

Total Commitment: A Communion Meditation for Pentecost
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A reading from the Gospel of Mark, chapter 1, verses 9-11:

In those days Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. And just as he was coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens torn apart and the Spirit descending like a dove on him. And a voice came from heaven, "You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased."

Jesus is the actual pleasure of God's will. And he carried out God's will throughout his life.

Is it your intention to be in favor with God, to be in that circle of God's love we find here in the Gospel of Mark? You see, finding favor with God is another way of expressing the seriousness of our intention to pursue the will of God in our lives.

Most of us are committed in many different ways in life. In fact, we place a lot of controls on our lives. We take on many responsibilities, and each of these responsibilities is, to an extent, a control on one's life. It may be a responsibility to a schedule. It may be to some member of the family. It may be to a particular possession. Yet the Communion Table, through which we partake of the life of Christ, symbolizes total commitment. It requires of us a greater commitment than all the other responsibilities we take on. It requires us to give up control in our lives.

In the West, many of our churches today—collectively and individually—are lacking in energy. They're suffering because of a low level of commitment. We are being pulled in so many other directions, we don't have much energy left. And we draw the conclusion very quickly that a call to total commitment to our faith is an invitation to become fanatical about it. God forbid. We all want a reasoned faith.

But a tight balance must be maintained between a reasoned, ordered kind of faith and one that has passion—high levels of energy and enthusiasm. How do we recover that first love for our Lord, when the energy level was high—as it was with the disciples when they received the Holy Spirit at Pentecost? Through discipleship at its deepest level, namely, through giving up control, crossing the threshold, and truly giving our whole lives over to the hand of our Lord.

What will be the quality of your discipleship? Luke 9:57-62 reads,

As they were going along the road, someone said to [Jesus], "I will follow you wherever you go." And Jesus said to him, "Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests; but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head." To another he said, "Follow me." But he said, "Lord, first let me go and bury my father." But Jesus said to him, "Let the dead bury their own dead; but as for you, go and proclaim the kingdom of God." Another said, "I will follow you, Lord; but let me first say farewell to those at my home." Jesus said to him, "No one who puts a hand to the plow and looks back is fit for the kingdom of God."

In other words, Jesus said that any kind of qualifying clause dilutes your commitment. Let us deepen our journey, our pilgrimage toward total commitment to Jesus Christ as we partake of the Table of the Lord.