



## “Conversations with a Savior: The Disciple”

Sixth Sunday after Pentecost  
8:30 & 10:45 a.m. Saturday, June 26, 2016

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1 Kings 19:15-16, 19-21; Galatians 5:1, 13-25;  
Luke 9:51-62

Grace and peace be to you from God Our Father and our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.  
Amen.

When I was dropping my children off for school, I wanted to leave them with something they could think about throughout the course of the day. What I was trying to do is mold my children into good disciples. So I would say to them this little Latin phrase that I liked and then I added a little bit to it. I've always liked the term *carpe diem*. If you know anything about that it means “seize the day,” but I would add a little twist to that, two more words *Pro Deo*. *Carpe diem Pro Deo*, “**seize the day for God.**” I wanted that to be the last thing they heard their father say before they went off to school. I was trying to create this moment in time where they could get some sense of focus before they went off to learn whatever they were going to learn and get involved in whatever they were going to get involved in. And so, for day after day, year after year, that's what I left them with as their father, *Carpe diem Pro Deo*. And I hope that in that small moment it was something that would last a life time.

Now in the Bible, it talks about time and how we use time in three different ways. The first word that's used in Greek is *hora* from which we get our word hour. And we would use that term for it's the right hour or it's the right time. The second word that's used is *chronos* that has to do with chronology, time as it moves forward. We use the chronology from that word. The last word is the word *kairos*, now *kairos* is a little bit different. There it's talking about those strategic kind of moments in time. Those special moments where you just know something is going to be different in your life as you enter into that time. These would be the moments where for example, maybe you realized that you're in love, you know. You just loved that person or when you met your spouse, you just knew this was the moment. That's *kairos* time. Or perhaps it was for life direction. You know, you almost had a sense of purpose, maybe it was in a job or business, you just knew that this is the direction you had to go.

Certainly for myself when I received the call to ministry, it was actually through a period of different *kairos* moments where I felt called by God to be involved in public ministry. I remember taking a walk with my pastor and asking him all sorts of questions, you know, when did you want to be a pastor and what was that like, and how did you know? He shipped me off to Nawakawa by the way, that was his answer to that. Not a bad choice, not a bad choice. And then finally just knowing that that was what God was calling me to, that's a *kairos* moment, it's more than just an hour or a *chronos*, it's a *kairos* moment.

Theodore Roosevelt once said that in any moment of decision the best thing you can do is the right thing. The next best thing you can do is the wrong thing. And the worst thing you can do is nothing, Interesting, carpe diem Pro Deo. These kairos moments, these specific moments can bring incredible meaning to life and we can have such a sense of God's presence with us in those moments of decision.

Now these past five weeks we've been talking about Conversations with a Savior. For five weeks Jesus has been in conversation with a real mixed group of people. You recall that it was Jesus in a conversation with a soldier. Jesus talking to someone who had lost their son, a widow. Jesus talking to a variety of sinners or demon possessed man, and now he's going to have a conversation with a disciple. Actually he's going to have a conversation with a number of disciples as well as potential disciples in our gospel reading. At this point in the gospel of Luke Jesus has now set his face toward Jerusalem, he's ready to go to Jerusalem from Galilee. To do that the journey has to begin from Galilee through Samaria which is the neighboring area and then into Jerusalem area.

Now Jesus knows that this is going to be the place of his crucifixion and resurrection. He is going with a purpose. This is a kairos moment for him. The ultimate in kairos moments as he prepares for his passion and death. So he sends his disciples ahead as he would normally do, he's traveling with a whole band of disciples because after all they got to know where they are going to stay, what are they going to eat, which road should they take. So the disciples that were sent ahead get rejected. The Samaritans know Jesus and his band are going to Jerusalem and they believe that you don't have to go to Jerusalem to worship God, you can do it in a different place. So they're not too keen on this Jewish Messiah making his way through their town because the Samaritans and the Jews didn't get along at all. They had a lot of animosity toward each other for a variety of reasons. So they reject Jesus' disciples, they reject Jesus because they don't want to have anything to do with him. Doesn't that happen some times?

You know you have the kairos moment and you're sure that this is what's right for you and you know that God's hand is in it and yet it's met with rejection. Now Jesus' journey begins with rejection and sometimes that can happen to us. You know that person that you confess your love for, you know what, they might say, I don't love you, or that business venture that you were just sure was the right thing, it might not work out. And I know when I told some relatives and friends that I wanted to be a pastor, some of them said, what do you want to do that for?

In the gospel there are four conversations that are part of this particular gospel. The first conversation is with the disciples after they get the rejection, and it's how do they deal with that rejection. The disciples get pretty perturbed that they got rejected by the Samaritans. So what they want to do, they want to turn the gospel into an episode of *Game of Thrones*, right, they want to kill them all, right. So they call upon Jesus' fire and brimstone upon these Samaritans, let's get all Old Testament on them and just destroy them all. A nice pastoral response from these disciples, you don't like what we're doing . . . fine, kill them all. Jesus of course rejects that, that's not what it's going to be about. It's not going to be about throwing fire on these Samaritans who are rejecting him. He takes it all in stride and he says, no that's not what we're going to be about, that's not what we're going to do.

