

Pentecost 24 Sermon  
Year A 2023  
November 12, 2023

As we gather today for the Kirking of the Tartans, we turn our hearts to the Gospel of John, specifically in the passage of John 1:35-42. This scripture brings us into the profound moment when Jesus begins to call his disciples, and it beckons us to reflect on the joys and challenges of answering that divine call.

Imagine the scene by the Jordan River. John the Baptist is standing with two of his disciples, and as Jesus walks by, John points to him, declaring, "Behold, the Lamb of God!" The two disciples, Andrew and another who is not named, immediately start to follow Jesus. Jesus notices them and turns, asking a simple yet profound question, "What are you seeking?" This question, my friends, echoes through the ages to each one of us today.

Being called by Jesus is a joy beyond measure, for in that call lies the promise of purpose, of a life transformed by love and grace. Andrew and his companion, in their response, reveal the openness of hearts yearning for something greater, something that transcends the ordinary. They answer, "Rabbi, where are you staying?" It's not just about a location; it's a plea for deeper connection, a desire to abide with the Master.

Yet, in this joy of following Jesus, we cannot ignore the challenges that come with it. Following Christ means stepping out of our comfort zones, leaving behind the familiar shores of our lives to venture into the unknown waters of faith. It means

embracing sacrifice and selflessness, mirroring the sacrificial love of the Lamb of God.

Moreover, in this passage, we see the beauty of unity despite diversity. Andrew, having encountered Jesus, immediately seeks out his brother Simon and exclaims, "We have found the Messiah." There is an inherent call to share the good news, to invite others into the transformative journey that Jesus offers. This call unites us across our diverse clans, transcending our differences and reminding us that in Christ, we are one family.

The tartans some of you wear today represent the rich tapestry of individual clans, each with its unique history and traditions. Yet, as followers of Jesus, we are called to a higher unity, a unity that surpasses the boundaries of our earthly distinctions. Just as Andrew brought Simon to Jesus, we are called to bring one another into the loving presence of our Savior.

The challenges of unity are real. The world often emphasizes our differences, promoting division and discord. But the call of Christ urges us to look beyond the superficial distinctions and recognize the shared humanity beneath. In this unity, we find strength, for a cord of three strands is not easily broken. Our individual threads, woven together in the fabric of Christ's love, create a tapestry that is resilient and beautiful.

Let us be honest about the challenges of unity. It requires humility, a willingness to listen and learn from one another. It demands that we set aside our pride and

prejudices, recognizing that we are all sinners saved by grace. The call of Jesus challenges us to break down the walls that separate us, to build bridges of understanding and compassion.

In this congregation, we are reminded that God's kingdom is not limited to a specific tribe or clan. It is a kingdom where people from every nation, tribe, and language come together in worship. Our call is not just to coexist but to truly love one another, recognizing the divine image in each person we encounter.

As we celebrate the Kirking of the Tartans, let us remember that our true identity is not solely how we differentiate ourselves from one another. Our primary identity is found in our relationship with Jesus Christ. It is a call to discipleship that transcends the boundaries of time and culture, inviting us into a community of believers that spans the ages.

May the joys of following Jesus be evident in our lives, as we experience the transformative power of His love. May the challenges of unity be met with the grace that flows from the Cross, inspiring us to build bridges of reconciliation and understanding. And may the diverse threads of our tartans serve as a visual reminder of the unity we share in Christ, a unity that celebrates the richness of our diversity.

In the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Amen.