

“Beyond the Horizon”

Marcia McFee, creator of our “Bread, Bath, and Beyond” Worship Series has said, “Looking beyond the horizon about what we are called to do is about engaging our God given imaginations. To co-create the Reign with God, imagination is one of our most important gifts.” Given the importance of imagination, as we are called to look beyond the horizon, let’s watch and listen to this video of musicians around the world imagine.” [“Imagine” video was shown.]

As we imagine – think about the breaking in of the Kingdom of God, it is helpful to recall our Scripture reported in **verse 15a**, *“The right time has come,” he said, “and the Kingdom of God is near!”* Understanding what Jesus meant by that, may be a little confusing. Rev. Kathryn Matthews discussed what some folks have said about this when she wrote, “The time is now, Jesus announces: his very first words of proclamation are ‘The time is fulfilled’ (v.15), or, as Eugene Peterson renders it in The Message, ‘Time’s up!’ This isn’t the kind of time we keep track of in our calendars, whether on our phones or written in journals: days, weeks, months and years. It’s a different kind of time, found in the New Testament but sometimes experienced today, too: kairos, as Fred Craddock describes it, ‘a time in which the constellation of factors creates an unusually significant moment.’” (Posted by Rev. Kathryn Matthews on Weekly Seeds in the Reflection, “Casting Call”)

Referring to the times when the Kingdom of God breaks into our lives is another way of describing aspects of the life of living beyond the horizon – past the boundaries of this world. Barbara Brown Taylor summarized and named living beyond the horizon and what happened in our Scripture as a “miracle story” which is about “the power of God – to walk right up to a quartet of fishermen and work a miracle, creating faith where there was no faith, creating disciples where there were none just a moment before.” (Posted by Rev. Kathryn Matthews on Weekly Seeds in the Reflection, “Casting Call”)

Jesus’ invitation to some of his earliest disciples served a dual purpose. First, it was an overt way of calling them to join him in his work and ministry. But, he was also inviting and encouraging them to live beyond the horizon – to sail into the sunset or sunrise as the beginning of their new lives, instead of the end of the story. Mark reported in **verse 17**, *“Jesus said to them, ‘Come with me, and I will teach you to catch people.’ At once they left their nets and went with him.”*

“Ted Smith suggests that Jesus doesn’t ask the fishermen ‘to add one more task to their busy lives. He calls them into new ways of being.’ So he doesn’t give them a new list of things to do but ‘a new identity – whole new life.’” (Posted by Rev. Kathryn Matthews on Weekly Seeds in the Reflection, “Casting Call”)

During the Threshold Moment it was said, “The scriptures today tell of the calling of fishermen on the shores of the Sea of Galilee to leave their work and follow Jesus. He is calling them to work they probably never in a million years imagined themselves doing. For years they had sailed that sea, perhaps never thinking what was beyond the horizons, beyond the distant shores. Where is Jesus calling us that just might be beyond the horizons we now see for ourselves?”

In a few moments, we will be Installing the Newly Elected Church Leaders. It may be a bit jolting to realize both the newly elected and continuing church leaders were called, like the disciples and all Christians throughout history, to live beyond the horizon of the world’s ways of life. We are to live in the present as citizens of God’s Kingdom – New Creatures in Christ – New Beings! Jesus calls us to follow his example of this New Life, which, by the way, is not merely repenting of our sins. Repenting really means we turn away from the world’s old way of self-centered living and toward the New Life of agape – suffering and self-giving love. God’s Son, Jesus Christ, manifested God’s Agape Love for us and all humanity through him bringing the Kingdom of God into this world at his birth; his welcoming, healing, forgiving, serving, teaching; and his death and resurrection. Jesus revealed God’s Radical and Extravagant Hospitality toward everyone by his associating – eating with the outcasts and the rejected by the Jewish Society.

Getting back to our call to look and live beyond the horizon – to follow Jesus’ call and example, each of us needs to ask ourselves, whether or not we have accepted our Christian calling. Are our minds directed by God’s way inspired imaginations? Are we living beyond the world’s boundaries – beyond the horizon? Are we following Jesus’ self-giving love and hospitality in our daily lives? Are we inviting others to join us in the New Life? How are you and I responding to Jesus’ call? Let’s move beyond the horizon to the Kingdom of God’s way of life, which was shown in God’s Son, Jesus Christ! Amen.