

Pentecost 16, 8/9/2013 at Holy Trinity

Luke 14:25-33

How do your family values concerning the love commandment hold up with this morning's reading from Luke's Gospel?

Is Jesus acting like "a loose cannon" with shots going in all directions without a thought for the consequences?

Surely, he must have intended to shock the listeners?

Some scholars think that this broadside is directed against family power that can have members of the family living in a cage with no way out.

Such family power restricts growth and brings death instead of life.

On the other hand, Jesus is calling people to a discipleship that will lead to a life of learning and growth with Jesus as the teacher and God as God, not family.

You will say that families are not like that but some certainly are.

Sometimes it is blatant abuse by a parent of the child, by siblings, by someone else coming into the household.

On other occasions, it is family dictating terms in relation to outside relationships, or marriage, employment, education or simply for "peace" within the family.

Being part of such a family suppresses self-exploration and any sense of self-worth.

It brings with it a closed mind, eyes not trained to see and ears not trained to listen.

To break with this kind of family must not leave a vacuum.

Jesus is saying that the vacuum is replaced by God.

This journey with God can mean the way of suffering expressed in the words "Take up your cross" and follow him, that is, in the life and death of Jesus.

This is not a call to fanaticism that means that the person has "tunnel vision" and who run roughshod over other people in the cause the has led to fanaticism.

It is a call to inclusiveness that is prepared to stand up and be counted and to face the consequences.

In other words, if you want to be my disciple you had better count the cost.

It is an “all or nothing” proposition: it is to stay with the journey until the very end.

We have this in two stories that are about strategic planning.

It is no good wanting to build a tower without having worked out the cost and having the money to pay for it.

The other is about a king with eyes on an offensive against another king.

It is no use embarking on such an offensive without having first an adequate army and the wealth to keep the army fighting fit.

The point of these stories is that people in who are in such situations need to know what they are doing and counting the cost.

The call to be a disciple of Jesus Christ is a call to be on a journey that will take you to the end of your earthly life.

The call is not to have a “feel good” life.

It is a call to be involved in a radical, inclusive life and love that will mean living the life of the God of love as a man or woman of God, and living in solidarity with all who share that love.

It is not just about me: it is about us and it is about them.

It is about making tough choices that will cost us to be a disciple of Jesus Christ.

For St. Francis of Assisi it meant becoming a fool for Christ.

For Julian of Norwich it meant living in a small room attached to a medieval church.

For Mother Teresa it meant living a life serving the lepers of Calcutta.

Each made tough choices and stayed with the choices in their own journey of discipleship of following God through Jesus to be a woman or man of God.

Your call to discipleship may not involve any of these things but you have a call to discipleship that will lead to a journey to the love of God in Jesus.