

Today's Gospel is about Jesus' calling of his first four disciples. It is about the first people who were called to hold the job which we hold today. Mark's story is not very elaborate. It is short and to the point. There is a certain note of adventure as the four men leave their fishing business to go with Jesus, but there is not much in the story that seems terribly upsetting.

What the story doesn't tell about is what those men were getting in for by becoming followers of Jesus. To find out what was really in store for them, we have to keep reading. As we dig into the gospels, we discover that being a disciple was not glamorous. In fact, it was downright dangerous.

Later in Mark we hear Jesus say, "Whoever loses his life for my sake and the sake of the gospel will find it." Matthew includes another comment: "Do not think that I have come to bring peace on earth; I have not come to bring peace, but a sword." Those are disturbing statements, especially for those of us who are today's disciples.

He was saying that being his disciple is not an easy job. He was saying that the gospel is a disturbing force in the world which can upset individuals and nations alike. It brings change and new experiences to all who hear it and as we well know, Lutherans do not like change.

But the first disciples were willing to put down their lives. They left their jobs and their family in order to follow Jesus.

Here at Immanuel, we are not asking you to go to that extreme. But we are giving you an invitation. We are giving you an invitation to participate in the ministry here at Immanuel. What we do and how we do it is dependent upon those who participate. Corlene is going to share the same sentiment at our congregational meeting because this is a focus for us this year.

Just as Jesus said to the disciples, he says to each of us, "Follow me and I will make you fish for people." As we follow Jesus, he will help us to fish for people. He will use us to share the gospel with those we meet.

As you listened to the invitation, did Jesus say it would always go the way you planned? Did he say we would not struggle or even suffer? Did he say it would be easy? Did he promise anything outside of forgiveness and eternal life through his own death and resurrection?

The only thing he promised was that he would use us to fish for people; that he would use us to share the gospel. We have no idea of what that will look like or even how it is going to work out.

The life of a disciple is an adventure. What that adventure is like is up to us. I think we participate in ministry because we enjoy it. Some like to help others. Some like to visit. Some like to participate in worship. Some like to talk and listen. Some like to play. Some like to build. It really doesn't matter what you like to do, God will use you in ministry.

Jesus calls you to follow him and God will use you as part of HIS ministry to save the world.