

**The Second Sunday after Epiphany**  
**January 17-18, 2015**  
**John 1:43-51**

*“Being SJLC 2015: Mission Mindset Changes”*

So we're now entering week #2 of **Serving Jesus – Living in Community 2015**, and that means we're continuing to read through this little book, *Joining Jesus on His Mission*. I hope you are enjoying what you are reading, and that it's challenging you in a good way. For me, one of the challenges came through with how chapter 5 in the book began, with this little prayer by Sir Francis Drake, the English adventurer and explorer, written in 1577:

*Disturb us, Lord, when we are too pleased with ourselves,  
When our dreams have come true because we dreamed too little,  
When we arrived safely because we sailed too close to the shore.*

*Disturb us, Lord, when with the abundance of things we possess  
We have lost our thirst for the waters of life;  
Having fallen in love with life, we have ceased to dream of eternity.*

*Disturb us, Lord, to dare more boldly,  
To venture on wilder seas where storms will show your mastery;  
Where losing sight of land, we shall find the stars.  
(Joining Jesus on His Mission, p. 51).*

That's quite a prayer, in my humble opinion, and a pretty powerful one. So, are we ready to pray that prayer and mean what we are praying? Are we ready for some mission mindset changes? As Jesus called Philip and Nathanael in today's Gospel lesson to "Follow me," so he calls us to follow him today, to "dare more boldly" and "venture on wilder seas." The theme for today's message is "Mission Mindset Changes." May the Lord's rich and abundant blessing rest upon the preaching, the hearing, and the living of his Word for Jesus' sake.

There is this calling these going on in today's Old Testament and Gospel lessons. As we think about how God called Samuel in today's Old Testament lesson (1 Samuel 3:1-20), it centered on hearing: "**Speak, Lord, for your servant hears.**" There were certainly some pretty big mission mindset changes that God was going to do concerning Eli and his household. Because he did not restrain his sons who were blaspheming God, the Lord God declares that the house of Eli will be punished. While Eli begins to recede into the background, "**all Israel from Dan to Beersheba knew that Samuel was established as a prophet of the Lord**" (1 Samuel 3:20). As we think about how Jesus called Philip and Nathanael in today's Gospel, it centered not so much on hearing, but on seeing. After Philip tells Nathanael that they've found the One who whom Moses and the prophets wrote, Jesus of Nazareth, Nathanael utters that very snarky and cynical comment: "**Can anything good come out of Nazareth?**" (John 1:46). Philip doesn't get into an argument over this, but simply says, "**Come and see.**" In other words, "Put your preconceived notions aside here. Don't take my word for it. Come and check it out for yourself." And after meeting Nathanael, Jesus says to him: "**Before Philip called you, when you were under the fig tree, I saw you**" (John 1:48). Jesus, as the all-knowing and all-seeing Son of God, knew Nathanael long before he ever actually met him in person, just like he knows each one of us. But wait, there's more! Jesus says to Nathanael, "**Truly, truly, I say to you, you will see heaven opened, and the angels of God ascending and descending on the Son of Man**" (John 1:51). We heard about the heavens being opened last Sunday at Jesus' baptism, when the Holy Spirit descended and then rested upon Jesus in the form of a dove (Mark 1:9-11). When Jesus says of Nathanael, "**Behold, an Israelite in whom there is no deceit!**"

(John 1:47), this is a reference to Jacob who deceived his father, Isaac and got the blessing that was to go to his brother, Esau (Genesis 27). After fleeing for his life, Jacob had a dream of a ladder that went to up heaven with angels ascending and descending upon it (Genesis 28:10-22). And now, Jesus makes clear that he is that ladder, that bridge, that connection between heaven and earth. He is the One who has come to fulfill everything that was written in the Law and the Prophets. He is the One who opens heaven for us through his life-giving death upon the cross. A whole lot of mission mindset changes going on here!

So what are mission mindset changes that need to happen for us today? Are we ready to pray that prayer of Sir Francis Drake, “Disturb us, Lord...”? Are we ready to be disturbed? Remember what the point of this book, *Joining Jesus on His Mission*, is: “This is an important change in mindset for most U.S. church members: Jesus is inviting me to join him on his mission. He does not give me a mission to do *for* him. Jesus is on a mission and he invites me to come *with* him” (p. 30). Friends, this is huge and I think unburdens us from thinking that we’re the ones who have to do all the heavy lifting. It’s the other way around, as the author, Pastor Greg Finke writes: “If I go *for* Jesus, I am doing the work and seeking the results of what I can accomplish. When I go *with* Jesus, he is doing the work and I am seeing the results of what Jesus can accomplish. One is hard, the other is fun. One is exhausting, the other is energizing. One causes me to worry (“Did I do everything correctly?”), the other causes me to be at peace (“Let’s see what Jesus does next.”). One tempts me to force things with people, the other invites me to keep loving people” (p. 30). This is a big mission mindset change!

I don’t know about you, but I was really convicted with chapter 6 in the book, “An Inefficiently Effective Strategy,” which focused on Jesus’ secret weapon, which was simply that he enjoyed hanging out with people and he wasn’t in a hurry. And because he spent time with people he was able to engage them in conversation when the time was right. It goes without saying that we are very time-conscious and are forever trying to figure out how to squeeze more time, more productivity, more output into our day. But maybe one of the big mission mindset changes that we have to deal with is following Jesus’ own example of valuing relationship over efficiency. The goal is not to make someone your project here. Who wants to be somebody’s “project?” The goal here is to value that person as a child of God even if they have no idea what that means, loving them enough to hang in there with them. At the end of the day, isn’t that what Jesus has done for us? Loving us when we were unlovable, hanging in there for us, not giving up on us, and choosing to go the way of the cross for us, giving his life for us. How efficient is that? Pretty messy, too. But that is what love looks like through the lens of Jesus, and this is the starting point for mission mindset changes.

So, the river has moved and the bridge that used to span the river doesn’t really work anymore – like the Choluteca River Bridge in Honduras. If you don’t know what I’m talking about, read chapter 3 in the book! We can be dismayed, angered or saddened by this, but the reality is that it’s a new day for church in America today. What will we do? Follow Jesus! He’s already out there in our neighborhoods, schools and places of work and he’s waiting for us to join him on his mission. Come back next week as we focus on chapters 7-10 in the book, “Seeking What’s Already Happening.” Amen.