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| **The Lessons Appointed for Use on the** | http://www.lectionarypage.net/Art/Newshield.gif |
| Third Sunday after the Epiphany |
| Year B RCL |

Jonah 3:1-5, 10

1 Corinthians 7:29-31

Mark 1:14-20

Psalm 62:6-14

**The Collect**

Give us grace, O Lord, to answer readily the call of our Savior Jesus Christ and proclaim to all people the Good News of his salvation, that we and the whole world may perceive the glory of his marvelous works; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.*Amen.*

**Old Testament**

**Jonah 3:1-5, 10**

The word of the Lord came to Jonah a second time, saying, “Get up, go to Nineveh, that great city, and proclaim to it the message that I tell you.” So Jonah set out and went to Nineveh, according to the word of the Lord. Now Nineveh was an exceedingly large city, a three days' walk across. Jonah began to go into the city, going a day's walk. And he cried out, “Forty days more, and Nineveh shall be overthrown!” And the people of Nineveh believed God; they proclaimed a fast, and everyone, great and small, put on sackcloth.

When God saw what they did, how they turned from their evil ways, God changed his mind about the calamity that he had said he would bring upon them; and he did not do it.

**The Response**

**Psalm 62:6-14**

***Nonne Deo?***

6 For God alone my soul in silence waits; \*  
truly, my hope is in him.

7 He alone is my rock and my salvation, \*  
my stronghold, so that I shall not be shaken.

8 In God is my safety and my honor; \*  
God is my strong rock and my refuge.

9 Put your trust in him always, O people, \*  
pour out your hearts before him, for God is our refuge.

10 Those of high degree are but a fleeting breath, \*  
even those of low estate cannot be trusted.

11 On the scales they are lighter than a breath, \*  
all of them together.

12 Put no trust in extortion;  
in robbery take no empty pride; \*  
though wealth increase, set not your heart upon it.

13 God has spoken once, twice have I heard it, \*  
that power belongs to God.

14 Steadfast love is yours, O Lord, \*  
for you repay everyone according to his deeds.

**The Epistle**

**1 Corinthians 7:29-31**

I mean, brothers and sisters, the appointed time has grown short; from now on, let even those who have wives be as though they had none, and those who mourn as though they were not mourning, and those who rejoice as though they were not rejoicing, and those who buy as though they had no possessions, and those who deal with the world as though they had no dealings with it. For the present form of this world is passing away.

**The Gospel**

**Mark 1:14-20**

After John was arrested, Jesus came to Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God, and saying, “The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has come near; repent, and believe in the good news.”

As Jesus passed along the Sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and his brother Andrew casting a net into the sea—for they were fishermen. And Jesus said to them, “Follow me and I will make you fish for people.” And immediately they left their nets and followed him. As he went a little farther, he saw James son of Zebedee and his brother John, who were in their boat mending the nets. Immediately he called them; and they left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired men, and followed him.

As a parent on the delivery end, and as a child on the receiving end, I personally have used or heard the phrase, “[Child’s name], I *SAID…”* as if the child did not hear you the first time, or second, third or fourth time. For some, that last call has the child’s middle name inserted. As if the parent had to differentiate from all the other John Smith children they had, as in *“*John *Adam* Smith!*”*

And as much as we often perceive God to be like a parent, God is decidedly more patient than any parent could possibly be, and isn’t THAT good news. (I can speak only for myself, I intentionally had my children on the young side, because as I said then “Patience is a virtue, but it’s not one of mine.” I did not run long on patience. Although being a parent did actually give me some patience which I didn’t have before.)

So when we are called by God, the readings today teach us two things. One is that the call of God is patient and the call of God is different.

The old testament reading for today is a selection from the story ofJonah. Most people in today’s world, if they know nothing else about Jonah, they know that Jonah spent some time in the belly of a big fish. Of course, we have no way of knowing if this is folklore, metaphor, but it probably isn’t history, but that does not mean the story is not true. It teaches us true things about God and about humanity. The selection comes after God called Jonah the first time, and Jonah thought, “yeah, that doesn’t seem like a good decision to me… you want me to go to Nineveh, I’ll go to Tarshish.” So he sets off in a boat the other direction, seas rise up, the crew end up throwing Jonah overboard. When the seas calm after Jonah is gone from their boat, they praise the one and only true high God. Jonah gets swallowed by a big fish. In the belly of the fish, Jonah still has the nerve to rail against God. Yeah, … God is patient.

And so the fish eventually spits Jonah out on the dry land. And God tells Jonah a second time, “go to Nineveh” our story this week, because Jonah clearly did not hear him the first time. God is exceedingly patient. And Jonah thinks better of it the second time, and goes.

This patience which can at the same time conveys a sense of urgency around the work given to us by God is what I think Paul gets at in this passage from the first letter to the people of Corinth. Yes, it is true that Paul and the early Christians had an expectation that the second coming of Christ was going to be soon, and particularly in their life times, but the urgency is to get it right sooner rather than later so that we are in line with God’s work. This same urgency is heard in Jesus’ own words, “The kingdom of God is at hand.” In whatever time frame God chooses to act, “The present form of the world is passing away” is always a true statement—for God is always doing a new thing. This new thing is filled with patience, and does not at all change the perspective of Paul’s that the “time is growing short,” because as Christ acts in the world, the new thing is changing, and the present form is passing away.

When we recognize God’s call, we become aware that God’s call is also just plain different than a human call.

The old Testament shows us that the call of God is not limited to God’s chosen people Israel. It only takes Jonah as a messenger wallking through the streets of Nineveh, evidently not even mentioning God, for the people to turn from their evil ways and for the king of Nineveh to put on ashes and sackcloth in order to repent.

The Gospel gives us the account of Jesus’ call of his first disciples. This is God in Jesus calling. There is no second calling, Jesus doesn’t say anything we would consider persuasive, evidently in this case the call is so compelling it “takes.” What there is is a promise to be changed. Yes, the two sets of brothers were fishermen. The translation we often receive is that “I will make you fish for people,” as if the action or job-description of fishing were the same. Jesus, however, is recasting his first disciples. His promise is more a change of identify. The better translation receives fishing for people as a new identity. A literal translation might read, “Follow me and I will make you to become fishers for people.” There is a big difference between “I will make you fish” and “I will make you to become fishers.”

In this case, discipleship is an identity, not a task. Jesus calls his disciples to a new identity.

The real kicker is that you are called too; you are called to a new identity. You have been called to be a disciple. You have said “yes” to God, and that means you want to be changed. You don’t want to be the same. You too want to become fishers for people. You want to actually follow Jesus in your prayers and in your life in ALL That you do.

The words stick, the call is patient and still it is decidedly different. And so it is as heard in the psalm for this week, again a very different effect.

“God has spoken once, twice have I heard it, \*  
 that power belongs to God.”

Go fish.