Living the Good News

The message of Jesus is simple. It can be boiled down to two sentences. "The Kingdom of God is at hand. Repent and believe in the good news."

In this Sunday's gospel, Jesus appears in Galilee for the first time preaching the good news. At the Lake of Tiberias, he calls simple fishermen who drop everything to follow him. Their immediate and wholehearted response teaches us what it means to repent and believe in the good news. It means encountering the person of Jesus, following him and leaving everything behind.

Believing in the good news means having an encounter with Jesus Christ. The apostles didn't leave their families, homes, and jobs because they believed in an ideal. Rather it was coming face-to-face with Jesus that moved them. Meeting Jesus changed everything for them.

We cannot have the same face-to-face encounter with Jesus that the apostles enjoyed. But we are still able to meet the Risen Lord when we read the Bible, receive the Sacraments, and serve our sisters and brothers who are his living body. We are not on fire for our faith because we like to follow rules. Rather it is because we have met and fallen in love with Jesus Christ. This personal relationship with him that we have through faith and the ministry of the Church drives everything that we are about.

Believing in the good news also means that we must follow him. Our life of faith can be understood as a journey with Jesus leading the way. It means that, like the apostles, we have to give up our own plans and put our trust in God and His plan for us. It is not easy because very often the road is steep and the pathway rocky. We will not always see where it is headed, and we will stumble frequently along the way. We will see our friends walking a different way that seems easier, and we will be tempted to join them. But God will give us the strength and the courage to follow Him. And we will be blessed with joy because we are with Jesus.

Finally, believing in the good news means leaving everything behind. The apostles could not follow Jesus and stay fishermen. We cannot follow Jesus and continue to live the same way we did before. When we choose to follow Jesus, some things will have to stay behind. We may have to end friendships because they lead us to bad behavior. We may have to change our business practices because they are deceitful. We will all be called to live simpler lives so that we will have more left over to give to the poor. Some will even be called to sell everything and to give their lives totally over to Jesus in religious life. For all of us, gaining Jesus will mean the loss of something or someone we love. It was that way for the apostles, and it continues to be that way for us. There is no other way if we are to put our lives in the hands of our loving Father.



The Kingdom of God is among us. The Risen Lord is present in our midst. His presence soothes our fears. His words touch and heal our hearts. His Sacraments nourish and strengthen us. We meet him in one another, and we fall in love with the one who died for us. We gladly leave everything behind to follow after the one our heart longs for. Despite the difficulties, we know that it is the path of life. We walk with ever growing strength because we have met Jesus and our lives can never be the same.

— Douglas Sousa, S.T.L.

PRAYER
Loving Father,
You sent your Son to proclaim the
good news of our salvation.
Help us to answer his call courageously
may your Kingdom become a reality in our midst
as we hear his word proclaimed,
gather at the table of his Body and Blood,
And serve one another in love.
Through our encounter with the Risen Lord
may we live the good news with faith and hope
and bring the light of your love
to the darkest places of our world.
We ask this through Christ our Lord.
Amen.