

Why the Church?

Disclaimer - Why the Church?

- **Eating lunch with Johnny Honeycutt at Ivy's Cafe in Whiteville**
 - He suggests the salad.
 - To be healthy or sustain his business
- **Disclaimer - Why the Church? - My Salary?**
 - My sermon today has nothing to do with my salary or giving to the church, but I must admit how easy it is as a pastor to answer why the church for my own security.
 - Instead I want to answer why the church through God's calling upon our lives.
 - We will begin by looking at how Jesus called his first disciples.

Read the Text - Matthew 4:18-22, NLT

- **18** One day as Jesus was walking along the shore of the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers —Simon, also called Peter, and Andrew—throwing a net into the water, for they fished for a living. **19** Jesus called out to them, “Come, follow me, and I will show you how to fish for people!” **20** And they left their nets at once and followed him. **21** A little farther up the shore he saw two other brothers, James and John, sitting in a boat with their father, Zebedee, repairing their nets. And he called them to come, too. **22** They immediately followed him, leaving the boat and their father behind.

The Text - Matthew 4:18-22, NLT

- **Chapter 3** - Jesus gets baptized; **First Half of Chapter 4** - Jesus is tempted in the wilderness.
- **2nd Half of Chapter 4** - Jesus leaves the wilderness with God's calling in his soul and begins his earthy ministry.
 - Jesus begins by calling others to help him.
- **v. 18** - In God's calling upon our lives, Jesus meets us where we are.
 - **Peter and Andrew were at the Sea of Galilee, and Jesus notices them.**
 - Before Jesus calls you, Jesus notices you.
 - Before Jesus calls the Church, Jesus notices the people of Church.
- **v. 19** - God's calling comes out of who you are.
 - **Peter and Andrew are fishermen, and Jesus calls them out of that profession into fishing for people.**
 - They have a unique perspective of fishing for fish, and they are invited to use that perspective to fish for people.
- **v. 20** - God's calling is upon us now.
 - **Peter and Andrew immediately left their nets and started to follow Jesus.**
 - Now is the time to respond to Christ.
 - Now is the time to accept your calling and identity in Christ.
 - Now is your time to drop your nets at once and follow Jesus.
- **v. 21** - We are not alone in answering God's call.
 - **Jesus finds James and John and they too accept Jesus' call to fish for people.**
 - To help others find their faith and life in Christ.

Transition Story

- Brian McLaren, author and former pastor, wrote a poem about a young woman visiting her priest.
 - Listen to this poem and look if you find yourself in it.

“De-Baptist Me” by Brian McLaren (<http://brianmclaren.net/archives/blog/a-poem-that-struck-a-nerve.html>)

- "Please de-baptize me," she said.

The priest's face crumpled.

"My parents tell me you did it," she said.

"But I was not consulted. So Now, undo it."

The priest's eyes asked why.

"If it were just about belonging to

This religion and being forgiven,

Then I would stay.

If it were just about believing

This list of doctrines and upholding

This list of rituals,

I'd be OK.

But

Your sermon Sunday made it clear

It's about more.

More Than I bargained for. So, please, De-baptize me."

The priest looked down, said nothing.

She continued:

"You said baptism sends

Me into the World to

Love enemies. I don't.

Nor Do I plan to. You said it means

Being willing to stand Against the flow. I like the flow.

You described it like rethinking Everything, like joining a Movement.

But I'm not rethinking or moving anywhere.

So un-baptize me. Please."

The priest began to weep.

Soon great sobs rose from his deepest heart.

He took off his glasses, blew his nose, took

Three tissues to dry his eyes.

"These are tears of joy," he said.

"I think you are the first person who ever

Truly listened or understood."

"So," she said,

"Will you? Please?"

Transition Thought

- **Have you ever felt like this woman?**
 - If not, then I as your current pastor and your pastors before you have failed you.
 - The Christian faith is full of paradoxes that don't make sense.
 - The faith is easy because we do not and cannot earn it; faith is a gift.
 - The faith is hard because we must surrender our lives daily; faith takes sacrifice.

