

## THIRD SUNDAY AFTER THE EPIPHANY

---

The Rev. J.D. McQueen, II - All Saints' Episcopal Church, San Diego, CA

We all know that we need all of the rain we've been getting – the grass in our backyard had been dead and brown for so long that it seems like every time Sarah and I even *look* at it now, one of us makes a comment about how green it is.

- Of course, thankful as we are, we're also at least a little scared of the rain, especially the kind of rain we're in the middle of right now.
- It's the kind of heavy downpour that makes us wonder just what kind of shape our gutters are in, whether our drains are clear, and so on.

We can sometimes experience the way Jesus moves in our lives in a similar way.

- Intellectually we know that we need him.
- We may have even begun to feel the way our soul longs for him when he seems absent.

But we're also a little scared of what he might ask of us or what he might bring into our lives.

- Is he going to overflow the spaces that I've created for him?
- Is he going to make a mess of something?
- He can get us thinking about the places and things that make us feel comfortable secure, making us wonder whether those shelters are really that sturdy.

It's easy to feel something like that stirring when we encounter a passage in the gospels like today's.

**January 22, 2017**

Now first off, it might be a little less scary if we remember that this isn't the first time Jesus has met Peter, Andrew, James, and John – the other gospels make that clear, as we saw last week.

- So they've spent time together before, but those were during things like festal gatherings and holidays.
- They've come to know who Jesus is and probably have had some experience of his preaching and teaching.

But this is different – now Jesus has come right into the midst of their everyday lives.

Jesus doesn't want to be on the fringe of their lives, he wants to be at the center.

- So he doesn't pull them aside quietly after services at the synagogue or drop by their houses after work.
- Jesus doesn't come at the easiest or most convenient time for them – he comes and calls them at the best time, and he deals with us the same way.

Jesus is always coming to meet us and calling us to follow him more closely today than yesterday.

- So of course he'll overflow the spaces we've set up and take us beyond our hopes or expectations.
- But we shouldn't be worried or anxious, we should praise God for that.
- Because it means that Jesus doesn't just want to be a part of our lives – he wants to lift us into his own divine life.

Think about what Jesus might be calling you to do to draw nearer to him.

- Is there a sin or failing that you continually struggle with? Make a firm resolution that from now on you're going to cut it out of your life, and ask for the grace to know how to do it.
- Are you praying and reading the Bible every day? Make a commitment to starting.

**January 22, 2017**

- Is there a question or decision that you're wrestling with? Lay it out before God, and ask, "What do you think I should do?"

Start looking for the dry places in your life and letting Jesus in, and I promise you it won't be long before you're amazed by how green they become.