Commentary on Luke 5:1-11
The Kingdom of God & the Cross
Fr. Herman Acker, September 28, 2025

in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit amen.

Christ is Among Us! He is never shall be!

This Gospel today is about the kingdom of God and at the center of this kingdom is the Cross, the Cross of Jesus Christ. But remember we're talking about the Kingdom and how did we start out the Liturgy this morning? What were the very first words the priest said, "Blessed is the kingdom of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit." This Gospel reading has a context as all words have contexts and they take their meaning from the context in which they're found. And in order to read them correctly of course you need to keep them in that context. Immediately preceding this passage we had the healing of a blind man in two stages. Jesus heals and touches the Man's eyes and he sees a little bit but he sees in a kind of a fuzzy way. He says, "…people look like trees. I can kind of see them but you know they don't quite look clear. They're a little foggy." Then Jesus touched his eyes again and the man was able to see completely and without hindrance. Then immediately we have Peter's confession. Jesus says to the disciples, "Who do people say that the son of man is?" Some say this and some say that. While some say the other. Jesus said, "Well what do you say, Peter?" and Peter said, "You are the Christ."

Immediately after having heard that response, Jesus said, "The Son of man is going into Jerusalem and he's going to be abused. And he's going to be mocked and ridiculed and he will be crucified. Then he will rise from the dead." And Peter said, "That will never happen to you. Never!" Immediately Jesus said, and the text is clear. Notice the words before all the Disciples, in other words it's a public proclamation. It's not a hidden or secret thing. He says before all the Disciples, "Get behind me Satan for your mind is on the thoughts of humanity and the human being. Not on the thoughts of God." So Jesus rebukes him publicly, not privately. Because this Gospel of the Kingdom which has the Cross as its Center is public; it's not hidden, it's not secret, it's not mystical. It's a public proclamation. It's as public as Jesus crucifixion was public, in the middle of a Crossroads. Naked hanging on a cross, with a sign above his head reading, "Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews." That's where he reigns. That's where he sits on his Noble Throne representing in his Father.

Well, after calling Peter Satan, Jesus gives the passion prediction and he talks about who will be great among you and who must be servant and so on and so forth. And then we have this teaching that we heard today in the gospel. Jesus tells us to deny ourselves; to take up the cross. But we do this deliberately and to follow Christ to Golgatha. In other words, follow him to the shame and take up the Cross. This Cross that we take up is not just something that's imposed upon us. It's not a malady. It's not a sickness, you know. We talk today about well so and so has a lot of crosses to bear. That's not what the Bible is talking about, because nonbelievers suffer. Non-believers have toothaches just as well as believers have them. It's not a cross; it's just a byproduct of being in this world. But we

are to deny ourselves. In other words, we get rid of our human opinions about what the kingdom is all about.

Things appear to us along certain lines. We see powerful people that can command great respect and we imagine that the Kingdom of God must be something like that. As a matter of fact, you know what the earliest form of human government was after the small tribal units? Do you know what the very first form of human government was? It was kingship. we actually have a word for it; it's a Sumarian word. They called The King, "The Lugal." Spelled, "L" "U" "G" "A" "L". The Lugal which means, "great man," "mighty Man," "powerful man." What was his function? To lead his people in battle, to defend their resources and to fight on
behalf of that community. That's what the king was to do. The very earliest form of human government outside of the small localized tribal nomadic groups, a "great man," "a powerful man" who would crush his enemies and trample them underfoot, ostensibly to protect his people. Though we know how that did not work out many times, because the king would very often turn and trample his own people while they were applauding him, at the same time. Which is rather an ironic thing but it's written in the books this is the king the great man.

Well Jesus says that if you want to be a part of this Kingdom, you need to change your definition of the king and the definition of what this kingdom is all about. For Jesus says, "Whoever would save his life will lose it." In other words, if you're seeking salvation, solace and security from any human being, any institution, any ideology or anything other than God himself, you are being duped! And you're duping yourself in the process because God's Kingdom works along different lines. It follows different rules so whatever you have in your mind you need to get rid of it when you're dealing with the Lord Jesus. You need to deny yourself. And when your will comes in conflict with God's Will, and you can only know God's Will by knowing His Word. I'm assuming you believe that if your will is in conflict with God's Will, you must deny yourself; even if it seems unreasonable to do so.

