

Epiphany 3
January 21, 2018

Did you hear it? Did you feel it? This morning when the scriptures were being read did you hear it?

Hopefully one of the things we do when reading or listening to the stories of the Bible we listen not only with our ears and mind but with our heart and soul. I know I have talked about listening with your heart in the past but I think we must be reminded that is the way we are to listen all the time. You judge a lot less when you listen with your heart and hear a lot more. That is what takes place when God is talking to us ... our heart is being touched and transformed ... and that should happen when we read the Bible.

There are many ways in which we are lead by God ... usually by other people, hence why we should be on our toes at all times ... always being our sweet, loving and compassionate selves! Another way is through the Bible. The Bible is many things ... a history book, a book on rules and behavior, a story book, a book of biographies but it also talks to us personally. This is a time when God has our undivided attention when we sit down with the Bible ... when we are listening to a reading ... God will chose this time to give us advice that will help grow our soul.

Have you ever wondered at times when you hear a sermon where that idea came from ... you didn't hear that in the lessons? That is because God spoke specifically to you and to the person giving the sermon. When I preach I preach what I am led to share with you. Maybe it is only for my benefit so you all are confused but, hopefully, most of the time my preaching is a help to many of you. God gave me advice for you. And I will go a step further ... there have been times after the service someone will come up to me and thank me for my preaching and they explain how it has helped them in their life ... I sometimes am amazed and joyful ... amazed because I have no idea how they got that out of my sermon and joyful because God was talking to them through my sermon.

Think of your Bible Study experiences and how many ideas are shared on the meaning of one verse. I used one Bible for my Bible Study for years and I am amazed what I wrote as the meaning of a verse years ago because now God is using that same verse to tell me something different.

I wonder how many of you today received the same message from God that I did ... did it get you a bit riled up? Were you a bit exhausted from the read? Did it make you want to run outside and love all mankind as God would like us to do as disciples of God?

Just listen to some of the words out of all the lessons ... Get up! Overthrow! Walk! Walk! Pour out your heart!, appointed time has grown short! Repent! Believe! Follow! Follow! Followed! Immediately! Immediately! Last Sunday we heard; Follow! Come and see! Ascending and descending.

What is God trying to tell us? Oh my goodness! Do you hear the urgency? The Marching orders? ... They were given to Jonah, Simon, Andrew, James, and John ... and last Sunday

Phillip and Nathaniel and of course all these action words are for us ... the disciples of God today.

It was almost like a cheer from Jesus ...

Follow me Follow me says the Lord\ Follow me Follow me says the Lord/ Yea! Lord!!!

What I am hearing today from my dear sweet Jesus is do something ... be active. It is great to pray and read – those certainly are actions but perhaps this year we are to go a step further. There are some great steps I have seen people getting up here and reading for the first time ... there will be a couple new groups starting this year to help us with meditation to pray and listen better ... to help us form a better us.

How have your New Year Resolutions been going so far on the 21st day of the New Year? Maybe you can add one more on to your list or if you don't have a list maybe use this one ... add a Godly action to your life ... we have a parishioner who called me the other night to ask me about A Safe Place and what kind of volunteer work do they need there. Now she already works a couple times a week at a hospice facility and will be helping at an animal shelter but as a disciple showing God's love is never ending. You know we have many things that can be done through Annunciation ... we are having an Outreach meeting February 4th that will give you ideas. And of course you have the everyday interacting with people to show how much God loves them by your kindness, compassion, and generosity. Perhaps that could be a new years resolution ... put that phone away while walking and spend the time smiling at those you meet. There are so many ways to do God's work ...

Again, I remind you ... we are all God has on this earth ... we are the Disciples following the example given to us by Jesus. Today's lessons are filled with action words to help us get pumped up and go out there to slay the dragons and love the unlovable. Let us go out there and follow, follow, follow the path God has given us. Using the manual for his disciples ... the Bible ... as our guide.

We are all that God has ... we are the light and love of this world. As Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. said:

Darkness cannot drive out darkness; only light can do that.
Hate cannot drive out hate; only love can do that.

We are the light and the love.

Amen.