



Redeemer Lutheran Church of Leisure World

13564 St. Andrews Drive
Seal Beach, CA 90740
Phone (562) 598-8697; FAX (562) 598-8697
e-mail: redeemer_lutheran@verizon.net

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Reflections on WORSHIP and DISCIPLESHIP by Margo Geesing

“Ready, Set, GO”

Faith in fullness is an action word. You can have faith, but to truly live your faith you are really called to DO. In James 2:26 we read, *“For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also.”* In the Gospels for the month of June Jesus in fact directs us into action.

On the first Sunday of June [Holy Trinity Sunday], we have Jesus commissioning the eleven: *“¹⁹Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you.”* Matthew 28:16-20. This is the continuing action of the church. Jesus’s followers, just as we, are sent to make disciples. The way we do that is through our actions and our words. I can **tell** you all about Jesus, and God the Father, and the Holy Spirit but that will not convince you that faith in the Trinity is a good thing. My actions, how I treat others; my words, how I speak about and to others; shows how my faith in the Trinity changes me. Having faith is hard. Living faith is harder. All those warning and such that Jesus constantly speaks of to his followers – they still happen. Living your faith can be dangerous – just look at who we follow and where he ended his human life. Faith, living faith, is not for the faint of heart [but the final reward is great!].

The second Sunday of June we have the calling of Matthew, and Jesus challenging the status quo. Jesus was willing to talk with and eat with those who society saw as less than. Jesus came for all of us. We all need his salvation and redemption. The issue is with those who don’t realize they need him. Jesus humbled himself to become human. He wishes us to do the same. *“¹³Go and learn what this means, ‘I desire mercy, not sacrifice.’ For I have come to call not the righteous but sinners.”* Matthew 9:9-13, 18-26. When we acknowledge our own need for mercy, we can learn to be merciful. Jesus calls us all to live out his mercy with others. This

Gospel lesson has Jesus showing mercy to those who were less than in society: a child and a woman with hemorrhages. The faith of both the synagogue leader and the woman is what Jesus looked for. The faith and trust in him.

The third Sunday of June [Father's Day] Jesus sends his followers out to preach. ^{10:7}*As you go, proclaim the good news, 'The kingdom of heaven has come near.'*” Matthew 9:35—10:8 [9-23]. The issue with his sending: he sent them with nothing. No money, no extra clothes, no reservations on where to stay. The only thing they had to take was his words and actions. The absolute trust they had in him to go. Leaving everything behind: family, friends, and livelihood to trust in the kindness of strangers. Now days, you would hardly walk out of the house without your wallet, keys, jacket, perhaps a snack, and a map [or cell phone] if you were going somewhere you didn't know. And you would definitely make a few hotel reservations so you knew where you would be sleeping at night! And does he tell them that all will be well? Of course not! He tells them that they may run into trouble, they may get hurt and betrayed. And then he says, don't worry about it: trust me! And now, thousands of years later, we too are being sent to go and preach the good news. We are sent into the world not knowing what is going to happen when we speak the truth of God. Jesus's followers are still being hurt and betrayed. And again, we are only equipped with Jesus's words and actions to share; and our trust and faith in him. As we go through our life, we are indeed bringing the kingdom of heaven nearer.

Jesus continues to challenge his followers in the Gospel lesson for the fourth Sunday of June. He again warns them that following him will not lead to a easy carefree life. In fact, just the opposite! Jesus came to show the way back to the Father. He did not come to say, believe and everything will be easy. He showed through his own life, following the will of the Father is hard. We each have our own cross to carry. At times that burden seems too heavy to bear, but bear it we must to reach the reward at the end. ³⁸*...and whoever does not take up the cross and follow me is not worthy of me.*” Matthew 10:24-39. Jesus carried his cross even though he did not deserve it. But just as Jesus had Simon to help with his cross, we also have one another to help when our own cross gets too heavy. This leads us back to the concept of mercy. We are here not only to carry our own cross but also to help others. When we get caught up in our own lives and burdens, we fail to see what others are enduring. Sharing the weight helps both. Sometimes we need to reach out and ask for help and sometimes we are the ones being asked. The “go” order for this Sunday is a bit more subtle: go, carry your burden; share with others when you need to, help others to carry their burden, walk the journey in support of one another.