a one room hut with:

- four walls...

- and wooden floors with fairly large holes.

Those holes are for you to take your drill,

drill a hole to sink your fishing line...

and Once you do that you begin telling hours and hours of untrue fishing stories

while you wait for the right fish to come your way.

The one rule Uncle Terry had was that if you caught a fish,

you never yelled out or you would find 10 other cabins moving “next door”

Well, I remember the moment my line sank in the water and I had a monster fish on my hands.

Immediately I violate the first rule by yelling as only a 10 year old could,

“I’ve got one,
I’ve got one!”

It was just a ground eater...

But sure enough, cabins began to move in our direction and yes I get an earful from Uncle Terry about violating the first rule of ice fishing!

Now, I report this story to you because it was in many ways my first lesson on what I’m calling....

FOLLOW-SHIP.

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FOLLOW-SHIP...the discipleship practice of following another.

Put a bookmark there...and let me take you to another Lake, the Sea of Galilee.

They call it the Sea of Galilee but it really is just a lake,

- 13 miles from north to south
- 8 miles east to west.

One man described Galilee this way he said:

“Seen from any point of the surrounding heights,

- it is a fine sheet of water
- a burnished mirror set in a framework of rounded hills and rugged mountains

- which rise and roll
- backward and
- upward
- to where Hermon hangs the picture against the blue vault of heaven.”

I remember like yesterday being on the Sea of Galilee during our 2013 pilgrimage with many St. Michaelites..

Personally overwhelmed as I imagined Jesus:

- Walking on that water
- Calming that water
- Recruiting on that water!

More than a beautiful place though...

Galilee is the Cape Canaveral, the official launching place of the ministry of Jesus.

It was prophesied nearly a thousand years earlier that the Messiah would launch his ministry from Galilee..

We just read that prophecy out of Isaiah this morning..remember the words?

“In Galilee, the people who walked in darkness have seen a great light! Upon them a light has shined!”

So, Galilee is more than a lake, it is a global and revolutionary site of a new beginning!

But notice how Jesus launches:

- Not by big rallies
- No big Inauguration
- No bands
- No fireworks
- and no protestors..

Jesus begins by calling just a few....into something I never want you to forget.

He calls them into FOLLOW-SHIP.

Not to be confused with fellow-ship.

3 separate times, in 6 verses, Jesus repeats one phrase to Andrew, Peter, James and John:

FOLLOW ME

FOLLOW ME
FOLLOW ME.

So, If learning to lead is leadership,

Learning to follow, is: Followship.

Now we all follow someone and something don't we?

Some of us follow

- Wealth
- Power
- Presidents
- Politics
- And yes, even Patriots..

Yet, for the 4 disciples Jesus calls into Follow-ship,

He calls them into a life of living, looking and loving more like himself-- What we call discipleship.

There are so many lessons on followship from these short verses,

but today I want to focus on just one.

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On this confirmation slash vision Sunday,

What I want to zero in on is this:

FELLOWSHIP ETERNALLY CONVERTS YOUR LIFE'S CALLING.

AS YOU LIVE AS A FOLLOWER,

YOUR CALLING BECOMES MORE AND MORE ETERNAL.

What do I mean by this.

Notice what Jesus doesn't ask these 4 men to do.

He doesn't say follow me and I will give you something TOTALLY different to do...from what you're doing now!

Jesus is saying take what you're currently doing and eternalize it.

To these fishermen...HE doesn't SAY...

Follow me and become a business man.

Jesus says follow me fishermen..and
I will make you fishers of men.

If Jesus was in a field he wouldn't say to a farmer: FOLLOW ME AND I WILL MAKE YOU A BARBER...

HE WOULD SAY FOLLOW ME AND I WILL MAKE YOU SEED PLANTERS OF FAITH!

- ETERNALIZING OUR CALL MEANS:
 - TAKING WHAT WE'RE DOING
 - AND DOING IT FOR JESUS!

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I think here of William Wilberforce, an Anglican Lawyer of the 19th Century in England.

After he committed to the followship of Jesus,

Wilberforce heard: follow me and I will convert your legal work into legal work that will MAKE AN ETERNAL DIFFERENCE.

Sure enough, Wilberforce would dedicate his law practice to the abolishment of slavery in England.

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FELLOWSHIP ETERNALLY CONVERTS THE CALLING ON OUR LIVES.

On this Vision Sunday, let me say this is the goal of our vision of transforming hearts through Jesus Christ.

Here at St. Michael's we have a rhythm of followship that we pray through the Holy Spirit will produce an eternal conversion of your life's calling.

- It begins on a night like we had two weeks ago with Mingles and Sociable Saints, or the night the Gate social ministry will have..
 - A place to invite others to Alpha..
- Alpha is like our Sea of Galilee where Jesus enters heart after heart for conversion and follow-ship...
 - a course we launch here this Tuesday.
- From Alpha, that followship flows into a life group where with others this followship,
- this discipleship is developed, nurtured and grown....

- studying the life of Jesus
- following him by shaping our lives around his plan for ours!
- Life group sign ups by the way are today!
- In and amongst our life groups comes that time to step out as fishers of people..
- Which is why next week we launch the Global Impact Celebration!

Many of you have local and foreign missionaries coming to talk to your life groups..

