



Proper 7, The Third Sunday after Pentecost
Rev. Jonathan Stepp
June 21, 2020

Today's sermon is a little bit different than what we've done in the last few months. I want to show you a clip from a few years ago from the Presiding Bishop of the Episcopal Church, the Rt. Rev. Michael Curry. I'm showing you this clip because of this week's gospel reading in which Jesus talks about what we might call "the cost of discipleship" – the ways in which following Jesus might cause others to not like us, not approve of us, and may even, in some cases, lead to others persecuting us.

The clip you're about to see from Bishop Curry comes from about four years ago, when the Episcopal Church of the United States was censured and called into account by other members of the Anglican Communion at a meeting of the Primates of the Anglican Communion (that is, those Bishops who are the Presiding Bishops of their respective national churches.) We were censured, and chided, as it were, by the other members of the Anglican Communion for having permitted same-sex marriage.

Bishop Curry speaks briefly in this clip about what it means to follow Jesus in the vocation to which we have been called and what it means, in the face of disagreement, and in some cases dislike, and even in some cases a very mild form of persecution, to continue doing what it is Jesus has called us to do.

In the context of today's gospel reading hear are Bishop Curry's words:

Before I say a word about our gathering here at the Primates Meeting, I just want to say a word of thank you to you for all of your prayers: your prayers for this meeting, your prayers for me personally, both here and in my earlier sickness. We are well, and God is God, and I thank you.

Let me say a word about the meeting. This is not the outcome we expected, and while we are disappointed, it's important to remember that the Anglican Communion is really not a matter of structure and organization. The Anglican Communion is a network of relationships that have been built on mission partnerships; relationships that are grounded in a common faith; relationships in companion diocese relationships; relationships with parish to parish across the world; relationships that are profoundly committed to serving and fol-

lowing the way of Jesus of Nazareth by helping the poorest of the poor, and helping this world to be a place where no child goes to bed hungry ever. That's what the Anglican Communion is, and that Communion continues and moves forward.

This has been a disappointing time for many, and there will be heartache and pain for many, but it's important to remember that we are still part of the Anglican Communion. We are the Episcopal Church, and we are part of the Jesus Movement, and that Movement goes on, and our work goes on. And the truth is, it may be part of our vocation to help the Communion and to help many others to grow in a direction where we can realize and live the love that God has for all of us, and we can one day be a Church and a Communion where all of God's children are fully welcomed, where this is truly a house of prayer for all people. And maybe it's a part of our vocation to help that to happen. And so we must claim that high calling; claim the high calling of love and faith; love even for those with whom we disagree, and then continue, and that we will do, and we will do it together.

We are part of the Jesus Movement, and the cause of God's love in this world can never stop and will never be defeated. God love you. God bless you. And you keep the faith. And we move forward.