

Third Sunday in Ordinary Time B - 2021
Jonah 3.1-5,10//1 Cor. 7.29-31//Mark 1/14-20

→let me ask....how many vice-presidents can you name?...does anyone keep up with the lives of the runners-up in the Miss American pageant? How about losing teams in the Super Bowl and World Series...how many of those teams...who came so achingly close to wearing a championship ring... are remembered?

→it is probably far and few because...we are taught from early on and almost every aspect of our society reinforces the idea that celebrates those that come in first...not second [aren't we?]

→we want to see first run movies...not second-hand reruns...we want to wear new clothes rather than hand-me downs...and...we like freshly prepared food instead of reheated second servings

→we don't want to be second best at anything...instead we strive always to be number 1 and not settle for number 2

→in a word...anything less than first seems so...well...so secondary and who wants that...

→but...maybe we should reconsider our haste to relegate "seconds" to the trash heap....

→because maybe being "second" also holds a special place in God's plan...

PAUSE

→that seems to be the case today after a closer look at the first reading from the prophet Jonah and our Gospel reading...both readings seem point this out...so....that at the very least...it might be worth taking a "second" look.

→there is a popular book entitled *Halftime* that speaks to a yearning for significance and meaning...//.... felt keenly by many middle-aged persons as they reflect on the success they have gained in the first half of life, raising children and building careers.

→[however]...it suggests that there is a tendency in most people... that as we enter the second half of life... we tend to take more risks and find more ways to live for the greater good...in short...to live for **significance** rather than success.

→in the second half of life...people seem to want to write a more meaningful epitaph than the one we etched in the first half

→to live life defined more by what it gives rather than by what we possess

→and such a recalibration of one's life is not a confession of failure but moreso it is a celebration of wisdom and permission...

...permission to change **because** of the successes of the first part.

→we have all heard about people who begin a second career at mid-life, perhaps leaving the corporate structure to start a business from the ground up.

→or engaging in a volunteer role not previously thought of.

→these are not failed lives in search of success but rather successful lives seeking to share gifts and passions and wisdom with others.

→and that seem to be case in both todays...first reading and gospel passage

→we hear that God doesn't limit His call only to those who move from one success to another...sometimes he calls on those who in need of a second chance...

→and the story of the prophet Jonah is an excellent case in point.

→God had called Jonah to preach to the city of Nineveh...but Jonah refused and runs from that call...and from God.

→and...[as the story goes]...he ends up being swallowed by a whale

→[and] after time to rethink his decision, the call of God comes to Jonah a second time...just as it had previously

→this time [as we hear today]...Jonah goes through the city proclaiming the kingdom of God...urging the townspeople to repent

→then in the Gospel we hear about Simon and Andrew along with Zebedee's sons...James and John...being called to move from a successful life to one of even greater significance.

→two sets of brothers running successful fishing enterprises are called by Jesus...they are faced with a choice between two competing worlds.

→to stay as they are...secure and comfortable OR to make a leap of faith...//...building on their success...to a bold and daring new life...

→and perhaps **that is** the whole point of these readings....

→may be we are being called to leave our nets...and all the security they represent to follow a call from God to our second life...**a life lived not to conquer the world but to serve it**

→that's what happens to Jonah...

→by the time we get today's reading, Jonah realizes that God is stronger than him...and so he gives in and goes through the town doing what God wants him to do

→and strangely enough, the people of Nineveh repent

→they stop sinning and even more startling...they make a public display of their repentance

→they changed their lives completely

→[and] ----in the second reading, St. Paul [in his second life] writes to the people of
Cornith...recommending that they live without becoming overly attached to their
possessions....[he writes] "time is running out...the world in its present form is passing away" ////

→and the point Paul makes is that.....instead of becoming so attached to things of this world
we should attach ourselves to Christ

→and then, finally in the Gospel, we hear Jesus even proclaiming that the reign of God
is at hand...that now is the time to repent and believe in the Good News....

→all three readings speak of the urgency to do what is right in the time that is left

→to repent and live the message of Christ

→to attach ourselves to his words and message

→[and] to live as true disciples committed to the gospel and the mission of Jesus Christ

→i.o.w. all three readings are calling us.....to a different way of life...[a second way]

...to one of forgiveness...compassion

...of patience and understanding

...to a life of justice and respect

...to one rooted in Jesus Christ... in faith...and to the gospel

PAUSE

→[you know] all too often, we seem to ONLY realize how good we have it, how fortunate we
are and how blessed we have been...when it's too late

→time seems to always run out before we realize what we are suppose to be about,
who we are, and what our purpose is in this life and the world

→and so perhaps, what we are really being told today through these scripture readings is that [maybe] it should be different when it comes to Christ, our faith, and our relationship with one another and God.

→perhaps just like...the Ninevites, the Corinthians and the early disciples of Christ...we are being called.....to begin our second phase...our second chapter...our second chance

→after all...isn't...second chances... what life is about

...when it comes to forgiveness...to opportunities...relationships....AND
when it comes to God.