

To all the Saints at Manatee Life,

SCRIPTURE: Matthew 9:21 (TM) – *larger reading Matthew 9:18-26*

She was thinking to herself, "If I can just put a finger on his robe, I'll get well." Jesus turned - caught her at it. Then he reassured her: "Courage, daughter. You took a risk of faith, and now you're well."

STORY:

Paul Borthwick writes: But leaders take risks. No one ever stubs his or her toe while standing still. Franklin D. Roosevelt once said, "It is common sense to take a method and try it. If it fails, admit it frankly. But above all, try something!" Failing to try because of a desire to be secure results in inaction and failure to lead.

John Henry Jowett, a great English preacher, likewise pointed out the temptation of self-preservation and its result in faithless lives:

It is possible to evade a multitude of sorrows through the cultivation of an insignificant life. Indeed, if a man's ambition is to avoid the troubles of life, the recipe is simple: shed your ambitions in every direction, cut the wings of every soaring purpose, and seek a life with the fewest contacts and relations. If you want to get through the world with the smallest trouble, you must reduce yourself to the smallest compass. Tiny souls can dodge through life; bigger souls are blocked on every side. As soon as a man begins to enlarge his life, his resistance's are multiplied. Let a man remove his petty selfish purposes and enthrone Christ, and his sufferings will be increased on every side.

OBSERVATION:

His words bore a testimony to his career. "I flew below the radar my entire career and the cabinet left me alone." He was bragging that at no time did he take any risks. How sad. Following the example of the woman in Matthew's story I would have rather taken a faith risk and got into trouble than live a life of "blow the radar". Mr. Borthwick's words go directly to the heart of the matter – "Let a man remove his petty selfish purposes and enthrone Christ, and his sufferings will be increased on every side."

The inescapable question: Where are the faith risks in my life? Or, am I simply playing it safe? Flying below the radar? Never rocking the

boat? Never sticking out my neck? Never stepping into the middle?
Leaving the difficult issues and circumstances to others?

Does Christ wish for us to live a “safe” life or a faith-risk centered life? One kind can be popular the other ... not so much. There is skill in navigating the rocky shoreline and still get great things accomplished. But, in truth, the men and women who are able to do that are a rare find in deed. The rest of us take great chances and simply get into trouble, ruffle feathers, and have people get upset with us.

Bishop Nolan Harmon, while teaching a seminary course, shared: “If everyone is happy with what you preached on Sunday morning then you didn’t preach the gospel.” And again, “If everyone is happy with your ministry and no one is getting upset, writing the bishop and/or district superintendent about you, and taking their money and leaving the church then what has been accomplished.” Ministry, as in life, is faith-risk centered. Bishop Harmon did also add: “If you decide to be a faith driven pastor just make sure you keep a good supply of boxes available because you probably will end up moving often.”

Does Christ call us to live an insignificant life of self-preservation or does he summons us to risk big time for the sake of the Kingdom? As the motto over the arches of my undergraduate school states: “Attempt Great Things For God ... Expect Great Things From God.”

Here is to some great risk taking!

QUOTE:

“Life is inherently risky. There is only one big risk you should avoid at all costs, and that is the risk of doing nothing.” – Denis Waitley

PRAYER:

Have to admit Lord, a faith-risk life is very scary.

And the faith journey continues, Pastor Jim
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