

The Rev. Michael C. Fedewa  
Epiphany 2 Sermon  
January 20, 2008

Isaiah 49:1-7  
1 Corinthians 1:1-9  
John 1:29-42

When my sons were home for the Christmas holiday, we had our own Fedewa Family Film Festival. We went to 5 movies, *I Am Legend*, *Kite Runner*, *The Great Debators*, *American Gangster*. These movies were very different, but, I can say that they all left us quite satisfied. It was time well spent, and movies that we quite enjoyed.

The fifth film we watched was *No Country for Old Men*. *No Country for Old Men* was intense. It was also very violent. Overshadowed by the violence and intensity, were the internal struggles, the internal reflections of the main character. The movie ended in a way that left me wondering the point of the movie. At the end of the movie we all just sat, staring at the screen, very unsatisfied. I suspected I was missing something.

In the week after the movie, I checked out the tape version of the book, *No Country for Old Men*. It was just as intense and just as violent as the movie, but the book captured the internal struggle of the main character in a way that the movie could not. At the end of the book, I was very satisfied. At the end of the book, I called my sons and told them that the book was excellent, and suggested strongly that they read it as well.

What was the difference? The main difference I think is the length of the book and the length of the movie. The movie was just over two hours. The taped book: 7 hours. For the movie, I went into the theatre, and after two hours, the movie was over. For the book, I stayed with it for over two weeks. I spent two hours with the movie. The book remained part of my life for the better part of two weeks.

As I listened to the Gospel this morning, I was struck by the fact that there is a lot of staying and remaining in the Gospel. The Spirit descends and remains on Jesus. The disciples ask Jesus where he is staying. He invites them to come and see where he is staying and they remain with him for the day. This theme is central in John's Gospel. Come, Stay, Remain, Abide. Jesus becomes most fully known by those who stay and remain with him. Those who stay and remain with Jesus discover that he is the one Anointed by God. Those who stay and remain with him discover in Jesus that which they are looking for.

This is the first invitation that Jesus offers in John's Gospel. He offers it to the disciples and he offers it to us. If we stay and remain with Jesus, we discover that he is God's anointed. If we stay and remain with Jesus we discover what we are looking for.

How do we stay and remain with Jesus? We stay and remain with Jesus by joining in worship, by sharing his body and blood in the Eucharist. We stay and remain with Jesus by taking time in the week for prayer. We stay and remain in Jesus by taking time to study. We stay and remain in Jesus by serving the poor. When we do these things, we find his presence in our life. When we do these things, we discover what we are looking for.

At the center of our readings this morning is also the theme of call. Isaiah speaks of the servant who is called by God before he was born. He was called before his birth to be light to all the nations. Through the servant, God will call all the ends of the earth to share salvation. Paul is called to announce to the Good news of God's love to the Gentiles, to the people of Corinth. The people of Corinth are called to be saints. The disciples are called to come and stay with Jesus. Andrew calls his brother Simon to come see Jesus. Those who are called are invited to share the fullness of life that comes in fellowship with Jesus. Those who are called are invited to come and find that which they are looking for.

This call, this invitation is offered to each of us as well. God invites us to be saints. God invites us to share the fullness of life that comes when we have fellowship, when we stay and remain with Jesus. God invites us to find in Jesus that which we are searching for.

That which we are searching for is celebrated in the Eucharist we share each Sunday. In that Eucharist we are united more deeply with one another and with our God. In our Eucharist we are united with Christians around the world. In our Eucharist we are united with men and women of all nations and all races of the earth. This is the unity we strive for as we pray this week for the unity of all Christians. We pray for Christian unity, so we might better be a light to all nations.

As Christians find unity, we become a source of hope for the unity of all the children of God. This is the unity we strive for as we remember the life of Martin Luther King Jr. Dr. King is honored by our nation and by our faith communities because he gave his life seeking justice, seeking reconciliation between the races, between those who are rich and poor. Dr. King is honored by our nation and our faith communities as one who answered the call of God. Who came to Jesus, who stayed and remained with him. As one whose witness invites us all to deeper unity and fellowship with each other in Jesus.

At the end of the last movie of the Fedewa Family Film Festival, *No Country for Old Men* left us all unsatisfied. We were hoping for more.

In truth no movie could ever give us what we were hoping for.

That is the message not only of today's readings, but really it is at the heart of the Good News of God.

In Jesus God invites us to abide in a country that is for all men. A country for all women. Young and Old. Rich and Poor. All nations. All faiths. All are called. All are invited. All. All. All.