

Today we had lessons about two Biblical super heroes, Moses and Simon Peter. But these stories are not about their heroic feats; instead we hear Moses making excuses, “Who am I to take on the task of bringing the Israelites out of Pharaoh's clutches? What am I supposed to tell them when they ask what your name is?” We didn’t read further in Exodus, but the conversation continues. Moses protests, “They won’t believe me!”

God responds “Yeah they will, watch this!” He turns Moses’ staff into a snake and returns it to a staff; He causes leprosy (an incurable disease in Biblical times) on Moses hand, then cures it instantly; and he tells Moses if he pours water from the Nile River onto dry ground, it will turn into blood. We know Moses *did* use similar miracles, attempting to persuade Pharaoh.

Finally, Moses says, “But I stammer when I speak.” God offers to put the words in his mouth, but Moses is still reluctant. Finally God summons Moses’ brother, Aaron, to do the talking. At last Moses agrees. Moses, of course, would become one of the best known Old Testament heroes, leading the Israelites in the desert for forty years, and finally to the land of milk and honey.

Then there is Simon Peter, scolding Jesus for sharing God’s plan for His suffering and death. Jesus’ strong language, “Get behind me Satan!” certainly infers that he was angry that this disciple

completely misunderstood. Remember last week? Jesus asked the disciples, ‘Who do men say I am?’ The names of John the Baptist, Elijah, and Jeremiah were suggested. When Jesus asked, “Who do you say I am?” Simon Peter quickly and boldly responded “You are the Messiah, the Son of the Living God.” What a contrast! From, “You are the Messiah,” to “Get thee behind me, Satan!” I have a hard time understanding that swing, The best explanation I know is Peter expected the Messiah would be an earthly savior, perhaps a king in the mold of David.

This wasn’t the only time Peter let Jesus down. During the last supper he protested that he would follow Jesus to prison and death. Yet, all four Gospels record that before the cock crowed, Peter denied Jesus three times. Peter certainly doesn’t sound like super hero material, does he? In spite of Peter’s misunderstanding and denial, tradition holds this feckless disciple was indeed the rock upon which the church was founded. We honor him as our first Bishop. In the Episcopal Church and others, we believe the laying on of hands for confirmation and ordination connects us, by touch, back to Peter.

Four or five years ago, when I was in formation to become a deacon, my friend Margaret Weiner, gave me several little pieces of paper with the mantras on them. The one that was most significant

remains on my refrigerator. It says, “God doesn’t call the qualified, God qualifies the called.” I think this really describes Moses and Simon Peter, as well as many other heroes and heroines of the church. It should speak about each of us, too.

God is calling us to share in caring for his world. When we are called to serve, like Moses, our first impulse may be to say, “I don’t think I’m up to that scary thing God is asking of me!” And we make excuses. Or perhaps we are like Simon Peter, so stuck on an old understanding that we can’t hear the new one. The lesson of these two readings is: it’s OK to be scared, it’s OK to misunderstand. God still wants you! God still loves you! God still calls you!

So what is God calling you to do? Guess what, it probably isn’t as grandiose as the tasks he asked of Moses and Peter.

The lesson from Romans outlines our calling; note that it begins with love, followed by a long list encouraging us to do good instead of evil. If you are like me, you may be saying, but how do I apply it? There is the famous Mother Teresa quote, “Do small things with great love!” I think that’s how God calls most of us.

Something that seems small is pray deliberately and regularly—beyond this Sunday morning service. Prayer for others is one the most important ministries of the church. Everyone can do it with great love, no matter our age, our physical condition, our location, or

our abilities. If you aren't already praying regularly and deliberately, here's a simple way to start. Take home this insert that contains our St. Andrew's prayer list; challenge yourself to read the names to God everyday—with great love. If you miss a day, remember Peter—with his giant gaffes of misunderstanding and denial—God called him to found the church. Tomorrow is another day to pray!

Another small way to serve—Help with Sunday morning worship; some jobs don't require a special trip to the church. Volunteer to take a turn at any lay jobs you see while you're here: ushers, readers, communion servers, recyclers, coffee hosts. Eucharistic visitors require a little extra time, but it's how we share communion with those who cannot be physically present. Altar Guild, choir, and band also require a little extra time, but they bring beauty and joy to enhance our Liturgy.

And there are more involved jobs, too! All our teams, Stewardship, Liturgy and Spiritual Formation, Community Care, Gathering, and Property would be delighted to have you help with planning and execution of activities of St. Andrews.

Whew! I haven't even mentioned serving God's people outside the church, have I? Well, it appears most of us are contributing in some way to the Community Fridge; but its not easy to keep up with the need for food. And it needs frequent cleaning. The garden is

pretty self-sustaining, but those big water tanks need filling often during the growing season. Do you know that some of our members go to the Food Bank of Iowa regularly to help sort, portion, and store donations? At least one member of St. Andrew's is active in preparing apartments for newly arrived refugees. Those are just a few of the opportunities to care for God's world.

So don't shrink from serving, just because you can't achieve something big and memorable. You've probably heard some version of the story of a person walking on the beach when they encounter a man throwing starfish into the ocean. They said to the man, "There are so many—how can throwing one starfish back in the water make any difference?" The man replies, "It makes a difference—to this one." God can use each of us even if, like Moses, we question His plan, or misunderstand it like Peter.