

77. LET JESUS LEAD (JOHN 21:4-8) 11/23/14
FIRST CHRISTIAN CHURCH, ATCHISON, KS PASTOR LEE HENDON

AFTER FISHING ALL DAY - RETURNING TO THE BOAT DOCK - FISHERMEN GREET EACH OTHER WITH THE INQUIRY, "CATCH ANY-THING?" CHRIS & I WOULD USUALLY SWELL UP WITH SATISFACTION TO RAISE A STRINGER OF FISH FOR ALL TO SEE - "THEY WERE BITING TODAY!"

THAT WAS THE EXCHANGE GOING ON BETWEEN JESUS & THE DISCIPLES WHO HAD BEEN OUT FISHING ALL NIGHT, "CATCH ANY-THING?" THESE PROFESSIONAL FISHERMEN REPLIED, "NO! NOTHING." IT WAS A GREAT DISAPPOINTMENT TO BE FISHING ALL NIGHT WITHOUT ANY CATCH TO SHOW FOR IT. ADD TO THAT THE FATIGUE OF MISSING A NIGHT'S SLEEP. THEY WERE TIRED, HUNGRY & FRUSTRATED - A GRUMPY CREW!

A WEALTHY BUSINESS MAN WAS ALARMED TO SEE A FISHERMAN SITTING BESIDE HIS BOAT, EARLY IN THE DAY, PLAYING WITH A SMALL CHILD.

"WHY AREN'T YOU OUT FISHING?" ASKED THE BUSINESSMAN.

"BECAUSE I CAUGHT ENOUGH FISH FOR THE DAY," REPLIED THE FISHERMAN.

"WHY NOT CATCH SOME MORE?"

"WHAT WOULD I DO WITH THEM?"

"YOU COULD EARN MORE MONEY," SAID THE BUSINESSMAN. "THEN WITH THE EXTRA MONEY YOU COULD BUY A BIGGER BOAT - GO INTO DEEPER WATERS & CATCH MORE FISH. THEN YOU WOULD MAKE ENOUGH MONEY TO BUY NYLON NETS. WITH THE NETS YOU COULD CATCH EVEN MORE FISH & MAKE MORE MONEY. WITH THAT MONEY YOU COULD OWN TWO BOATS, MAYBE THREE. EVENTUALLY YOU COULD HAVE A WHOLE FLEET OF BOATS & BE RICH LIKE ME!"

"THEN WHAT WOULD I DO?" ASKED THE FISHERMAN.

"THEN," SAID THE BUSINESSMAN, "YOU COULD REALLY ENJOY LIFE."

THE FISHERMAN LOOKED AT THE BUSINESSMAN QUIZZICALLY TO ASK, "**WHAT DO YOU THINK I AM DOING RIGHT NOW?**"

IN THIS GOSPEL STORY CATCHING FISH IS A SPIRITUAL SYMBOL FOR SATISFACTION IN LIFE - THE GOOD LIFE - PURSUIT OF & OBTAINING SAID SATISFACTION. IT IS SO GREAT TO RELISH & TASTE THE GOOD LIFE.

AN EXECUTIVE HEAD-HUNTER WHO HIRED CORPORATION EXECUTIVES FOR OTHER FIRMS, ONCE TOLD THIS STORY. "WHEN I GET AN EXECUTIVE THAT I AM TRYING TO RECRUIT I LIKE TO DISARM HIM/HER. I OFFER 'EM A DRINK, TAKE OFF MY COAT, THEN MY VEST, UNDO MY TIE, THROW UP MY FEET & TALK ABOUT BASEBALL, FOOTBALL, FAMILY, WHATEVER, UNTIL HE/SHE IS RELAXED. THEN I LEAN OVER, LOOK 'EM SQUARE IN THE EYE & SAY, 'WHAT IS YOUR PURPOSE IN LIFE?' IT IS AMAZING HOW TOP EXECUTIVES FALL APART AT THAT QUESTION.

"WELL, I WAS INTERVIEWING THIS FELLOW THE OTHER DAY, HAD HIM ALL DISARMED, WITH MY FEET UP ON HIS DESK, TALKING ABOUT FOOTBALL. THEN I LEANED IN & SAID, 'WHAT IS YOUR PURPOSE IN LIFE, BOB?' HE SAID, WITHOUT BLINKING AN EYE, '**TO GO TO HEAVEN & TAKE AS MANY PEOPLE**

WITH ME AS I CAN.’ FOR THE FIRST TIME IN MY CAREER, I WAS SPEECHLESS.”

WHAT IS YOUR PURPOSE IN LIFE? EVER THOUGHT ABOUT IT? WHAT DOES THE “GOOD LIFE” LOOK LIKE TO YOU? DO YOU EVEN KNOW WHAT IT WOULD TAKE - YOU MIGHT ALREADY BE IN THE MIDST OF IT - NOT EVEN TASTING ITS JOY & SATISFACTION - THERE IT IS ALL AROUND YOU! THESE DISCIPLES KNEW THAT A GREAT CATCH OF FISH WOULD SATISFY THEIR LONGING FOR THE GOOD LIFE - THAT WAS THEIR PURPOSE. THEY MADE THEIR CONFESSION OF FAILURE TO THE MAN ON THE SHORE - WHOSE IDENTITY WAS YET UNKNOWN TO THEM. “CAUGHT NUTHING!”

