

THE HOPE JOURNAL

LEARNING TO LOVE, TOGETHER



JANUARY 14, 2024

FIND

living a life of seeking

by Drew Downs

We talk a lot about resolutions this time of year. About changing, developing, and growing; dieting, losing weight, and quitting bad habits. We share our desires for the new year and who we hope to be.

There's energy in resolutions. And in the desire to be better people. To be healthier, happier, and more full of life. The desire to change, to live a *New Life* in which we are already changed, is powerful.

Of course, what we want most is to *be* changed more than change. To *be* healthier rather than make healthier decisions.

It is part of our nature to want to find without seeking. Just as it is to wait for others to find us. But that doesn't make it the best choice.

New life still involves living. As finding involves seeking. Even pursuing. Better to focus on living better. And doing it.

EPIPHANY

2024

WHAT'S GOING ON

*"You know we've got to find a way
To bring some loving here today".*

-Marvin Gaye

Disciples, Apostles, and Saints!

Calling

"The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it."

—John 1:5

In this season after Epiphany, our work is looking for the light—to be light chasers. Seeking out how God's light breaks through, where Jesus is present, and where the Holy Spirit guides us.

We describe this in the church as our "calling". It is something that God has given us to do; a way that we have been given to walk. Some refer to it as our "deepest why." As in *Why we do the things we do*.

The question always boils down to "How do I know?"

This is an essential question—and one that requires deep discernment. But I don't think it should be *our* question just yet.

This season is about seeking the light itself—in all of its appearing. So our calling isn't to calculate the dark or the volume of the light. But to find the light, rejoice, and share how God's love is manifest in our world.

So let us celebrate the light! In who we are to one another. To our neighborhood. And to all people.

With love,
Drew

EPIPHANY

2024

FOR SUNDAY

Epiphany 2B

January 14, 2024

Collect

Almighty God, whose Son our Savior Jesus Christ is the light of the world: Grant that your people, illumined by your Word and Sacraments, may shine with the radiance of Christ's glory, that he may be known, worshipped, and obeyed to the ends of the earth; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who with you and the Holy Spirit lives and reigns, one God, now and for ever.

Amen.

Reading

John 1:43-51

Jesus decided to go to Galilee. He found Philip and said to him, "Follow me." Now Philip was from Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter. Philip found Nathanael and said to him, "We have found him about whom Moses in the law and also the prophets wrote, Jesus son of Joseph from Nazareth." Nathanael said to him, "Can anything good come out of Nazareth?" Philip said to him, "Come and see." When Jesus saw Nathanael coming toward him, he said of him, "Here is truly an Israelite in whom there is no deceit!" Nathanael asked him, "Where did you get to know me?" Jesus answered, "I saw you under the fig tree before Philip called you." Nathanael replied, "Rabbi, you are the Son of God! You are the King of Israel!" Jesus answered, "Do you believe because I told you that I saw you under the fig tree? You will see greater things than these." And he said to him, "Very truly, I tell you, you will see heaven opened and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man."

EPIPHANY

Reflection

In the church, we call this story of Nathaneal and Philip one of the “call stories;” Jesus inviting the disciples to join him on his journey.

The concept of “call,” which is a decidedly religious word, is our humble attempt to describe our relationship to a divine invitation. For us, as it is for Nathaneal and Philip, is an invitation to follow Jesus, learn from Jesus, and be a part of the *Missio Dei*, God’s mission in the world.

The late bishop of Eastern Michigan, Ed Leidel liked to say that the word call feels like a misnomer. It makes it sound like God will call us on the phone and all we must do is “pick up”. More often, being called by God is something more like a nudge or an itch that we are compelled to investigate, explore, and seek understanding.

In John’s gospel, there is only one disciple Jesus seeks for. The others seek him or are introduced to him and choose to follow him. Once again, this is the opposite image of what we hear from the word *call*.

What we see instead is a story of introductions and experience and knowing. Jesus displays a knowledge of Nathanael that leads the mildly skeptical friend to declare, “Rabbi, you are the Son of God! You are the King of Israel!”

It may seem like so little proof of divinity to us, especially from those of us waiting by the phone to be called, noticed, remembered. But it is a declaration of faith by one who sees the divine manifest among them. The Messiah, calling these humble people to a new life. One that requires them to do the work of seeing, hearing, doing, and actively choosing this life of faith.

ST. STEPHEN'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH
215 N. 7TH ST TERRE HAUTE IN 47807
812.232.5165

STSTEPHENSTH.ORG