

July 16, 2017
Pentecost 6
Beaches of the Bible: Fishers Beach
(You Follow Me?)

First Reading ~ Matthew 4:18-22

As Jesus was walking along the beach of the Sea of Galilee, he watched two brothers, Simon, who was called Peter, and Andrew, casting a net into the sea. They fished by trade. Jesus said to them, “Come follow me, and I will make you fishers of people.” Immediately they left their nets and began to follow Jesus. He walked along further down the beach and caught sight of a second pair of brothers, James and John, in the boat with their father, Zebedee, mending their nets. Jesus called them. Immediately they left the boat and their father, and followed him.

Second Reading ~ *Adapted from A.J. Swoboda in “Messy: God Likes It That Way”*

Something momentous has stayed with me as I’ve read these brutally honest stories about this famous carpenter / convicted-felon / Divine-Human named Jesus from a little town called Nazareth, famously unknown to the God-raising business. What’s stayed with me is that either Jesus, in all his apparent wisdom, decidedly and intentionally chose the saddest and slowest people available— on purpose —as the future of his upstart globe-shaping organization, or he’s the sort of carpenter / convicted-felon / Divine-Human who’s surprisingly difficult to keep up with. Because as you watch things unfold, so many of these stories are about these people called “disciples” following Jesus, who, over and over, aren’t able to keep up with this guy. Ultimately, my gut says both are true- that this Jesus from nowhere is significantly faster than his followers, who, if we’re honest, are slow yet faithful. At the end of the day it makes for a good story. Disciples slow. Jesus fast.

This stuff sells itself. I know of no other religion that portrays a god who gets dust in the eyes of their followers- followers from nowhere, of nothing, and less than swift. Followers who fish, willing to leave their day job, to learn a new way to fish. I know no other process where an otherwise unknown fisherman from Galilee named Peter could become the first Pope. The Jesus in the Bible is constantly at least one step ahead of everyone else.