

Sermon: Are You Hungry? 1-22-23

Scripture: Matthew 4;12-23, CTW: Psalm 15

Hymns: 668, 337, 600

Theme: The true follower can only be found in the life of the one who is Committed... When Jesus calls us – He’s looking for commitment & sacrifice...He looks for those who hunger for Him day and night.

## **I. Introduction: Blessed are Those Who Hunger**

The Bible says, “Blessed are those who hunger...” I figured if I talked about food all morning, we would all get really hungry and would all realize how blessed we are...

Did you know the Bible said that? Well, it does if you take it out of context... What the Bible really says in Matthew 5: 6 is, “Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.” This is a part of the Beatitudes, the words Jesus spoke from His sermon on the mount...

### **A. But you know, I’m not so sure that many Americans hunger... I’m afraid that we’re so blessed that we’re spoiled...**

- Did you know that each American produces an average of 3-1/2 pounds of garbage per day...
- We produce 5 million extra tons of trash between Thanksgiving & New Years Day...
- The waste generated each year in the U.S. would fill a convoy of 10-ton garbage trucks 145,000 miles long – that’s halfway to the moon...
- According to the United Nations stats, the average American consumes:
  - 5 times more than a person living in Mexico
  - 10 times more than a person living in China, and

- 30 times more than a person living in India

Let's face it: Americans are spoiled! We have the best of everything... The average supermarket has over 100 brands of cereal to choose from!

**B. Unfortunately, we are not only physically spoiled in America. I think we are spiritually spoiled...**

Every Sunday, thousands of Americans make their weekly journey to their favorite church... There is certainly no shortage of churches... It seems there is a church on almost every corner... I know there are 4 within a two-mile radius from here!

We have the best facilities money can buy, great choirs, well-trained pastors, authors & teachers... We've got people like Max Lucado, Chuck Swindoll, Charles Stanley, Dr. James Dobson and Tony Evans...

We have the best teaching materials available in the best Christian bookstores in the world... We have Christian radio stations, Christian Television and Christian Music Concerts... We have Christian books at our nearest Wal-Mart...

Most of us have computers with e-mail and the internet that allow us to connect to more Christian resources than we could ever digest...

We've got the Bible in more versions than Baskin Robbins has flavors... And how could I forget, we've got Bob the Tomato & Larry the Cucumber – The Veggie Tales...

We've got it all – everything imaginable to fill our hunger & thirst for righteousness... Yet, we don't seem to have have much of an appetite...

We're so spoiled that we are not hungry & thirsty any more... Look around you this morning... There may be a church on every corner, but they're half empty... Have we lost our appetite for God? **Psalm 34:8** says, "O taste and see that the Lord is good!

**C. The Psalmist knew what he was talking about when he wrote, "O taste and see that the Lord is good."** God is so good! Always has been & always will be! The problem is, so many Christians today fill their lives with "junk food" that we're not hungry for God!

We'll talk for hours on the phone, but we don't have the time to pray... We'll read the latest novel or the newspaper, but we won't read the Bible... We'll sit for hours in front of the television, but it's too much effort to sit in church for an hour... Friends, we've lost our appetite for God... and we need to get it back... but it takes commitment...

**II. This morning, our scripture tells us about Jesus calling His first disciples...** I want us to look at our scripture again and point out a few things to you...

**A. Focus on the Fact that "they immediately followed Him."**

Notice in verse 18 & following, it says "As Jesus walked by... He saw two brothers, Simon Peter and Andrew... casting a net into the sea – for they were fishermen... And He said to them, "Follow me, and I will make you fish for people..." **Immediately they left their nets and followed Him..."**

Here we have Jesus walking down the beach and He comes upon a couple of fishermen, casting their nets... So He stops & talks... Now I would guess that they talked for several minutes, maybe hours... The Bible doesn't say this, but I would think that the

conversation made them at least curious – and from there, they were convinced – and from there, they were committed... For Jesus said, “Follow me... and immediately they left their nets and followed Him...”

And as we keep reading, we see that from there, Jesus walked further down the beach until He came upon two more brothers, James & John... and they were mending their nets with their father Zebedee... And we’re told that Jesus called them & immediately, they left the boat & their father, and followed Jesus...

**B. Understand their ordinary nature...** These men were just ordinary people – fishermen working on the Sea of Galilee... They were ordinary businessmen – like a farmer, insurance salesman, teacher, mill worker – they had families, they had homes – they had taxes to pay...

But the Bible says, “Jesus called them – and immediately, they left their nets, they left their boats, James & John even left their father – and they followed Jesus...”

Isn’t that amazing! Right there on the spot, they just decided to give up their life & follow Jesus... Yes! That’s amazing! But friends, THAT’S WHAT WE’RE CALLED TO DO!

**C. The only difference between us & them, is COMMITMENT...**

There was a hen & pig discussing the farmers upcoming birthday... The hen suggested it would be nice if they gave him some bacon & eggs for breakfast... The pig thought for a moment and said, “There’s only one thing wrong with giving him bacon & eggs... for you it only requires a **contribution**, but for me it requires **total commitment**...”

