

Matthew 4:12-23 ¹² When Jesus heard that John had been put in prison, he returned to Galilee. ¹³ Leaving Nazareth, he went and lived in Capernaum, which was by the lake in the area of Zebulun and Naphtali-- ¹⁴ to fulfill what was said through the prophet Isaiah: ¹⁵ "Land of Zebulun and land of Naphtali, the way to the sea, along the Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles-- ¹⁶ the people living in darkness have seen a great light; on those living in the land of the shadow of death a light has dawned." ¹⁷ From that time on Jesus began to preach, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is near." ¹⁸ As Jesus was walking beside the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers; Simon called Peter and his brother Andrew. They were casting a net into the lake, for they were fishermen. ¹⁹ "Come, follow me," