IN NOMINE JESU

ST. MT. 4: 12-23

AS I THOUGHT ABOUT & MEDITATED ON THIS SCRIPTURE, ONE WORD, USED 2 X'S IN 4 VERSES, KEPT COMING AT ME LIKE A BOLT OF LIGHTNING: "& IMMEDIATELY THEY LEFT THEIR NETS & FOLLOWED HIM," & A LITTLE LATER: "IMMEDIATELY THEY LEFT THEIR BOAT & THEIR FATHER & FOLLWED HIM. I THINK OF LIGHTNING BOLTS & THUNDER CLAPS - I THINK OF MICROWAVE POPCORN - INSTANT REPLAY ON T.V. - PUSH BUTTON READ-OUT ON COMPUTERS - HIGH-SPEED ZEROXING & PHOTOCOPYING. I THINK OF THE FIREMAN CATCHING A CHILD IN MID-AIR IN CHICAGO - THE PARALYZING SNOWSTORM IN THE BIG APPLE OR THE FLASH FLOODS IN VIRGINIA. I THINK OF THINGS THAT PRODUCE AN INSTANT RESPONSE - THE HUMAN DESIRE FOR INSTANT GRATIFICATION....MARY ANN & I REPEAT THE SAME N. Y.'S RESOLUTION EVERY YEAR - FROM THE NIKE PROMOTION: "JUST DO IT!" TO WHICH MARY ANN ADDS THE WORD "NOW!" "JUST DO IT NOW!" IF YOU SEE A DISH THAT NEEDS TO BE PICKED UP OR WASHED, "JUST DO IT NOW!" - IF CLOTHS NEED TO BE PICK UP OR WASHED - IF THE FLOOR NEED TO BE SWEPT - IF THE TALBE OR DESK NEEDS TO BE CLEARED, "JUST DO IT NOW!" NOW I CONFESS I AM STILL WORKING ON SOME OF THIS LIKE GOING THROUGH THE STAK OF PAPERS ON MY DESK, BUT I LIKE THE RESOLUTION. IT IS A VISIBLE DEMONSTRATION OF OUR COMMITMENT & LOVE FOR EACH OTHER -- THAT WE AR PULLING TOGETHER IN THIS THING CALLED MARRIAGE.

WHAT I WANT YOU TO TRY TO IMAGINE -- MAYBE YOU HAVE EVEN EXPERIENCED IT IN YOUR OWN LIFE -- IMAGINE THE TREMENDOUS MAGNETIC FORCE JESUS HAS IN THE LIVES OF PEOPLE. ASK YOURSELF, "WHY DIDN'T THESE FOUR FISHERMEN EXPRESS SOME HESITATION -- LIKE JONAH DID & MOSES DID & ISAIAH & JEREMIAH DID? JUST IMAGINE THESE GUYS -- SWEATY & STINKING FROM THE FISH -- IMAGINE THEM TOSSING IT ALL ASIDE & FOLLOWING JESUS TO BE MADE "FISHERS OF MEN." & CAN YOU IMAGINE THE REACTION OF ZEBEDEE - JAMES & JOHN'S DAD - HOW HE FELT OR WHAT HE SAID WHEN HIS SONS LEFT HIM TO MEND THE NETS ALL BY HIMSELF? WAS HE MAD? SAD? GLAD? ....WHATEVER THE FAMILY TRAUMA MIGHT HAVE BEEN, THE CALL OF JESUS WAS CLEAR: "FOLLOW ME & I WILL MAKE YOU FISH FOR PEOPLE!"

IF EVER THE SONG WERE TRUE, "YOU LIGHT UP MY LIFE" IT HAD TO BE TRUE FOR THESE DISCIPLES -- & IT IS STILL TRUE FOR US TODAY! THERE IS NO OTHER PERSON IN THE WHOLE HISTORY OF THE WORLD WHERE THE PHRASE IS MORE TRUE - "YOU LIGHT UP MY LIFE" - EVEN IF IT MEANS THE "FOOLISHNESS OF THE CROSS & YOUR OWN EVENTUAL DEMISE & DEATH -- AS IT WAS FOR JOHN THE BAPTIST & LATER ON FOR JESUS HIMSELF. "IT CAN'T BE WRONG IF IT FEELS SO GOOD!" YES! YES! ...."THE PEOPLE WHO SAT IN DARKNESS HAVE SEEN A GREAT LIGHT & FOR THOSE WHO SAT IN THE REGION & SHADOW OF DEATH LIGHT HAS DAWNED."

& IT ISN'T GOING TO BE VERY LONG BEFORE JESUS IS GOING TO TELL PETER & ANDREW & JAMES & JOHN & US TOO: "YOU ARE THE LIGHT OF

THE WORLD! -- LET YOUR LIGHT SO SHINE BEFORE OTHERS THAT THEY MAY SEE YOUR GOOD WORKS & GLORIFY YOUR FATHER WHO IS IN HEAVEN! -- DON'T HIDE YOUR LIGHT UNDER A BUSHEL!".....JESUS IS NOT ONLY THE ONE WHO WAS TESTIFIED TO BY THE GREAT STAR WHO BROUGHT THE WISE MEN FROM AFAR -- HE HIMSELF IS THE GREAT LIGHT SHINING IN THE DARKNESS OF THOSE WHO LIVE IN DARKNESS & IN THE SHADOW OF DEATH. AND OUR RESPONSE OF FAITH & WORSHIP IS: "YOU LIGHT UP MY LIFE!"

THINK ABOUT IT - THERE ISN'T ONE AMONG US WHO HAS NOT EXPERIENCED THE DARKNESS OF LONELINESS. THERE ISN'T ONE OF US WHO HAS NOT KNOWN THE DEPTH OF DESPAIR. THERE ISN'T A PERSON WHO HAS NOT KNOWN GRIEF, WHO HAS NOT CRIED -- IF NOT WITH THE EYES THEN CERTAINLY WITH THE HEART. WE ARE ALL INVOLVED IN THE SAME STRUGGLE -- TRYING TO MAKE SENSE & MEANING OUT OF THE HOLLOWNESS, THE EMPTINESS, THE DARKNESS INSIDE -- A YEARNING, A HOPING, A DREAMING FOR SOMETHING MORE! WE ARE ALL INVOLVED IN THE SAME STRUGGLE -- TO FILL OUR LIVES WITH MEANING & PURPOSE ~~& MEANING~~! & JESUS SAYS, "I HAVE COME THAT YOU MAY HAVE LIFE - & HAVE IT MORE ABUNDANTLY!" WHAT A TRAGEDY IF WHAT HENRY THOREAU SAID COMES TRUE -- "TO HAVE REACHED THE POINT OF DEATH ONLY TO FIND THAT YOU HAVE NEVER LIVED AT ALL."

"REPENT! TURN AROUND - COME ON ALONG," SAYS JESUS, "& I WILL MAKE YOU FISH FOR MEN!" AND THAT WILL COME THAT DAY WHEN YOU WILL BE ABLE TO SAY WITH THE APOSTLE PAUL: "FOR ME TO LIVE IS CHRIST! TO DIE IS GAIN!" FOLLOWING JESUS - BEING HIS DISCIPLE - MEANS THAT YOU WILL BE IN REGULAR & CONSTANT CONTACT WITH HIM - READING, HEARING HIS WORD - PERSISTENT PRAYER, ASKING THAT THE "LIGHT OF CHRIST" INCREASE WITHIN YOU SO THAT YOU WILL BE ABLE TO "LIGHT UP THE LIVES" OF THOSE AROUND YOU -- THAT YOU WILL BE ABLE TO RADIATE HIS LIFE & LIGHT & LOVE TO THEM - THAT YOU & I & ALL OF HIS DISCIPLES BECOME WILLING TO WORK FOR THE WELL-BEING OF EVERY HUMAN BEING EVEN IF IT MEAN SACRIFICING OUR OWN WELL-BEING.

EVERY DAY WE HAVE TO MAKE HUNDREDS OF DECISIONS: AT WORK, AT HOME, W FAMILY, W FRIENDS --- SOME BIG, SOME SMALL --- DECISIONS THAT HAVE URGENCY & IMMEDIACY TO THEM. ARE WE FOLLOWING XP IN THE RESPONSES WE MAKE TO OUR CO-WORKERS, OUR FAMILY MEMBERS, ETC. ALWAYS ASKING, "WHAT WOULD JESUS DO? HOW CAN JESUS LIGHT UP THEIR LIFE TOO"? HE WILL PUT A SPRING IN YOUR STEP & A GLEAM & LIGHT IN YOUR EYES. "LET THE REDEEMED OF THE LORD SAY SO!