

Kitchen Fire

Christ the Redeemer Church
February 7, 2010
5th Sunday after Epiphany

Luke 5:1-11
Rev Gary L. Smith
www.christredeemerchurch.com

Leslie commented to me recently that all of Life is connected. So it is. Here are some dots to connect this morning.

Today the Invocation was given by Carla Roberts who had pink hair earlier this week. During chemo treatments, she had no hair. Now she has hair and made a bet with some kids at school that if they raised a certain amount of money for cancer research then she would paint her new hair pink. Isn't her hair beautiful?

Today we bid See You Later to Larry and Shirley Weston who are moving back to Shirley's home state of Tennessee. They will be missed. I never had a church member who lived across the street from me to keep watch over me or to cook for me. Shirley offered to bake me one last batch of banana nut bread last night but all of her baking dishes are packed. She was going to make it in a cheap, flat aluminum pan which would make look like a sheet cake. I said if she was going to make bread then it needed to *look* like banana nut bread and that I had a proper bread pan for her. I want banana bread to look like bread. She huffed and said, "Bring your darned pan over here." It was good!

What do you do when your net is empty in life? What do you do when you have no more energy to pull up the empty net? What do you do when the sea seems so large, the fish have vanished, and your little boat and feeble efforts so small?

When Pam started graduate school three years ago and gave up cooking, as has been well documented, I took over the cooking chores. You know my line which you have endured many times. She cooked the first 30 years and I will cook the next 30. I have 27 years to go. Then we flip for the final 30 and we don't have a plan for the fourth 30-year quarter in our marriage. I mentioned this is a sermon two weeks ago and Mae Smith from Boston wrote me an email that I thought was a joke at first.

She wrote: Funny-about the cooking. I work 60 hours a week Dave doesn't. He gets home from school and starts dinner before I get home. This (photo of a charred kitchen) was the result of my cooking for the first time in months.

We are blessed and lucky. We have a good landlord and hope to be back there in weeks. We can stay during the week at the billeting on the base that is reasonably priced and has a microwave. The possessions we lost are nothing because we got my daughter-Daisie out safe and sound. We don't take vacations-we have three girls in college-so other than being technically homeless-this is as close to a vacation we have had since my husband retired from the military-I think being an ex-military wife and moving helps-every weekend we pack up and head to Maine until the Monday morning 4 hour drive back to work with everything in the car. We have decided to call this our first adventure of 2010.

Translated. Mae burned the house down when she tried to cook again. A grease fire. They have empty nets right now in life. She reached back into her past and approached this loss as a new adventure. God can only give that kind of tenacity to a person.

If you stay within the voice range of your Creator then you have a shot at making it through your times of empty nets. Some of you have some empty nets this morning. Your hands are calloused; you are thirsty from all the salt water in the air which just makes you thirstier.

The owner of the Indianapolis Colts in today's Super Bowl says he has moved in his life from wanting adventure to wanting contentment. He treats his players and others better now in life. Peace and harmony are important to him. So is winning tonight!

I called my Pamela this week and hit the wrong name on the cell phone listing. Pam Kitchin in Tennessee answered. I said, "Hey, you are not my wife." She said, "I am glad I am not your wife!" I was in a hurry to and the wrong Pam was on the phone.

She said life is like a fire drill right now. She and her husband Shawn have decided to switch careers and jobs, sell their house in Tennessee, and move to hopefully Ohio. They have not owned the house long enough to be able to sell it easily. Life is hectic and their future unknown. I told her that I had to go. Good luck! Bye. She laughed.

What do you know about fishing, Jesus? You are a carpenter. We are fishermen. Put your nets on the other side of the boat, you fishermen. Keep fishing; try listening to my suggestion, boys. Keep fishing. Stay within range of my Voice.

Trust me and put out into the deep waters, says the carpenter. When you are empty in life then God can begin to fill your nets. When you are in transition then your nets can be moved to the other side of the boat. When your kitchen is burned then you draw from what God has gotten you through in the past.

Will's pig story from last week is going to run in the local paper this coming week as a St. Valentine's Day feature story. It is a funny story that lifts the spirits.

I ended the article by including Mae Smith's line from Boston of "*Wouldn't it be nice to hear our tribute before we die? Well, unless you are a Cubbies fan – that would be hard.*"

Shawn responded: [Gary, The Cubbies fan part at the end had nothing to do with your pig story. I think you just put it in there to be hurtful \(to me\)! Now get back to work and quit picking on those smart people who cheer for America's team.](#) Shawn got the joke.

Pick up your empty nets, get back to work like Carla and Mae have, and trust God enough to throw your nets on the other side of the boat into the sea again. There may be some fish there for you. See you at the Super Bowl party tonight. The Kyle boys are cooking your dinner right now. I have a haircut on the Saints. Amen.