

Create disciples, not members.

Am concerned that people sit in the pews and listen, but don't take what they've heard and then go out and look to apply that during the week.

Guess it really comes down to Active vs. Passive faith. Active vs. passive participation....in the development of our faith lives...our becoming disciples of Jesus Christ.

Our faith in the Episcopal church is an active one. We go to GREAT LENGTHS to make our faith our participation in worship easy—low bar to entry: HECK ALMOST ALL THE WORDS YOU SAY ARE IN THE BULLETIN. Two books was too complicated...for the newcomer.

Love the Great Amen here. And baptism.

Sing the psalm like you are saying the Great Amen. Sing the communion hymns like you are shouting your WE WILL for baptism.

If I'm honest:

All preachers want to be like Jesus—especially as this passage today portrays Jesus—Look a new teaching and with AUTHORITY.

But the truth is that preaching with authority isn't about the preacher only. God has given us ALL the authority to preach, the authority to take control of our faith development--the freedom to grow in our faith lives...or not.

I don't want us to be a mile wide and an inch deep in our faith—I want us to grow deep roots so that whatever the winds of life blow on us—tree in a big wind storm—we are stable, we can bend but not break. [worry about those who do not have those deep roots: argument with an atheist at a bar].

St. Martin's, I'd like us to explore two models:

Model 1: Come to church, sit and hear the lessons, sit through the sermon and then go out and look for that sermon to make sense in our life.

Model 2: Throughout the week, examine our lives and see how our LIFE relates to the scripture, the sermon, the hymns, the communion, the confession, the absolution and all the rest.

First model = passive faith development

Second model = active faith development

Second model makes disciples, grows deep roots of faith, engages us with our faith daily, not just for 70 minutes on Sunday morning.

Second model where examine our lives throughout the week and see how our LIFE relates to the scripture, the sermon, the hymns, the communion, the confession, the absolution and all the rest....is what being a disciple is about.

Our faith is not a reflection of our life, our life is a reflection of our faith.

If you are relying on the sermon or the worship on Sunday morning to carry you through the week, it will more times than not, fail at carrying you through the whole week. Faith and church are not things that only happen in our lives for an hour on Sunday morning. As an old clergy friend of mine is fond of saying: "Coming to church is not a decision you make every Sunday...it is a decision you make once and then live into the rest of your life."

I think about--and sometimes even worry about--whether or not what we've done here in this room for an hour and 10 minutes of your life will have ANY EFFECT WHATSOEVER IN YOUR LIFE and stick with you or be forgotten by the time you get to your car in the parking lot.

If you rely on Sunday morning to be the sole recharge of your faith St. Martin's has failed you. Our faith is not about relying on others solely. Our faith is about being given the freedom to search out and find God EVERYWHERE—to find and be found by God in Christ all OVER the place. That's called having depth of faith.

Now, if that depth of faith is there throughout the week you will come to church amped up already. Truly will be able to "CELEBRATE" something like Holy Eucharist. [in BCP the person who says the Eucharistic Prayer is titled the "CELEBRANT" for a reason]

Sunday is the glorious explosion of what has been brewing inside of you all week. Image of a Champagne bottle...pretty bubbly to begin with...but what happens when you give that bottle a shake before you open it—explosion. Sunday should be that shake. Call it the shake of faith—call it the Holy Spirit, or what you find in the reconnection with friends, or even when you are moved by the power and authority of the preacher, but FEEL that shake.

We have the bubbly already inside of us as beloved children of God...baptized into the new life that God gives us through Jesus—we've already been given the keys to the kingdom...we're already carbonated and effervescent as is. But where is that shake, where is that bubbly faith that is inside of you?

Some people do come to church not to be shaken up, but to settle and NOT be shaken up by life. The church has, since the first days of Jesus' ministry been about healing and restoration. That healing and restoration have almost all been initiated by those who need restoration seeking out and being found by Jesus...and BELIEVING that Jesus can heal them, save them, make them whole again.

Witness the demoniac in the synagogue from today.

Comfort the afflicted, afflict the comfortable.

Being a Christian requires an active participation in faith. Not passively sitting and hoping it somehow sinks in. What does an active participation in our faith even look like?

Engaging with our faith looks like:

- All of those large images out in the Narthex and the hallway that leads to Parish Hall.
- People coming together during the forum hour to cook chili that will be served at Paul's Place to hungry and homeless of Baltimore.
- Volunteering to teach Sunday school;
- Taking on the challenge of reading the bible over the course of a year together with fellow parishioners
- Like picking turnips out in a muddy field at First Fruits Farm.
- Engaging our faith looks like stopping and asking someone honestly, HOW ARE YOU? And then waiting for them to give you their full reply.
- Setting aside the time in your busy, busy life to do one or ALL of the wonderful things in the Green Sheet.

If we don't engage with our faith—get our hands sometimes literally dirty for and with our faith, we won't grow into the faithful people that God NEEDS us to be in the world that is increasingly UNFAITHFUL.

Seek out your faith. Look for your faith. Go out looking for God and expecting that God will show up (spoiler alert: God is already there waiting for you to notice).

Come to church EVERY SUNDAY to get that shake if that's what you need to have happen...but then don't you dare leave here without then taking that shake and exploding with your faith out into the world...at the very least you can be that shake for someone else. Help THEM to know what you feel, what you question, what you wrestle with, what you love, what sets your heart on fire.

AMEN.