

“Dereliction” Sermon for March 25, 2018, Christ’s Passion: Philippians 2:5-11. Mark 14:46-50; 66-72

Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. For this reason also, God highly exalted Him and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name....

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The Bible records dereliction because it records life as it is. The Bible is about real people, us. Peter was a great disciple, but when Jesus needed him most, he was in derelict. Dereliction is the shameful failure to fulfill one's obligations. It literally means to “abandon” one’s job. All of the disciples abandoned Jesus. They fled when he was arrested, except Peter. Peter had disputed with Jesus, he had disputed with the living rhema, the prophetic revelatory Word of God incarnate.

When Jesus predicted that one would betray him and the rest would all abandon him, Peter

responded, “You’re wrong Lord.” It was not the first time. When Jesus had told his disciples that he was to be crucified, that his mission was to give his life for many, Peter disputed the living rhema, prophetic Word of God incarnate again.

Not so Lord. This is not the way to glory. This is not the way to life-being executed as a criminal.

So, to reiterate his challenge to God’s Word, Peter replied:

Everyone else may turn from you, betray you and deny you, but not me. I will never deny you.

By saying that, by claiming something that was apart from and more than God’s Word, God’s plan and God’s will, Peter had obligated himself to do what Jesus had already told him would not happen.

We cannot live faithful lives as disciples of Christ, contrary to God’s revealed Word, and we will not know that word unless we begin to intensify our relationship with the source of God’s Word, Christ in

us, the very mind of God, and what the Trinity calls the person of the Holy Spirit or Mind of God.

It is a contradiction for Christians to make statements, pass legislation, promote political positions and have certain predispositions concerning the poor, the different, the immigrant, the migrant, the outcast, the oppressed, the despised and concomitantly be God's children. But more than this, since we have been given the way, the truth and the life and choose to follow other paths, we are in dereliction of duty.

Peter followed Jesus at a distance. But what point is it there to follow at a distance when you can have Christ walking with you? A servant girl spotted him, and he denied knowing Jesus. Luke tells us this final denial happened about an hour later (Luke 22:59). In other words, he was there at the courtyard for a long

time. But stubbornness should never be mistaken for spiritual courage.

How we respond to dereliction to carry out our discipleship is critical.

1. Dereliction is not fatal, if we remember that everyone fails. You may be among those in the inner circle of Jesus. You may be the one with courage and leadership-quick on your feet, but you can still be derelict in your duty. Peter boasted hours earlier:

29 "Even if all fall away, I will not."

He was very certain that he would never fail, but he was found derelict in just a few hours.

2. Dereliction is not fatal if we understand that God's nature is lovingkindness. King David wrote in Ps 51:17 "The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise." God continually through the Word, deciphered by his Spirit in us, calls us away from our

guilt and dereliction, in order to restore us to life, to get us back on track.

Take advantage of your dereliction; don't waste it. Learn all you can from it; every bitter experience can teach us something. We must never use dereliction as an excuse for giving up, because we serve a God that will never give up on us. Amen.