

Prayer: Come Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful and kindle in us the fire of your love. Send forth your Spirit and we shall be created, and you shall renew the face of the earth.

O God, who by the light of the Holy Spirit did instruct the hearts of the faithful, grant that by the same Holy Spirit, we may be truly wise and ever enjoy your consolations... (Peace of drawing close to you)

May the words of my mouth and the meditations of all our hearts be pleasing in your sight, you who are rock redeemer and Renewer of us all. Amen.

Good MORNING! Peace be with you!

How is it with your soul? I PRAY it is well, as is mine.

Last week we discussed how we ‘Become People of God’ when God calls and we respond. Each time we respond to God’s call, we are living out our covenant of faith and our identity as a disciple/follower of Jesus. We embody God’s love for the world as we meet the needs of the world and love is poured out. So a quick check-in:

What call did God place on you this week? How did you respond?

The scriptures today offer two responses to God’s call... through Jonah, and through the fishermen by the Sea of Galilee.

Turn to your neighbor and tell them how the fishermen and Jonah were different in responding to God’s call. (30 sec.)

Today, anyone decide they responded the same? No... The first words read today from Jonah 3... The LORD’s word came to Jonah a second time:

Big clue, yet easy to miss.

In short, God called Jonah to go to Ninevah, but Jonah went the other way...directly away from that city, onto a boat that ran into a storm. Jonah went overboard, swallowed by a big fish and after 3 days got spit out and dried out.

Then God called the second time.

Now I’m not suggesting that the best Christians are those who ‘hear and obey’. The truth is there are many who receive a call and don’t understand it. Samuel and Eli are examples of this...Samuel didn’t know God when he heard the call.

Simon Peter may have dropped the nets to follow Jesus, but he didn’t grasp the call and the mission for a very long time.

The key is God keeps calling again and again. God doesn't give up on us, not on you not on me.

Listening and action feed each other as grace forms us into the people of God.

Even when we run the other way, God keeps calling.

God knew that Jonah didn't want the job, didn't like Nineveh, and was likely to hit the bricks—or the waves. So God just says, “Go tell them what I want you to tell them.”

Remember a key strategy when addressing a biblical text is, “Who are we in this story?”

So who are you in these stories- Jonah, Simon, One of the other fishermen?

To be honest, I definitely identify with Jonah. Maybe you are more like the fishermen, hearing something passionate about this invitation and the person who issued it to them. There was something attractive in an indescribable way.

But the true call of the book of Jonah is to be more like the God who sent him; the one who believes in second chances. We can be the one who doesn't give up issuing the invitation, even when the response isn't what was hoped. We can ask again and again; we can invite again and again. We make ready, roll out the carpet, and focus on hospitality again and again.

That's what it means that God didn't give up on Jonah. We don't give up on one another and on the community around us. We are in the business of making disciples who make disciples.

So whether the need is for prayer, or food, or presence, you are living out the mission and ministry of loving God and God's people. You proclaim your faith and your disciple-ness as you embody the servanthood and God's love for the world.

'Take heart, you are not alone' is the message you send when you respond with hands and feet and hearts. Let us also keep inviting others to come & see so that they will meet the God we serve and be positioned to hear the good news.

Let's pray.... (on screen)

Response to the Word

God's word is shared to open our eyes and enliven our spirits.

Thanks be to God.

May it be so...so be it. Amen.

Quicken (verb)

quick-en 'kwi-kən

quicken; quickening 'kwi-kə-niŋ 'kwik-niŋ

Synonyms of quicken

1 transitive verb

a: to make alive : **revive**

b: to cause to be enlivened : **stimulate**

2 archaic

a: **kindle**

b: to cause to burn more intensely

3: to make more rapid : **hasten, accelerate**