

Thirteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time - A 2020  
2 Kings 4.8-11,14-16///Romans 6.3-4,8-11///Matt. 10.37-42

→FREE CHECKING...the advertisement says...until you find out that you have to maintain a minimum balance of \$3500, an automatic deposit of your paycheck...and a mortgage loan with the same bank to qualify....that's called the "fine print"

→TWO NIGHTS AND THREE DAYS IN BEAUTIFUL ORLANDO, ABSOLUTELY FREE...until you learn that you are responsible for your own airfare, and have to submit to a two hour sales presentation about buying a time share at the same resort.....the "fine print."

→ZERO PERCENT INTEREST...NO PAYMENTS UNTIL JANUARY 2022 until you hear in a low quick speaking voice...minimum down payment of \$5000, subject to credit approval, limited time offer on specially marked vehicles only, offer not valid in some states... "the fine print strikes again!"

→three offers that came across my desk just this past week....

→*caveat emptor*... "let the buyer beware!"...that's the sobering wisdom of our age these days.

→how many of us have been burned by the "fine print"....[you know] that lingering aftertaste that surprises us after swallowing a deal that sounded too good to be true?

→how many of us have been taken in by such offers...only to learn the hard way...that if walks like a duck, quacks like a duck and looks like a duck.....it's a duck!

→at some point in life...we have all been ambushed by the hidden costs, underreported risks and exception clauses of contracts...

→that it is no wonder we are all wary of any offer that sounds too sweet, promises too much, or tastes too good to be true.

→ “if only someone would tell us the truth up front” we often say... “what a refreshing change that would be!”

→if you are like me....we want someone to tell us the upside and downside of an offer in plain language rather than tell us only what we want to hear in order for us to sign on the dotted line and being surprised later...

→[well] for all of you who feel this way....i’ve got good news for you!...because today, Jesus is the voice of truth we have all been waiting for

PAUSE

→today’s gospel reading continues from last week....the instructions Jesus gives to the disciples as he prepares to send them into the world to extend his ministry of teaching, healing and reconciliation.

→today Jesus gives very explicit directions about the way they should “sell” the invitation to become a follower and disciple without any fine print...fast talk...or bonus offers.

→...he speaks about the way he wanted the disciples to recruit others to their ranks....

→he tells them....*whoever loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me...and whoever loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me; and whoever does not take up their cross and follow after me is not worthy of me”*

→how is that for an appealing offer....

→i.o.w....we can only become a disciple of Jesus if we clearly value his calling above every other relationship...even over parents and children and the preservation of our own life!

→[and] as you might expect, the disciples did not return with very many new converts with that sales pitch...

→such a hard approach must have shocked the hearers of the first century just as it does to those of us today...

→how could Jesus expect anyone to follow him when he demanded such a high level of commitment?

→isn't our family, after all, supposed to be our first priority in life? ...isn't taking care of ourself and our well-being just as important?

→yet what Jesus is doing here is just the opposite of our common modern sales tactics..

→he didn't want anyone claiming they had been hoodwinked into becoming a disciple...rather...Jesus, just like the marines...would rather have "a few good men and women" than a crowd of fickle followers who wilt at the first sign of trouble and sacrifice...

→and that is the same message being told to us today...to be involved...to be active....and to be committed to spreading the gospel message.

→in a word...the point Jesus is making is rather quite simple...

→you and I need to be open to and welcome the words and message of Christ in our lives

→you and I need to be open to those who show us Christ...AND

→you and I need to be the one who spread the message of Christ.

PAUSE

→Jesus tells his followers....and you and me...to establish the Church and its message by telling the truth, straight up with no fine print....

→i.o.w....we can only spread the message if it is first already alive in us...

→and he deliberately chooses the highest, the most noble of all priorities in a person's life to help underscore the importance of counting the cost for discipleship.

## PAUSE

→no one ever accused Jesus of making an “easy sell” of the Christian faith.

→if a person truly decides to follow Christ...it is not a life of ease and comfort to which that person is called...but it is one of great impact and influence...

→it's not one that leads to a plush chair in the corner office; but it is one that is challenging and rewarding [most of the time...]

→and the retirement package for those of us who follow Christ...who are true disciples...and accept all of the challenges....well that is truly out of this world...

→so with all this in mind...we are being invited to join...

→there is no fine print...but it is a fine life indeed with the greatest of rewards!