JESUS WAS STANDING ON THE SHORELINE & GAVE DIRECTION TO CAST THE NET ON THE RIGHT SIDE OF THE BOAT. ***JESUS COULD SEE SOMETHING THEY COULD NOT SEE.*** SO THEY FOLLOWED HIS LEAD - CAST THE NET & THE CATCH WAS SO GREAT THEY COULD NOT HAUL IT INTO THE BOAT - THEY HAD TO DRAG IT TO SHORE! THE SUCCESS OF THIS NEW CATCH OF FISH LED JOHN TO RECOGNIZE THE MAN ON THE SHORE AS NONE OTHER THAN JESUS!

LET JESUS LEAD! LET JESUS LEAD....

“DANCING WITH THE STARS” HAS POPULARIZED COUPLE’S DANCING. AS YOU MAY RECALL I TAUGHT COUPLE DANCING HERE WHEN I FIRST ARRIVED - TO HOLD THE WOMAN IN MY ARMS & SPIN HER AROUND THE FLOOR - WHAT FUN! IN COUPLE DANCING THE MAN HAS GOT TO KNOW HOW TO LEAD. IN C & W DANCING THE LEAD IS GIVEN PRIMARILY BY THE MAN’S LEFT HAND. BY TAKING YOUR HAND OVER THE WOMAN’S HEAD SHE WILL KNOW TO SPIN OR TURN - TO WAIST HIGH FOR A WAIST WRAP - OR RELEASE THE HAND FOR A FREE SPIN. ON & ON AROUND THE DANCE FLOOR DOING SPINS & TURNS. MOST OF THE DANCES ON “DANCING WITH THE STARS” ARE CHOREOGRAPHED - BOTH MAN & WOMAN KNOW WHAT COMES NEXT - BUT IN COUPLES’ DANCING THE MAN CAN MIX IT ALL UP - THE WOMAN MUST KNOW HOW TO FOLLOW THE LEAD - THE MAN MUST KNOW HOW TO GIVE A GOOD LEAD FOR IT TO TURN OUT WITH THE STYLE & GRACE OF THE DANCE. ***IT MUST BE DECIDED BEFORE YOU GET ON THE DANCE FLOOR - WHO IS GOING TO LEAD & WHO IS GOING TO FOLLOW.*** THAT CAN BE A FUNNY THING TO WATCH WHEN TEACHING DANCE. J. J. JACKSON - MY FAVORITE DANCE TEACHER IN DALLAS, TX - USE TO REMIND US GUYS OF THE #1 RULE IN DANCING - ***MEN ARE TO MAKE THE WOMEN LOOK GOOD*** - DO NOT SHOW OFF & DANCE ABOVE THE WOMAN’S ABILITIES - MAKE THE WOMAN LOOK GOOD!

IS THAT NOT WHAT JESUS DID? HE GAVE THE LEAD & MADE THE DISCIPLES LOOK GOOD. THEY TOOK HIS LEAD TO CAST THE NET TO THE RIGHT SIDE OF THE BOAT - THEIR NETS WERE FILLED TO OVERFLOWING - JESUS MADE THEM LOOK GOOD - CATCH ANY-THING? YOU BET WE DID - THE CATCH WOULD HAVE CAPSIZED THE BOAT - WHAT JOY & SPLENDOR SWELLED UP IN THEIR HEARTS!

FOR THE DISCIPLES, A RETURN TO FISHING WAS A WISE MOVE. EVERYTHING DEPENDS ON HOW WE USE & FILL OUR USE OF TIME. THEY WERE TAKING THE LEAD THEMSELVES IN GETTING BACK TO THEIR FAMILIAR DAILY WORK. YET IT WAS WITH ALARM THAT AS THE NARROW RIBBON OF WATER WIDENED BETWEEN THE SHORE & THEIR BOAT THE LORD’S LEAD BECAME

WEAKENED. CAUGHT UP IN THEIR OLD LIFE AGAIN THEY DID NOT NEED THE MASTER'S LEAD - THEY COULD TAKE THE LEAD - THANK YOU VERY MUCH. THEY COULD TURN THEIR BACKS ON THE GREAT ADVENTURE OF FOLLOWING JESUS - OH MY! THEN IN THE DIM LIGHT OF DAWN A VOICE GAVE THEM A LEAD THEY COULD FOLLOW & IMMEDIATELY THEY NOTICED THE TOUCH OF THE MASTER'S LEAD.

SOONER THAN LATER - BECAUSE IT IS **LATER** THAN YOU THINK - WE MUST DECIDE WHO IS TO LEAD & WHO IS TO FOLLOW - GET UP ON THE DANCE FLOOR OF LIFE - THERE IS LITTLE OR NO JOY BEING A WALL FLOWER. WHEN WE SHOW UP AT THE DANCE BE READY TO DANCE & TO LET JESUS LEAD - PUT THOSE DANCING SHOES ON - TIME TO CUT A RUG!

WHEN WE LET JESUS LEAD - FULLNESS - PURPOSE - JOY - DIRECTION IN LIFE OVER FLOWS. THINK ABOUT IT - THERE IS NOT ONE LEAD THAT JESUS WOULD EVER GIVE US THAT COULD NOT BE TRUSTED & THAT WOULD NOT BE FOR OUR OWN WELL-BEING & JOY. EVERY LEAD BY THE LORD WILL MAKE US LOOK GOOD IN THE DANCE OF LIFE - EVERY LEAD. THERE IS NO SUCH THING AS TOO MUCH LOVE, JOY, GRACE, FORGIVENESS, GRATITUDE, TRUTH, GENEROSITY, PRAISE, ON & ON. TAKE YOUR SPINS & TURNS, PROMENADE DOWN THE DANCE LINE TO THE LEAD OF JESUS. TURN UP THE MUSIC! LET THE DANCE CONTINUE - LET JESUS LEAD!