

Third Sunday in Ordinary Time  
January 21-22, 2012 - Cycle B

*“Gospel Themes”*

There are four wonderful themes from the gospel. **1)** There is the theme of “good news.” **2)** There is the theme of “repentance.” **3)** There is the theme of “belief.” **4)** And there is the theme of “following the Lord.” The first theme, “good news” has six supporting parts.

a) The “good news” is good because it speaks the truth about our human nature. We all need a sense of knowing that God is part of us and we are part of God. That’s why Jesus is one of us; so that we might be like Jesus. The good news is the truth about us and God. We are united with God and God with us. That’s truth; and that is good news.

b) The good news is hope. There are least two gospel passages that relate to us that, “nothing is impossible for God.” That’s hope and that is good news. [Matthew 19: 26].

- c) The good news is peace. There is a rift between good people and bad people, between life and death. Only Jesus had victory over good and bad, life and death; over sin and grace. The power of Peace is good news.
- d) The good news is “promise.” Many people think of God in terms of threats. The God of Jesus speaks in promises; God is ready to give more than what we expect. It’s a promise. That’s good news.
- e) The good news is “resurrection.” Death meant the end of all things. With Jesus death is yet another step in life; we call it life after life; that’s good news.
- f) The good news is “salvation.” Salvation is not just escape from sin and liberation from past wrong doings of humanity. Salvation means a whole life and death change. It means living life and dying in the ways of the Lord; for the

Lord gives life and death an eternal meaning.  
Salvation is good news.

The second big theme from the gospel is “repentance.” The theme of repentance is simple. “Change your mind.” Change your mind about destroying yourselves and others. We can do that with Jesus.

The third big theme from the gospel reading is “believe.” To believe is to take Jesus at His word. Why believe? Because God will make any sacrifice to bring us to Himself. Take Him at His word.

The fourth big theme from the gospel reading is “follow me.” This is a personal invitation from God to all of us. “Be my partners.” “Follow me.”

Our four themes from the gospel are **1)** Good News. **2)** Repent. **3)** Believe, and **4)** Follow. These four themes from the gospel provide guidelines for a partnership with Jesus. The following is a humorous story about partnership with Jesus.

*“Finkelstein and Jesus”*

Jesus was wandering around Jerusalem when he decided that he really needed a new robe. After looking around for awhile, he saw a sign for Finkelstein, the Tailor. . . So, he went in and made the necessary arrangements to have Finkelstein prepare a new robe for him. A few days later, when the robe was finished, Jesus tried it on - - and it was a perfect fit.

He asked how much he owed. Finkelstein brushed him off, “No, no, no, for the Son of God there is no charge! However, may I ask for a small favor? Whenever you give a sermon, perhaps you could must mention that your nice new robe was made by Finkelstein, the Tailor?” Jesus readily agreed and as promised, extolled the virtues of his Finkelstein robe whenever he spoke to the masses.

A few months later, while Jesus was again walking through Jerusalem, he happened to walk past Finkelstein's shop and noted a huge line of

-5-

people waiting for Finkelstein's robes. He pushed his way through the crowd to speak to him and as soon as he spotted him he said, "Jesus, Jesus, look what you have done for my business! Would you consider a partnership?" "Certainly," replied Jesus, "That's why I'm here. I am in the business of partnering."

"Jesus & Finkelstein it is." "Oh, no, no," said Finkelstein. "Finkelstein & Jesus," "After all, I am the craftsman," said Finkelstein. The two of them debated this for some time.

Their discussion was long and spirited, but ultimately fruitful - - and they finally came up with a mutually acceptable compromise. A few days later, the new sign went up over Finkelstein's shop: "Lord and Taylor."

Mother Teresa of India had a tough but rewarding life with Jesus. Asked why she did what she did, she would answer, “because Jesus is everything for me; Jesus is everything for me.”

-6-

So we pray: *Lord Jesus, we are challenged by gospel themes that give life, purpose, direction, and peace. When You say, “follow,” please help us to have conviction to follow You in every way, every day. A simple prayer we make in the name of Jesus. Amen.*

Rev. A. J. Geraci  
St. Paul Church  
Yellow Springs, OH