

3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday after Pentecost  
June 26th, 2022  
Christ Lutheran Church, West Covina

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

## **Sermon**

“I have set the Lord always before me...My heart therefore is glad, and my spirit rejoices.”

Let us pray....

39 years ago today I was ordained as a Lutheran pastor at Holy Trinity Lutheran Church in Minneapolis, Minnesota. The same church I was baptized and confirmed in. My uncle, who was also a Lutheran pastor was given special privilege by the Bishop of Minnesota, to conduct the service and officially ordain me, (although as he said, it is God who ordains, or calls you into ministry!)

It was indeed a very special day, but what happened almost immediately after the service was in some ways even more memorable. My mother pulled me aside and in private, told me that when she was pregnant with me, she attended a worship service where the pastor gave a special sermon urging those present to consider ordained ministry. My Mother said I began kicking like crazy, as if I was responding to the pastor's message! She wondered first, if her baby could be a boy (she already had four daughters) and if it was a boy, would he become a minister? (at the time, only males were allowed to become pastors)

So, for over 28 years my mother kept all of this a secret because she didn't want to influence me one way or another. But now, finally, upon my ordination she could share her secret and confirm that it was all true. Pretty amazing how she could keep that secret for so long, but she did! I have treasured it ever since and have tried with God's help to live up to that calling and her premonition. Even now, it's probably one of the reasons I am here with you now; that there really is no ending to a pastoral calling as my hunch warned me.

The desire to follow Jesus, to be his faithful disciple and accomplish his mission is really the bottom line. The fact is that everyone of us is called to follow Jesus and share in his ministry. I realize you might not feel like you have a spiritual story like I described but the truth is we all are called by the waters of baptism.

Martin Luther made it clear that we all have been given the same vocation which comes from the word VOICE, as God calls each and everyone of us to be ministers in our service to Him. Luther called it the priest hood of all believers, and perhaps this concept helped to change or reform the church just as radically as all his other proposals. Essentially, Luther reclaimed the principles from the **early** Church where everyone was Christ's disciples, and everyone had the responsibility to carry out the mission of the Church; in other words, continue the work of Jesus.

Jesus warned his disciples that it was not going to be easy. There is bound to be great sacrifice and discipline required to be his disciples. Just as he was committed to go to Jerusalem and face the fate of the cross, they needed to prepare themselves for a similar fate. Isn't that what Jesus was trying to make clear to them; that it was going to require commitment to put God first in their lives, to put God ahead of material possessions, and ahead of their career and even their family? As we see throughout the weeks ahead in Jerusalem, the disciples don't really get it. In fact, even in today's gospel, James and John figured the best way to handle rejection from the people of the village was to just destroy them all; after all they were 'just Samaritans'. Little did they know along the way, Jesus would tell them perhaps his most famous parable called "The Good Samaritan"

Yes! They had a lot to learn. Isn't the same thing true about us? Don't we underestimate both how we have been called and what God requires from us? I wonder if the place to begin is to affirm that by our baptism we are in fact called to be the Lord's ministers and that whatever we do, we need to see it as ministry. However small or insignificant we may think it is, whenever and however we do God's work with our hands and heart, we are fulfilling our vocation and our calling. The second thing we need to remember, over and over again is that we are nourished too, so we are able to follow-through in our commitment to follow Jesus. We receive His body and blood. We receive the Spirit to inspire and guide us. We receive each other to be the body of Christ together.

So today, I invite you to do what I did on the day I was ordained. I affirmed my baptism which called me, and then received communion which fed and nourished me. These are God's gifts for the journey as we join Jesus on the way to Jerusalem; As we too commit ourselves to God's path of life, where we too shall discover the fulness of joy and truly rejoice that God is with us every step of the way. AMEN