You see, Jesus calls us too! We’re ordinary people, just living our

lives day to day, doing whatever it is we do... And Jesus walks by, He sees us, and He calls us – and it's the same calling, "Follow me," and yet, some of us aren't committed to His calling...

We don't follow because we're not hungry & thirsty for righteousness – because we're not committed... And it's so sad!

### **III. What Do Other Churches of Today Look Like?**

**A. Let me share story with you about some church people...** It's about 4 people in the church whose names were Everybody, Somebody, Anybody, and Nobody...

The church had some financial responsibilities and Everybody was asked to help... Everybody was sure that Somebody would do it... Anybody could have done it... But you know who did it? Nobody... It ended up that Everybody blamed Somebody when Nobody did what Anybody could have done...

Then the church grounds needed some work, and Somebody was asked to help... But Somebody got mad, because Anybody could have done it, and after all, it was really Everybody's job... In the end the work was given to Nobody, and Nobody did a fine job...

On & on it went... Whenever work was to be done, Nobody could always be counted on... Nobody visited the sick, Nobody gave his time, Nobody shared his faith... In short, Nobody was a very faithful member...

Finally the day came when Somebody left the church and took Anybody & Everybody with him... Guess who was left. Nobody! Isn't that a sad story?

**Mike Slaughter, the author of the book "Real Followers" says that:**

## **B. Jesus calls us all... but we fall into 3 categories...**

The **Curious**, The **Convinced**, and the **Committed**... Which category do you fall into?

The disciples were beyond the curious... they were convinced that Jesus was for real... and they were committed...

I think the difference in Lifestyle is apparent... The curious followers just show up on occasions... They come to church just often enough to keep up with "who's who & what's what..." They may read their Bible once a week... they may throw up a prayer just before they go to sleep... They do the minimum amount they can do & that's all!

The curious don't want to get involved, they don't want to get their hands dirty – they think if something needs done, let somebody else do it – they don't want to make a sacrifice or be committed – they're just curious...

It's like following a fire truck... We want to see what's going on – but only from a distance... don't ask me to help put the fire out – I'm not going into a burning house – I'm just a bystander... I'm just curious...

## **C. Then we have those who are convinced followers...**

They know "who's who & what's what," they know it's important to attend church & to read their Bible... and they know how important a prayer life is... They know what it means to be a follower of Christ & they're convinced that that's the right thing to do...

When a convinced Christian is called to make a sacrifice – they'll do it, but you still have to convince them to do it...

“Convinced Christians must move in the direction of becoming a **committed** Christian... and that’s what Jesus calls us to be – He calls us to be **Committed Followers...**

**D. You see, committed followers are true followers...** It’s the true followers that make a difference... They’re the ones that keep us going from week to week... They’re the ones that come to church & bring their family & friends... They’re the ones studying the Bible & praying for the Church & community... They’re the ones serving when there’s a task to be done... They’re the ones who make the sacrifices...

The true follower can only be found in the life of the one who is Committed... When Jesus calls us – He’s looking for commitment & sacrifice...He looks for those who hunger for Him day and night.

Can you imagine what the world would be like if people would just **Obey the call of the Father...** If people would go where He wants us to go, and do what He wants us to do... What an impact that would have on the world...

Mission fields would be full... Churches would be packed... Bible colleges would be overflowing... Darkness would be overcome by the light... It would be a perfect world... Unfortunately, it’s a world that we won’t experience until we get to heaven...

#### **IV. So Where is Our Church In All of This?**

##### **A. Important Things Are Happening here at Trinity**

Look at all God has allowed us to achieve in the past year or so! I have told you that I’m committed to Trinity, but that’s relative...I am the Pastor, I should be! I want to know if you’re committed to Trinity... You see, it’s not about me... it’s about you, it’s about the Lord – it’s about you & the Lord...and the wonderful

plans He has for us.

Are you committed? Are you hungry? Jesus has called us to come be a part of the Kingdom of God... He calls us to be true followers... more than just curious or convinced – He calls us to be committed followers... Have you committed your life to His calling?

**B. I am excited to be here at Trinity because I believe that God has great plans for us...** But He wants us to get focused – He wants us to get true – He wants us committed... Committed to His Word, committed to His Church... and committed to His people... God has plans to move us all forward, closer to Him. Will we follow?

**Think about the times of Jesus' ministry...Not everybody followed Jesus... There were some that were just not interested** – they didn't have the time – they weren't willing to make sacrifices and give up things – they were comfortable right where they were - and therefore, they refused to follow...

Friends, I think we're at a point to where it's important – it's urgent that we all take stock of where we stand...

God needs to know where we stand...as he moves us forward. Are we hungry? Anyone can praise Christ – but it takes **courage** and **unwavering focus** to **follow** Him...

Amen? Let Us Pray...