

Sermon 10th February 2019 by Reverend Ken Kvistad

Why drop all and follow Jesus? What does Justice have to do with it?

Intro Two weeks ago we had our Ecumenical Service and I was blessed to be asked to deliver the reflection. It was all about **liberty and justice for all** and for me it helped me dig back to very important issues in my life when I was growing up in the 50's and 60's, in the heartland of America...the suburbs of Chicago. Today's readings forced me to think about how today's Scripture passages are relevant to our world today...the *real politic* issues, humanitarian issues, and believe it or not the issues of pollution and our call as Christians within today's environment.

The more I reflected on it, the answer is quite simply **Jesus**. He is the answer and today's readings including Psalm 138 along with Luke 5 and Corinthians 15 give answers to these questions: Why God thru Jesus, why should we go and be willing to sacrifice and follow what does **Justice** have to do with these? So how do these Scripture passages help answer these fundamental issues of **WHY?**

First the Responsive Reading: **Psalm 138?**

I. Why come follow God? (through Jesus)

David was called and like Isaiah 6 his response was "I will go, send me and I will praise you, Lord, with all my heart; before the 'gods' I will sing your praise. I will bow down towards your holy temple and will praise your name. **WHY?**

BECAUSE Your unfailing love and your faithfulness You answered me; you greatly emboldened me You are forgiving You save me. You vindicate me; Your love, Lord, endures for ever Ps 138

II. Why Go as did the disciples did and drop everything and follow Jesus? Our First reading Luke 5:5 tells us Peter responded: I will drop all and follow you "Because you (Lord) say so, I will.

*Luke 5:5 puts it, 'Master, we've worked hard all night and haven't caught anything. But because you say so, I will They had witnessed the Godly power and majesty of his Jesus' word and action Peter was completely overpowered by recognizing Jesus' Godliness. So when Jesus told him and the others You will be fishers of men. ...So **they** pulled their boats up on shore, left everything and followed Jesus.*

III. What was it that they saw in Jesus ? Who was this Jesus that they went and followed and why? Paul reminds the Church in Corinth who this Jesus is and why they came following Jesus and his teachings

1Corinthians 15 explains: if you come follow me and obey the Gospel you are saved

"I want to remind you of the gospel I preached to you, which you received and on which you have taken your stand. 2 **By this gospel you are saved, if you hold firmly to the word** I preached to you.

Otherwise, you have believed in vain.

3 For what I received **I passed on to you** as of first importance: that *Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures,* 4 *that he was buried,* 5 *that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures,* 6 *and that he appeared to many, many of the disciples and others including myself, Paul least deserving but his **grace to me** was not without effect. No, I worked harder than all of them – **yet not I, but the grace of God that was with me.** 11 Whether, then, it is I or they, this is what we preach, and this is what you believed.*

IV Justice? As I began it is about Liberty and Justice. Justice for everyone under God's Kingdom who live their lives according to God's rules. As Paul writes to the Corinthians we follow because Christ brought us the GOODNEWS, the GOSPEL that we are Saved if we hold firmly to the WORD. **Christ our Lord and Saviour has done that. He has declared that his Father, and our Heavenly Father sent him to declare this liberation to all people for all time. He has set us free from our bondage to sin and calls on us to do the same to FORGIVE unconditionally those we oppress and hold in bondage through our prejudices, our belittling labels and slurs, and our gerrymandered laws and geopolitical boundaries.** Our participation in the Ecumenical Week of Prayer under the WCC chose the theme this year. Its focus was on injustice and our lack of ability to walk in the righteousness of our Lord and God as declared by Jesus Christ. The failure to rigorously maintain justice and only justice as Deuteronomy demands to "seek Justice and only Justice" leads to the worse kind of treatment of others, their incarceration and loss of their God given right to freedom of oppression—either literal imprisonment or spiritual capture. **Only true heartfelt, God-given love in the form of forgiveness can set these downtrodden, abused individuals FREE. Yes Freedom comes through the most unselfish and truest form of Love, forgiveness.** Christ set us free by forgiving us unconditionally. His loving saving grace through unconditional forgiveness gives Liberty and Justice to all. In the 1960's Black Preacher and leader of the Civil Rights struggle Martin Luther King quoted the OT Prophet Amos 5 and called to heaven for justice and righteousness when he quoted 5:24: "Let... justice roll down like waters and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream" Amos 5:24
It is the God-sent answer to Deuteronomy 16's call for "Justice and only justice" We need to Go, drop everything and follow Jesus and his

teachings, and forgive all unconditionally. That is why we study his word, he is the word and he is the way to Salvation and righteousness. **ISA 6: 8 Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, 'Whom shall I send? And who will go for us?' And I said, 'Here am I. Send me!' 9 He said, 'Go and tell this people. And Jesus did it first so should we pick up and follow at all costs NOW!**