

TEXT: Matthew 4:12-23

TOPIC: Jesus invites his first disciples to follow him so they can fish for people.

SUBJECT: Jesus call and invitation to fish for people is a call to relationship.

TITLE: The Disrupted Life

Have you ever let Jesus disrupt your life?

Maybe you've never been asked that question. In fact, the question may feel troubling because some of us have been conditioned to think of Jesus as someone who calms our lives or makes them more peaceful, so asking if Jesus has disrupted our lives is unsettling.

In Jesus, though, God gave us disrupted lives worth living.

When I was called into the ministry, I answered the call not knowing what to expect. I didn't understand at the time how my call represented living a disrupted life.

And yet every disruption has been necessary and every disruption has been worth it. Just not in ways I could have anticipated and certainly not during the times my life was being disrupted.

When Jesus calls the first four disciples, he calls people whose lives and livelihood were controlled and perpetually wounded by the Roman Empire, not unlike past generations of Israelites who were controlled and wounded by the Babylonian empire, the Assyrian empire, the Persian empire, and the Greek empire.

Jesus' call today remains the same; it is a call to the disrupted life. It is a call to heal ourselves and offer healing to others. It is a call to step toward love and keep walking toward love. It is a call to build relationships, especially with people Jesus hung around with. Jesus' call is a call not to change others, but a call to change ourselves, so the disruption changes how we see ourselves and others.

Jesus' call to Peter and Andrew, and James and John, was disruptive but in a way different than they were used to. They were used to the Roman Empire's disruption but I doubt they had any idea how joyful and life-giving their all to live disrupted lives would be.

Jesus call to his first disciples was disruptive because he was calling ordinary people doing ordinary things to a disrupted life that would have them do extra-ordinary things.

Jesus' call to the first disciples was a call to be healers rather than victims a venomous empire.

Jesus' call was a call to health, a call to self-love, a call to authenticity as people, and a call to the higher purposes of a kin-dom of heaven on earth as it is in heaven.

Jesus' call hasn't changed; it's still a call to live – really live – the disrupted life.

Jesus' call was and is a call to repair damage done by the empire, so God's children can engage God's life-giving empire just like Isaiah 25 suggests.

Jesus' call is a call to bring wholeness where the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the poor have good news brought to them.

And Jesus' call – his invitation – extends to us. We, too, can live lives disrupted by our risen Lord.

When Jesus invites his first disciples, he tells them two things. First, that they must change their hearts and lives because the kin-dom of heaven is here. The kin-dom of heaven is the alternative to the Roman Empire. So, to live in a way that is an alternative to the Roman Empire, Jesus' call to the disruptive life has followers' fish for people. Jesus' call is a call to serve the kin-dom of heaven by going all-in to what Jesus says to do: fish for others.

Jesus' call disrupts people's lives. Maybe that's why more people don't appreciate the call. Maybe that's why it can be a challenge for people to create and be the type of community Jesus built, yet that is the outcome of disrupted lives.

When Jesus calls his first followers in Matthew's gospel, Jesus says, "Come, follow me, and I will show you how to fish for people."

Fishing for people is all about the relationships we develop not just with people we know and like, but with people who have suffered from dis-eases associated with the various kin-doms of our day, such as everything from poor nutrition, to poverty, to incarceration, to addiction, to mental health, to capitalism, to fear, to the over-abundance of wealth to privilege.

So let me finish where I began this morning. Have you let Jesus disrupt your life? Maybe it's time because to not answer it is the same as staying in the darkness rather than stepping into the light. How we live our faith is for the here and now far more than for the then and there.

In the name of the triune God – Father, Son, and Holy Spirit – one God in perfect community. Amen.