

From the Rector's Study, the Rev. Bryce Sangster

Sunday, January 14th, 2024, Epiphany II

1 Samuel 3:1-20, Psalm 139:1-5, 12-17, 1 Corinthians 6:12-20, John 1:43-51

Paul says in Corinthians today, all things are lawful for me, but not all things are beneficial.

And Jesus in John's Gospel today, follow me and you will see greater things than these...

A while ago I came across the term: dry drunk. This may not be the proper use of the term, but I think of it as a person who has just stopped drinking and has not made any other changes in their lives. The idea is to replace the times they would drink in the past with some other more productive activity. To perhaps take the family to some activity instead of staying home alone and not drinking. This results in the person focusing on not drinking, so the drinking still dominates their thoughts.

⁴³ 'When the unclean spirit has gone out of a person, it wanders through waterless regions looking for a resting-place, but it finds none. ⁴⁴ Then it says, "I will return to my house from which I came." When it comes, it finds it empty, swept, and put in order. ⁴⁵ Then it goes and brings along seven other spirits more evil than itself, and they enter and live there; and the last state of that person is worse than the first. So will it be also with this evil generation.' Matthew 12:43-45

That is why there is a benefit to following Jesus, because we will move from thoughts and activities which are lawful but not so beneficial to more beneficial activities.

But it is not always easy, and there is a challenge to our beliefs. *Can anything good come out of Nazareth?*

We can always find a reason not to. An excuse which discredits. We don't like the idea of giving something up. There is a cost to doing so, and that cost may be high. I remember asking a fellow with a drinking problem what the worst time when he felt he could not get away from drinking. His answer, at the end of the workday on Friday when his buddies asked him to come out with them for a drink. He felt he would be betraying them if he just said no and didn't come up with a good reason not to go with them. He did not want to lose their friendship.

An Anthony de Mello story from One Minute Wisdom:

There was nothing about the master that any but the keenest I would see as out of the ordinary. He could be brightened and depressed when circumstances warranted. He could laugh and cry and fly into a rage. He loved a goodly meal, a nodded verse to a drink or two and was even known to turn his head at the sight of a comely woman.

When a traveler complained that the master was not a *holy man*, a disciple set him right: it is one thing that a man be holy. It is quite another that he should seem holy to you.

Do you believe, you will see greater things. Who knows what the benefit will be and what those greater things will turn out to be.
That is the risk we are challenged to take.

Paul also says; *do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you?*⁹

This is both a burden and a blessing. That we are restricted by the rules.
The Christian comedian, Mike Warnke, as said, that people have said Christianity is a bunch of rules, does and don'ts. His answer, if you spend your time doing the do's you ain't going to have time to do the don'ts.

Although Jesus says to Philip, follow me, and Philip says to Nathaniel, come and see, These two go together. To see for ourselves and not just a one-time event.

We tend to think our beliefs are neatly contained and yet there are questions which keep coming up, and we can answer them when they come up.

This is part of the definition of following. That following means that we haven't arrived yet.

Amen

May the Christ who walks on wounded feet
walk with you on the road.
May the Christ who serves with wounded hands
stretch out your hands to serve.
May the Christ who loves with a wounded heart
open your hearts to love.
May you see the face of Christ in ev'ryone you meet,
And may ev'ryone you meet see the face of Christ in you. Amen.