

February 10, 2019 Epiphany 5 ANOTHER WAY: This Way or That Way?

Ancient Reading ~ Luke 5:1-11

One day, Jesus was standing beside Lake Gennesaret, and the crowd was pressing in on him to hear the word of God. He saw two boats moored at the shore of the lake; the fishermen had disembarked and were washing their nets. Jesus stepped into one of the boats, the one belonging to Simon, and asked him to put out a little way from the shore. Then he sat down and continued to teach the crowds from the boat.

When he had finished speaking, he said to Simon, 'Put out into the deep water and let down your nets for a catch.' Simon answered, 'Rabbi, we have been working all night long and have caught nothing; but if you say so, I will lower the nets.'

Upon doing so, they caught so many fish that their nets were at the breaking point. So they signaled to their friends in the other boat to come and help them, and together they filled the two boats until both nearly sank.

After Simon Peter saw what happened, he was filled with awe and fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, 'Leave me Rabbi, for I am a sinner.' For Simon and his shipmates were amazed at the size of the catch they had made, as were James and John, sons of Zebedee, who were partners with Simon. Jesus said to Simon, 'Don't be afraid. From now on you will be fishing for people.' When they had brought their boats to shore, they left everything and followed him.

Contemporary Reading ~ adapted from William Stafford and Parker Palmer in "Let Your Life Speak: Listening for the Voice of Vocation"

Some time when the river is ice ask me
mistakes I have made. And ask me whether
what I have done is my life. Others
have come in their slow way into
my thought, and some have tried to help
or to hurt: ask me what difference
their strongest love or hate has made.

I will listen to what you say.
You and I can turn and look
at the silent river and wait. We know
the current is there, hidden, beneath the surface;
and there are comings and goings from miles away
that hold the stillness exactly before us.
What the river says, that is what I say.

~ William Stafford, "Ask Me"

“Ask me whether what I have done is my life.” For some, those words will be nonsense, nothing more than a poet’s loose way with language and logic. Of course what I have done is my life! To what am I supposed to compare it?

But for others, and I am one, the poet’s words will be precise, piercing, and disquieting. They remind me of moments when it is clear – if I have eyes to see – that the life I am living is not the same as the life that wants to live in me. In those moments I sometimes catch a glimpse of my true life, a life hidden like the river beneath the ice. And in the spirit of the poet, I wonder: What am I meant to do? Who am I meant to be?