As you seek to be secure in this world, you have ideas about how that is to be achieved. But you must seek solace in God. You need to deny your human ideas and accept his Godly ideas of what this Kingdom is all about. You need to know what kind of King you're dealing with. It's the king that is going to die. It's the King that is going to be killed and put to death by the earthly king, while the people cry out, "Crucify him! Crucify him! Crucify him!" The very ones he came to save. Just like we do when we don't deny ourselves and seek to have our will, when it is in conflict with His Will.

Like loving your neighbor treating all people with respect even if you don't like them why because God told you to this is the kingdom of God we're talking about we're not talking about the way the rulers of this world today or in any time think we're talking about how God thinks and we need to take this cross on this denial of self as I've mentioned deliberately for the sake of the Gospel and if we take it up deliberately for the sake of the Gospel we will save ourselves by means of that very
gospel for what does it profit a man to gain the whole world and loses life doesn't make any sense but every day that goes by someone is losing their life because they're seeking to

save it they're seeking to save you remember we're talking about the kingdom of God and who can save you only the king can save you your ideas which get you attached to all these other Idols all these other ideologies cannot save you they will leave you high and dry at the end you need to put your faith in the
king you need to realize that he is your lord and as we deny ourselves our ideas and exchange them for his ideas about how to think and live in this world we take up our cross we do it deliberately remember it's not a malady it's not a sickness now when one gets sick or one has a malady one may have to submit of course but the malady is not the cross because the malady comes upon you against your will will this is something you deliberately put yourself into you climb up on the cross and accept
crucifixion it's like Jesus in the garden he didn't want to die on the cross did I don't think theologically that's not going to help you listen to the words in the text Father take this cup from me but not my will your will be done deliberately taking upon himself what was otherwise inevitable why was it inevitable because he was living according to the teaching of his father and when every when anyone lives according to the teaching of God the Father they will suffer persecution and since it's going to
happen anyway and you've already started on that path to to obey God accept the crucifixion because at the end of the crucifixion comes life and if you think you can have life in any other way you will lose your life the gospel is very clear and so you follow him all the way you started on the path and you follow him to goala you follow him to the place of the skull where he will be ridiculed and he will be blasphemed and he will be criticized for not fitting into the system and if you want to know what the
system is about just read the scriptures who rules this world well you say God rules the world yes ultimately God rules the world he even rules the devil but more approximate to us who rules this world the prince of the power of the air the spirit that is now at work in the sons of Disobedience Paul says the very ones that on the day of judgment will be punished and thrown into the Lake of Fire because God's kingdom cannot be thwarted and his will will in fact come to pass so we deny ourselves according to the
teaching according to his will we take up our cross deliberately and we follow Christ to disgrace and to the crucifixion just as he did and remember whoever is ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation of him will the son of man also be ashamed when he comes in the glory of his father with the Holy Angels remember I started out saying that this is a gospel of the Kingdom it's about the kingdom listen to these two passages because this word to Evangelion the gospel in
its noun form which I just quoted and also in its verbal form have the same meaning it's good news and this good news did not start with the gospel of Mark it didn't start in the gospel of Matthew L or John it actually started at the beginning of the Bible but I'm going to go to Isaiah this is what the gospel is about how beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him who brings good news there it is who publishes peace who brings good news of Happiness who publishes publishes publicly
proclaims salvation who says to Zion and hears the punchline your god reigns and the parallel passage is in the gospel of Mark 1 verse 15 Jesus preached after coming from the 40 days in the wilderness saying the time is fulfilled and the kingdom of God is at hand repent and believe the good news where is that good news proclaimed which is the kingdom we heard it in the very last verse of this Gospel reading today the Lord Jesus said

there are some standing here who will not taste death before they see that the kingdom of God
has come in power flip some pages in The Gospel of Mark and where do you see that power you see it on the cross as Jesus hands are outspread nailed there and a centurion a slave of the Roman Empire looks at Jesus right in his face and he says behold this man is the Son of God in other words he is the king and he's reigning from his throne which is the cross that's our king that's our Salvation he's the Savior and the Roman emperor in the first century would put up Stone monuments that would be proclaiming to
evangelium the good news of the Kingdom because he was the one who was supposed to bring the pox Romana he was the one who was supposed to bring Salvation Jesus supplants Caesar but I wonder if some of you have a different Caesar in your hearts and not the true Caesar that will bring you victory over your enemies that will bring you salvation this Caesar says deny yourself take up your cross deliberately and follow him to golgatha that's where we're headed may God grant us this Victory through this Gospel of
the kingdom in the name of the father and of the son and of the Holy Spirit help us save us have mercy upon us and keep us oh God by thy Grace

Link to Sermon - https://youtu.be/pVlm2GmAFCo?t=5346