Why? Not just for information, but that we would be inspired by their stories and inch one more step into the eternal conversion of our call!

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- A rhythm of FOLLOWSHIP==
- that through the Holy Spirit==
- ETERNALLY CONVERTS OUR
 - Hearts
 - Hobbies
 - hang ups
 - and PROFESSIONS

Is it a perfect rhythm? No!

Are there holes yes!

It's why I've dedicated this winter to a focus on life groups and discipleship.

It's why I appointed a discipleship task force to strengthen this rhythm of followship.

Yet though our holes are imperfect...

this rhythm of eternalization is happening over and over within the life of St. Michael's..

- I think of St. Michaelite Nick Holum, a 2004 Citadel Graduate, police officer, and drummer..
 - He is eternalizing his life's call by going back to the Citadel as a drummer in a praise band
 - and a fisher of men under the leadership of The Rev. Doug Peterson.
- I think of St. Michaelite Nancy Hardwick

- who with her husband Ray moved to Charleston from Washington
- after a consulting career in organizational leadership at Booze Allen,
 - Nancy and Ray are eternalizing their life's calling by using everything they've learned
 - combined with discipleship
 - to lead the Alpha Course and help us think deeper organizationally
 - to be stronger than we are.
- I think of
- Wade Logan, a long time attorney in Charleston, eternalizing his life's calling by using those legal gifts and skills to serve the Diocese of South Carolina for many years and now St. Michael's as solicitor.

I could go on and on with stories of eternal conversions of your callings.

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Yet,

It all comes with a price tag.

For the disciples, this followship, this eternalizing and converting their call takes them away from the comfortable shores of Galilee.

The Bible doesn't interview their family to ask if it was painful to see these men leave but we know it was.

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I was meeting with Parishioner Linda Prince last week and she looked at me and said you know,

St. Michael's is a sending church.

Nothing static here.

This rhythm of our vision, this rhythm of our followship had made us a sending church.

As I look at how many of our staff and congregation have left for the mission field, it is breathtaking.

Yes we have had turnover in our staff, but it is in large part because this followship has made us a sending church!

For instance..

I think of all the priests that either started their ministries at St. Michael's or were converted here and now have been called out to eternalize their call.

1. Hamilton Smith,
 - church planting in North Mt. Pleasant
2. Peter Moore
 - founding the Anglican Leadership Institute
3. Doug Peterson
 - chaplaining at the Citadel
4. Ted McNabb
 - Mentoring a priest in Bermuda,
 - and now has returned!
5. Luke Rasmussen now serving a church in Clemson

Even going back some years, consider all these St. Michaelite clergy now serving elsewhere..

6. Peet Dickinson at the Cathedral
7. Rob Kunes and Bob Lawrence at Camp St. Christopher
8. Marshall Huey at Old St. Andrews
9. Bill Christian at the Cathedral
10. Andrew O'Dell at St. Philips
11. John Sosnowski at Holy Comforter, Sumter
12. Tyler Prescott at St. Pauls Summerville

And that's just a clergy list, not even the list of lay staff and volunteers.

It's my prayer that in our rhythm of fellowship here at St. Michael's...

Alpha to life groups to mission...

Would produce even more eternal conversions on the call of our lives!

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I know it's hard when we feel like we have a revolving door of staff, but we are a sending church of followers eternalizing their call!

And so...

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To our confirmands,

To all of us,

What would it mean to eternalize your life's call?

- If you're a lawyer,
 - what would it mean to be a Christian Lawyer?
- If you're a waitress,
 - what would it mean to be a Christian waitress?
- If you're a teacher
 - what would it mean to be a Christian teacher?

To answer that question answer this question...

Are you plugged into the rhythm of followship at St. Michael's?

Are you in Alpha?

Are you in a life group?

If not, today is open enrollment!

Are you planning engagement with the GIC?

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But know this... Followship, this eternalization of our lives is actually a daily decision.

It means getting up in the morning and saying Lord, I choose today to follow you;

- Holy Spirit
 - convert my day
 - consecrate my call
 - that it would be used to bring others to you.

In my own life, I'm Using Bible in a Year to help me hear the voice of Jesus.

I invite you to read with me passages for everyday that are on the website, allowing Jesus, the master sculptor to chip away at the call of your life--

To recreate it in His image.

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My friends, Jesus followed the voice of His father and as we're told in verse 23,

he left place after place to preach, teach and heal all over the region.

Followship that would lead him even to the cross to die that we might live.

And we say come Holy Spirit...out of this followship, eternally convert our lives.

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Let me end this morning with a testimony as to something that happened last night.

Scott and Cyndee Cave lead our 0-18 age children and youth ministry..

They are doing it by establishing teachings and leaders for each stage within that large age span...

This past week, they moved out all the furniture of the first floor of the Rectory, no easy task...

and last night held a vision night there for parents.

Our dinner was prepared by our own Angela Stanley.

The house was full, the vision cast...

But what was equally exciting was the fact that the Caves have raised up 12 young adults to be followers of Jesus

in a way that they are eternalizing their call with a complete focus on the transformation of our children!

Wow!

What would it mean to eternalize your life's call?

- Ask Jesus,
- Ask the Church
- To help you answer this question.

Come Holy Spirit...out of this followship, eternally convert our lives.

Amen.