The Church - More than a Feeling

- Question:
 - **Do you know people who are good at being friends and others who are not?**
- Shauna Niequist - "Why It Doesn't Matter How You Feel about Your Friends" (<http://storylineblog.com/2014/09/04/why-it-doesnt-matter-how-you-feel-about-your-friends/>)
 - Shauna and her husband were talking in their car and commented about a particular person who is really good at being their friend.
 - Then they also begin to think about a couple of other people who they love very much but are not so good at being friends.
 - **The Difference**
 - *"And, of course, that led us into a conversation about all the ways we don't always DO what good friends DO either. Because it doesn't matter how you feel in your heart about your friends—what matters is showing those feelings through words and actions."*
 - **Two Questions:**
 - Is this true about our friendships?
 - Is this true about our faith in Christ?
 - **Is this true about our friendships?**
 - In the article, Shauna says that friendships happen when we reach out to people with our words and actions instead of just our feelings.
 - Since moving here, Tammy and I have become friends with Jonathan and Katie.
 - We have enjoyed watching our children play with each other.
 - We have enjoyed getting to know each other.
 - I can say that I feel that Jonathan is my friend, but what would it mean if I confess that I haven't spent time with Jonathan apart from the quick hello on Sunday morning for the past 6 months?
 - **Is he still my friend?**
 - **In one way - yes.**
 - Because we have friends that we don't see often that we can see and pick up right where we left off.
 - **But on the other hand - no.**
 - Especially, if we only live minutes away from each other and rarely see each other.
 - Shauna argues that it doesn't matter how you feel about your friends; it matters how you share life with your friends.
 - It matters that people know and see how much you care about them.
 - **Shauna Niequist states,**
 - *"Because it doesn't matter how you feel in your heart about your friends—what matters is showing those feelings through words and actions."*
 - Two Questions:
 - Is this true about our friendships? - Yes, being a friend means acting on our feelings about those we care about.
 - **Is this true about our faith in Christ?**
 - Is our faith in Christ based on how we feel about Christ or is our faith in Christ based about how we share life with Christ, how we act in Christ?
 - **If we looked at some who call themselves Christian, we could assume that faith in Christ is more about our feelings than our actions.**
 - But this is an incomplete understanding of what it means to follow Jesus.

“De-Baptist Me” by Brian McLaren

- If it were just about believing
This list of doctrines and upholding
This list of rituals,
I'd be OK.
But
Your sermon Sunday made it clear
It's about more.
- **The Christian faith is about more than our feelings.**

Read the Text - 1 Timothy 1:19, NLT

- **18** Timothy, my son, here are my instructions for you, based on the prophetic words spoken about earlier. May they help you fight well in the Lord's battles. **19** Cling to your faith in Christ, and keep your conscience clear. For some have deliberately violated their consciences; as a result, their faith has been shipwrecked.

The Text - 1 Timothy 1:19, NLT

- **v. 19** - *“Their faith has been shipwrecked.”*
- How can someone shipwreck their faith?
 - If we don't cling to our faith in Christ and keep our conscience clear, we can shipwreck our faith.
 - When we approach our faith in Christ based on our feelings instead of our actions, we have shipwrecked our faith.
 - When we approach our faith in Christ as a list of doctrines to believe and rituals to do, we have shipwrecked our faith.
 - But when we explore how our faith empowers our actions, we are following Christ.

Final Image - My Grandfather's Tackle Box - **Go Down**

- Jonathan's Frog Lure and My Grandfather's Frog Lure
- Grandfather's Death - 2008
 - He did not give me his tackle box to sit on a shelf.
 - He gave me his tackle box and fishing pole to catch fish!
 - God has not called us to be fishermen and women to sit at home, at work, and in your pews.
 - God has called you out to be the Church, to share the gospel with those around you.
 - If you are not fishing for people you are not following Christ because Christ is truly a fisher of people.
- **Why the Church?**
 - **To teach each other how to fish for people!**

Closing Prayer