

A Few Thoughts for the Hunkered Down

Thursday, November 5, 2020

Time for a Little Adventure?

As Jesus went on from there, he saw a man named Matthew sitting at the tax collector's booth. "Follow me," he told him, and Matthew got up and followed him. —Matthew 9:9

The Lord said to Abram, "Leave your country, your people and your father's household and go to the land I will show you.... So Abram left, as the Lord had told him; and Lot went with him. Abram was seventy-five years old when he set out from Haran. —Genesis 12:1, 4

A few weeks back I led the adult Sunday School in a session on "Spiritual Types," and I again find myself refreshed by this fascinating topic. Just as we have personality types such as introversion and extroversion, we also have differing ways that we perceive and present the Gospel message. The lesson offered four types. There is the one who primarily sees themselves as a **sinner saved by grace**, which is indeed the central theme of the Bible. While all believers agree on this, some take a slightly different angle on their salvation, seeing the believer as an **orphan who has found their home**. This understanding adds an accent on the personal and relational dimension of our walk with God. Still others see themselves as called to be **crusaders**, who must advance the values and justice of Christ's Kingdom on earth. Their understanding of the Christian walk leans heavily toward the radical justice of the Sermon on the Mount and the messages of the prophets. And then there is the **adventurer**, who receives Jesus' call as an invitation to new and life affirming experiences. To the adventurer, sin is that disease of the soul which grinds us down with fear, doubt and self-hatred, but Jesus invites us not only to forgiveness, but to get into the game and to embrace life's challenges and adventures.

While it is not my primary spiritual type (I am a definite "orphan") I have always had a real appreciation for the adventurer. As a young man my faith came alive when in the middle of discouragement and a lack of direction, I read Jesus' invitation to Matthew: *Follow me*. This is a call to adventure, new horizons, risk, and a joyful new life, and ever since then I have treasured the adventure aspect of the life of faith. In fact, I came to understand that our lives must always have an element of adventure if we are to thrive as Christians. When I look back over my life, I can easily see that it was the steps into new adventures that added real joy and fullness to my earthly walk. It was such things stepping into leadership in my college fellowship, pursuing pastoral ministry training, joining the fire department which was next door to my house, running distance races or enrolling in barber school which added real richness

to my life. And of course, there are the more usual, but still great human adventures such as marriage and raising children, and going about the various servanthoods of life. As we step into these adventures God is glorified, we grow in faith and our Lord cheers us on.

Adventure involves stepping out of our normal comfort zones. Churches understand the human need for belonging, assurance and comfort, and sadly they often neglect the other aspect of our faith which should complement all that comfort: adventure! We can be far too good at avoiding all risk, even though it is in our scary steps into new frontiers that we find greatest blessing. *Lunch with Luke* is a classic example of the joy, satisfaction and rich blessing we find as we step beyond our comfort zone and into adventure.

These are tough times when depression is a bigger danger than normal and many spirits are sagging. This is the kind of season when we should be seeking a little adventure! Of course, I am not referring to any kind of sinful thrill-seeking or blatant foolishness. Now is the time to ask yourself, "What new endeavor should I be pursuing, even though it goes beyond the boundaries of my comfort zone?" The adventure may be big or small. Perhaps there is a book you have been meaning to read. How about a renewed discipline in Bible reading and prayer? Dare you organize all your photographs, or write your autobiography? Is there some role in Church leadership to which you need to be stepping forward? And rather than simply step into a role, might there be some special project that you would want to advance in that leadership? Is there a relationship which you need to mend? What household projects are calling your name? Might there be crafts you need to try your hand at, and what neighbors and other recipients might you want to make them for? (And go beyond your usual circle of familiar friends in that distribution!) Is there a fear you need to face down? Is there an endeavor which you have been procrastinating? You may want to meditate upon Matthew 9:9 or Abram's call in Genesis 12:1-4 and ask God, "Lord, to where and to what are you calling me?"

Throughout this pandemic we have become very safety conscious, and this is understandable. Let us be careful with this virus, but let us learn to take risks in other parts of our lives, for now is when we could all use a little adventure.

Blessings,

Pastor Jim

For all the possibilities ahead in this new year make us thankful, O Lord. Give us wisdom, courage, and discernment in the face of so much chaos, despair, and fear. Help us to see how, in our circumstances, we can contribute towards peace, faith and love. And give us the will to translate our desires into actions. —A New Year Prayer from Brother John Charles Vockler