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To the modern listener, St. Peter's exhortation, *He who would love life and see good days*, is astonishing! The popular, worldly way to love life and see good days has nothing to do *with keeping [our] tongues from evil, [our] lips from speaking guile, turning away from evil and doing what is right, or seeking peace and pursuing it*. The popular and worldly way to love life and see good days is envisioned by perpetual vacations, and parties, never mind evil and guile, instead seeking wealth and pursuing it leisurely. This morning we are presented with yet one more way in which our modern world is contradicted by the message of the Gospel, even in how a love for life and good days is defined.

In this morning's Gospel we read of a miraculous catch of fish. Let us remember that for the Disciples fishing was not just a favorite hobby but how they provided for themselves and for their families. A few days of bad fishing was disastrous for their income. No fish, no money. Jesus finds the disciples in such a situation. He tests their patience by first commandeering their boat for a makeshift pulpit, and after He finishes teaching the crowds on the shore, He rewards their patience by telling them to launch the boat back out and let down their nets. The disciples are professional fishermen, and now are expected to take orders from Jesus, professional carpenter, and itinerant rabbi. They protest, *Lord we have fished all night, and we have caught nothing*, but they do as Jesus says. They let down their nets, and they catch so many fish that the net breaks and they must call for help from the next boat over!

The disciples were astounded by this great catch of fish. There was no explanation for it, other than Jesus had worked a miracle. This miracle begins to shatter the worldliness of the disciples. St. Peter's reaction to this great miracle is to fall at the feet of Jesus and say, *depart from me Lord, for I am a sinful man*. St. Peter does not say, *you know Lord, if you did this a few more times we could hang up the fishing nets for a long time*. Instead of capitalizing on the miracles Jesus could work, the Gospels say they brought their ships to land, left all, and followed Him. We do not even read that they took the great catch of fish into market, we do not hear how much they made from it, only that *they forsook all and followed Jesus*. Again, our modern mindset is confronted and shaken by the Gospel's idea of what it means to love life and to see good days.

The Disciples *forsook all and followed Jesus*, and for thousands of years since the great saints have left rich and luxurious lifestyles, they have left lands, and titles to follow Jesus. Later in the Gospels, when Jesus tells His disciples that it is hard for the rich to enter into the Kingdom of Heaven,

the disciples protest and ask Jesus, *who then can be saved?* Perhaps they thought that they had only given up their old ways of life for a little while. St. Peter reminded our Lord, *Behold, we have left everything and followed you. What then shall we have?* And Jesus promises *them treasures in heaven where moth and rust do not corrupt and where thieves do not break through and steal.* To love life and to see good days according to the Gospel is not dependent on riches, luxury, possessions, or the world, it is a hard teaching now, and it was a hard teaching then to the disciples.

But what about those who are not called to give up everything, who are not called to take vows of poverty or to the totally renounce the world to follow Jesus? Even those who are not called to give up everything as Peter, James, and John and the many others have done are still called to live a life marked by Christ. We are still called to heed the words of Christ through St. Peter this morning, if we would *love life and see good days, we must keep our tongues from evil... from speaking guile... we must turn from evil and do right... we must seek peace and pursue it.* And we are reminded *that the eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous, and his ears are open to their prayer. But the face of the Lord is against those that do evil.* And if we do these things then we will be set apart from the world. Just as the disciples were set apart from their world by leaving everything behind to follow Jesus.

We who would be disciples of our Lord must be willing to leave off from the ways of the world and put Jesus Christ first. Though we stand against the world St. Peter writes to us, *if we suffer for righteousness' sake, happy are ye...be not afraid of their terror, neither be troubled; but sanctify the Lord God in your hearts.* For this is what means to love life and to seek good days, we are taught to love Him who is the Life, He who is Goodness itself, to whom all else pales in comparison. We are invited to receive this Life this morning through the bread and wine, the Body and Blood of Christ from God's altar. May He give us the strength to leave the ways of the world behind so that we may follow Him faithfully. Amen.