Four and a half years ago I took a step that would change everything in the life of my family when I entered into studies at the Episcopal Divinity School. And that August, the week before I went to Cambridge, I did what any good seminarian would do…..I went to Las Vegas.

I suppose I should explain myself a bit. For about twelve years, I had been working as a Clinical Consultant in the world of corporate healthcare. The company I worked for was meeting in Vegas and all of the team I had belonged to would be there. I had left the company in June and because of the way that we worked all over the country in teams, we were only together as a full division on a few occasions a year. There were many people I considered dear friends and colleagues that I hadn’t the opportunity to say goodbye to in person. I proposed to the senior leadership that I would take care of my own transportation and accommodations, if they would allow me to attend the social portions of the program. So, there I was in Sin City for one last fling with my friends.

On the final day of the convention the clinical team had their section meeting. I was invited to take part and I welcomed the chance to be a part of the team one last time. We were in the midst of lively round table discussions and about a dozen of my colleagues got up and left the room. I took notice but didn’t think much about it. About 10 minutes later we reconvened as a large group and listened to a presentation from one of the workgroups.

Suddenly, the PowerPoint presentation morphed into a scene from the movie Sister Act. Sister Act is one of those films that I can pass by as I channel surf and immediately pick up the storyline as soon as I see a few seconds of it. This scene was the one when Whoopi Goldberg, a lounge singer running from the mob and the nuns from The Holy Order of the Little Sisters of Our Mother of Perpetual Faith, sing *“I will follow him”,* for the Pope. All of a sudden a group of my colleagues, all dressed as nuns and priests came dancing into the room (one of them even in a bishop’s miter) and did a perfect parody of what was taking place on the screen above them and singing the theme song for my new life. I didn’t know whether to laugh or cry, so I did both! I’ll never forget it.

That’s along way around to get to answering Jesus’ call to follow him, ……but you have to admit, it was kinda fun getting there!

Mark wastes no time getting Jesus’ ministry going. You can hear it in the rapid-fire sequence of this first chapter of the gospel. We are only 14 verses in and already Jesus has been announced as “the Son of God”, he has been baptized by John, has been driven by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted for forty days by Satan, and John the Baptist has been arrested.

There is a sense of urgency to what Mark needs to tell us,….. this is the *“good news of Jesus Christ, the Son of God”*. Even Jesus gets directly to the point…no build-up, no prelude*….“The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has come near”*. Jesus has things to do, hearts to change, hands to join with, feet to move….time is passing and he is looking to call others to the work of the kingdom.

The calling of the four disciples today in Mark is short and to the point; *“Come follow me,”* Jesus calls*, “and I will make you fishers of people”*. And immediately, (Mark uses that word a lot!), immediately, brothers Simon and Andrew drop their nets and follow. Same thing with fisher-siblings James and John. *“Follow me”*, Jesus calls, and BOOM, they say *“goodbye Dad*”, and off they go.

It’s interesting that the little Holy Moly video that the children are seeing today in church school combines a few version of the calling of the disciples from Mark and Luke. You see, things aren’t so immediate for Simon Peter in Luke’s gospel. There was a bit more convincing that needed to take place there. Surely the fishermen sensed there was something special about Jesus, but it was not until he produced massive catch for the fishermen that they believed in the power of this itinerant preacher.

I have to say I find comfort in that bit of wariness Peter has in Luke’s version. I was always a bit skeptical with the story we hear today from Mark. It’s not that I don’t believe that there are some people, perhaps many of you here today, that can hear the call and know immediately that it is meant for them to follow Jesus wherever he may take them. And for those of you who are like me, take heart in knowing that this is the very beginning of Peter, Andrew, James and John’s journey with their teacher. They, like us, have many lessons to learn and much stumbling to do. Often they just don’t get what Jesus is about. Mark, more than any of the other gospelers, paints the disciples as pretty clueless a great deal of the time.

But today, these fisher folk, God bless them, have jumped with abandon into the deep end. Did they sense who was standing on the shore with them? Had they heard about his preaching the kingdom before he came their way? Was there already a yearning within them that God had planted there?

St. Augustine knew about that yearning within us when he wrote, “*our hearts are restless until we find our rest in You, O God”*. For Augustine, this is about locating that inherent gift of faith and willingness planted deep within us; a readiness and longing to trust and follow, not only walking along with the person of Jesus, but also embodying his teaching in the hope of living out the Kingdom of God. Jesus calls us to repent and follow him out of our sin and into God’s promise. There is a particular expression of sin that resonates with me. It is the Greek, *hamartia*, which translates as misorientation. It is a state where our hearts are aimed at something less than God’s hopes for us. I love the image of my heart being reoriented and redirected; of being turned toward the heart’s true North in Christ. In Christ we find our home.

I believe we are disciples not simply because of our own desire, but because God in Christ Jesus has claimed us as his own. The people that Jesus calls to follow are not the powerful, or the learned, or even the religious. We see again and again in the Gospels that the people that seek out Jesus and ask him what they need to do to get into the Kingdom of God are often the ones that have the hardest time with the answer they receive. The call is to discipleship is not found in tasks; it is a transformation our very identity; a journey of the spirit that moves us from our head to our heart.

I was with a group of friends recently and one remarked that by the very fact that we are human, we live in a perpetual state of imperfection. To which another replied that by the very nature of our imperfection, we then have been given the gift of being in a perpetual state of possibility….a perpetual state of possibility. *Isn’t that just delicious?*

I think that it’s important for us to remember that becoming a disciple takes a both a moment and a lifetime. Within the time of fulfillment that Jesus proclaims at the beginning of his public ministry lays God’s possibility and promise for humanity and all Creation. It is *Kairos*, the Greek term referring to a space of significant, right or critical movement, ripe with the possibility of what lies ahead for our discipleship in the here and now.

Take time this week to pause and see if you can sense that seed of yearning God planted deep within you. Where might Christ possibly be calling you? Remember Simon Peter, Andrew, James and John. We never quite know, even when we enter into our carefully chosen vocations and careers, where they will eventually lead us. God’s call is always into an uncertain future, but there **is** the guarantee of possibility, reorientation and transformation. What is the shape of discipleship that God calls you toward today?