

Today we finish up our message series on being called by God and you won't want to miss the Lenten series on "Wrestling with God".

We are called by God

- to be Baptized"
- to be Loved"
- to be United in Christ"
- to love All People"
- to be Sent"
- to Choose Life"
- to Forgive and Live"
- to be Raised from the Dead"

This last one is as hard for us to grasp as it was for the first disciples.

Most of us, I think, live our lives trying to stay above the fray of mere survival.

- We live within our means
- We have insurance against loss of life, health, possessions, shelter, and job.
- We don't borrow more than we can repay.
- We follow the rules and obey the laws of God and man.

We have enough money to live on, some to give away, and some to have fun with.

We work hard for this security and the benefits it brings.

Sometimes, we even look down our noses at those who don't fit this mold.

Because not everybody can manage it.

And sometimes we confuse this good life with “being Christian”,

as though those who don't fit this mold are incapable of reaching heavenly glory.

We need to be careful about making earthly security the goal of life.

More often than not, Jesus calls us to leave earthly security behind to follow him.

And where Jesus goes is into the lives of people who don't know what security is.

For some, the security of this so-called good life is breached early –

- A trusted adult abuses us in childhood
- An accident or illness leaves us or a loved one debilitated
- Stability is shattered by addiction or alcoholism
- We lose a best friend
- People make fun of us

For others, security is a thin thread that is snapped later in life:

- We lose our job
- We get a DUI
- A child has trouble with the law or drugs or is in self-destructive emotional pain
- Our mental health reaches a breaking point

- Aging parents need skilled care
- Insurance doesn't cover all losses

When we trust in the security of our own ability to keep things together, it is no wonder our faith wavers.

When we believe that God owes us good things
because we do good things and avoid bad things,
then we are often disappointed when life's crap touches our lives.
We have built our house on sand – and the tsunami is here.

I have good news for us.

Jesus comes into our lives as the one who says,
Blessed are those who are at the end of their rope and losing their grip –
for they will find safety when they fall--- into my arms.

Since Jesus doesn't quite use those words, let me explain what this means.

Jesus is not God on a cloud handing out trophies to those who float above the difficulties of life;

Jesus is God in the trenches –

- God with the outcast,
- with those whose minds are agonized by restlessness and
- whose hearts are depressed and hopeless.

Jesus is God with the poor who can't work and

- with orphans and widows who have no one to care for them.

Jesus is God with the teenagers who cut themselves and ponder suicide,

- And the ones who struggle to fit in;
- with the young adults who don't quite know how to make it on their own, and
- with the generation squeezed between children and parents whose problems are too big to handle.

Jesus is God With us – one of us

– where we live –down in the trenches.

And wherever Jesus is, there is the life God wants for us.

The thing is, when we are in the trenches, our vision is limited.

We often cannot see beyond our troubles, turmoil, and tasks of survival.

We need to know that there is more to following Jesus than going with him into the trenches or finding him there.

We need to know that Jesus means to get us out of the mess of this life.

**We need to know that he not only catches us when we fall,
but also gives us what we need to stand up again.**

Today, Jesus gives us a vision of what is at the end of the journey of life.
When he takes Peter, James and John up the mountain,

he lets them see him transfigured in the spiritual body that comes with being raised from the dead.

He lets them see him shining with the glory of God.

And by inviting Moses and Elijah, he lets them know that what they see in him is also what is promised to them.

His transfigured body will also be theirs in the great resurrection of the dead.

The trenches of this life – this vale of tears – is not all there is!

**It is simply where the life of Jesus is present and active
until the day when everything is put right with God.**

So, people of God, whether you are secure or insecure;

Whether you are able to do good or whether you are struggling to hold on and survive;

Know this – Jesus is with you and you matter to him.

As the Church, we are in the trenches together –sharing with each other the hope we have in Jesus Christ.

We lift one another up in this hope and participate in the body and blood of Christ for our life and salvation,

If you are baptized, you share his shining life already.

If you are not yet baptized, he holds out his arms to you in invitation.

As we prepare to begin the season of Lent,

Jesus calls us to follow him into death and resurrection.

It is the only true security there is.

In the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jjeE1wzLfjI>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D302i8nPnGs>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LzXZFVouFiY>