The next three conversations through are with potential disciples who come to Jesus and sometimes it is Jesus talking and sometimes it's them talking. Notice how different those conversations are. In the first conversation the potential follower is the one who initiates the conversation with Jesus. And yet, Jesus states an objection to that. In the second one, it's completely opposite, it's Jesus who is the one to the person, and in the third it's the potential disciple initiating the conversation and also raising the objection himself. And then Jesus just gives a commentary on what that is all about.

The first person that comes to Jesus is enthusiastic, approaches Jesus on his own, but receives this weird response from Jesus. Foxes have holes and the birds of air have nests, but the son of man has nowhere to lay his head. You can just imagine that the man is just scratching his head, going what? What does that have, I don't follow, foxes what?? And I am not sure what's going through Jesus' head at that moment, maybe Jesus is recognizing not so much the cost of discipleship, maybe he's recognizing the cost of lordship, that he's now going from his home of Galilee into Jerusalem, maybe he still is hurting a little bit from that initial reaction and rejection that he gets from the Samaritans. Maybe he knows that he is on this journey, this path that is ultimately going to lead to the cross and he recognizes that even though he is in this kairos moment, it too will lead to his own rejection.

The next two that come to him call him Lord, they recognize his authority as the Son of God, but then immediately begin to put conditions on how they're going to live out that obedience. The first one says that he would like to leave and bury his father. Now Jesus you would think would be okay with that because after all, one of the most important things that a son could do for his father was to provide a proper burial. For the Jews of that time, this was a holy and sacred act for a son. But what we need to understand is the Jewish burial customs are a little different. They bury the person first within twenty-four hours. Then after that they would collect the bones about a year later and then put them in a box called an ossuary for the final burial. Now because this is probably a Jew that is coming up to Jesus and he is also on his way going through Samaria to be a pilgrim in Jerusalem, his father has probably already died and we're probably talking about the second burial here, and who knows when that is supposed to be. So he might be saying, let me first go and bury my father and I'll catch up with you ten to fourteen months later. Can I be a disciple then? But Jesus says that the call to follow is more important than the burying of his father ten months later.

The need to announce the kingdom of God is immediate and right now. The other just wants to say good-bye to his family. The first reading that we had is a similar situation the prophet Elijah chooses Elisha, he throws his cloak on him and basically claims him as his own and say okay, you are going to be my disciple now and Elisha asks can I go and say good-bye to his family and Elijah allows him to do that. So Jesus by saying no, you need to go now, is basically saying that his radical call to be one of his disciples is more radical than even the prophets, then even the greatest prophet Elijah. To be disciple of Jesus means even more than that and there is urgency to his work. Now is the time. Jesus, after all, is on kairos time. Now is the sacred moment to make that choice, to be a disciple of Jesus. And Jesus recognizes that following that is not going to be an easy thing, and brothers and sisters, he doesn't make it easy for us.

In all of these cases he tells them to put aside their personal ambitions or their personal desires, and like a football coach he's saying to the players, I want you to give 110%. But the path, the journey that Jesus is talking about is not some wonderful triumph journey that is going to take place in Jerusalem, instead it's going to lead ultimately to the kairós moment of his death and resurrection. But it also needs to be a steady journey, step by step, sharing and talking about love and grace and mercy and forgiveness.

When Linda and I lived in New York on the road that we lived on, they decided to re-pave it so they laid down new asphalt and then the guy came to paint the stripes. At some point I am sure the guy was a little distracted because the double lines that were supposed to be straight down the middle started to swerve a little bit back and forth. Jesus says the same thing when he talks about the hand and plow. If you're going to be a disciple of Jesus, you need to be focused at the task at hand. And if you think, if you just get involved in the moment you're going to miss the further point of where you need to go. And anybody that does any planting or striping roads knows that you need to look far ahead of where you want to go so that you can make sure that everything goes straight. That's the reason, for example, why our congregation is involved in our strategic plan. It's to look far enough in advance so we know where we need to go because if we get involved in just the details of what's happening right now, we'll miss that more important part of the journey of keeping focused and getting to where we need to be as a congregation.

Seize the day for God, *carpe diem Pro Deo*, is so that we can have a focused journey, and so it is with all of us as we go about our life as a disciple. Jesus is asking us to travel with him, not just so concerned about today, but tomorrow and how and what can we do to follow him with our whole heart. How can we go where Jesus wants us to go? But that's the invitation for today, it's an invitation for us to follow and make an impact on the kingdom of God that he is bringing. *Carpe diem Pro Deo*.

There's a prayer that's in our hymn book that's particularly meaningful to me, I would like to share it with you for the close of my sermon today.

Let us pray.

*O God, you have called your servants to ventures to which we cannot see the ending,  
by paths yet untrodden, through perils unknown.  
Give us faith to go out with good courage,  
not knowing where we go,  
but only that your hand is leading us and your love supporting us;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord,  
and all the people of God said, Amen.*

In the name of the Father and of the + Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

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