

# Coffee to Go | Epiphany 3

## SUMMARY KEYWORDS

skills, fisher persons, God, nets, Jesus, gifts, calling

## SPEAKERS

Blake Smith, Karin Peter

### **Karin Peter** 00:27

Welcome to Coffee to Go, where we center ourselves in the scriptures, seasons and holy days of the Christian tradition. I'm Karin Peter, and I'm here with Blake Smith. We are your hosts, and we welcome you on the journey. So our question, as always is where are we with Jesus this week? And, we are still in Galilee. And apparently we have gone down to the lake shore, to quote the hymn in our *Community of Christ Sings*, we are near the shore. It is the third Sunday after Epiphany, so we are still in the glow of the season of light. And last week, the light shone on Nathaniel and his call, and today the light illumines the perspective of some fishermen Jesus meets in Galilee. So let's overhear that conversation. Blake?

### **Blake Smith** 01:20

All right, well, our Gospel passage today comes from the Gospel of Mark, the first chapter, the 14th, through the 20th verses. Now, 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's Zebedee in the boat with the hired men and followed him. Why does this matter for us?

### **Karin Peter** 02:18

Why does this matter? Why does this story matter? Well,

### **Blake Smith** 02:22

At first glance, it seems like, wow, I mean, these guys no questions asked, I, you know, have to wonder what I just drop everything and go with this itinerant preacher. But I think part of it is that they could probably heard some stories already. This probably wasn't their, their first, it might be their first physical encounter with Jesus, but my guess is that the stories had been passing. Anyway, last week, you know, when we were looking at the passage for last week, Philip had said to Nathaniel, Come and see. And Nathaniel had been a little resistant as we remember. But this week, Jesus calls this group of fishermen, to discipleship, actually to be fishers of people, and invites them to come and see this new thing that God is doing in the world, in this place. And it, of course, reads like Jesus just showed up and

said, Hey, guys, come on, let's go. And they did. Maybe, if it were today, it would be more like a Facebook post, hey, or a meetup group, we're gonna meet y'all come.

**Karin Peter** 02:26

Or just a text ... show up now.

**Blake Smith** 02:31

Just kind of a casual acquaintance. But again, I think, you know, there probably was some prior knowledge because they do they, they drop everything and follow. And what's important, really about the passage is that we hear this "fishers of people," and it takes us, in our mind, at least I'll say does, you know often for me, and I think it's been pretty traditional to do so that we take this phrase, and we immediately make this missionary connection. But I think it's important to acknowledge that it's more than that here. It is a signal, if you will, to Simon and Andrew, that they already have the skills they need to proclaim and participate in God's purposes. And so essentially, what Jesus is saying, you Come follow me, I'm going to, I'm going to take the skills you already have, he names them, your fishermen, I'm going to I'm going to make you fishers of people. I'm going to take what you have, and I'm going to teach you to use them for God's healing, restorative purposes in the world because the Kingdom of God has come near. What that means for me in this passage is that God can use what I have. For them, it was their fishing ability. For me it might be I'm going to make you a speaker to people, or I might make you whatever, whatever gifts and talents that I have received. God, God can use that in the midst of what God is doing in our world. And so the message to us and to you, our listeners is, you don't have to be worried about, oh, well, I don't know how to fish, so how am I got to do this, God can take whatever it is God has gifted you with, and use that for God's purposes in the world, because we are all created with a diversity of gifts to meet a diversity of needs, in bringing about the advent of the kingdom of God. And so how God is revealed in this Epiphany season in us will be different for each of us. But we can rest assured that this reference here, I think, has a little bit more to do with, again, taking that which we already have, and magnifying it for the purposes of making God's Kingdom present. And, James and John left their family and their livelihood as well. And it seems like there was almost a sense of urgency, you know, I would assume that we would, and that I would in this case, like, well, let me tend to this, and let me put these nets up. I mean, if you're a fisherman, you know how much cost and time and energy is put into these things. And so you want to take care of them. But there was such a sense of urgency that we might ask, you know, what sense of urgency did they experience? What made them willing to just pick up and move on? And then we turn that as we consider our own questions for ourselves this week, by asking, When have I sensed God, or God's Spirit calling to me? How did I respond and would I respond, as James and John and Simon, Simon, excuse me and Andrew did, or what I respond differently? And what I respond differently today than I might have a year ago? There's all different dimensions of that. Also, what skills do I already have that might be used to share the inbreaking of God's reign and way in the world? Because, again, God has gifted us and it's not that we have to learn new skills, we simply need to use the gifts that we've been given for God's purposes. And finally, what do I need to leave behind to continue the next phase of my spiritual journey? What is that "net" that might be holding me back?

**Karin Peter** 07:37

What gets left in the boat? Yep, yep. Well, as we're navigating the new calendar year, those are probably really good questions to ask ourselves, for going forward, especially in Community of Christ, where we're in a transitional time. And what do we need to leave behind? And what are the gifts? So how can we experience this this week? So, I'm thinking this week, maybe we need to all celebrate our fishing skills. And those are the skills we already possess that can demonstrate God's loving presence to others. Sometimes we forget that we can use our secular skills, our scholarly skills, our business skills, our arts and crafts, skills, our athletic skills, we can use all of those to demonstrate God's loving presence to others. So each day this week, when you're out and about or when you're on the phone or at the computer, ask yourself, How can I be a fisher person in this moment? How can I make God's reign the inbreaking of God's purposes of mercy, justice, love? How can I make that real right now in this moment? Is it with words of kindness? Is it to write a gentle note to someone? To put a lovely chat in the Zoom chat box during a meeting or is it to finish a colleague's task or simply offering a pleasant greediness smile to someone who might otherwise go unacknowledged, like clerks and the road crew sign holder people and all the people in our life that don't get acknowledged? What can you do? One moment each day this week, to demonstrate the in breaking of God's love into the world.

**Blake Smith** 09:29

Yeah, Karin, thanks for clarifying that on the skills because sometimes, I know I think about skills as physical activities, but that might be just things that are characteristics, personality traits that we have, that we utilize to make someone feel welcome or included or whatever. So there's so much so much to that. Thanks for helping reframe that to think outside the box a little bit.

Our blessing today comes from James O'Donohue, in *To Bless the Space Between Us*.

As you go, may you know the wisdom of deep listening, the healing of wholesome words, the encouragement of the appreciative gaze, the decorum of held dignity, the springtime edge of the bleak question, may you have a mind that loves frontiers, so that you can evoke the bright fields that lie beyond the view of the regular eye? May you have good friends to mirror your blind spots. May this call be for you, a true adventure of growth?

Well, thanks for joining us again here this week at Coffee to Go. As always, we invite you to join us next week for the next part of our journey through the liturgical seasons and holy days of the Christian tradition.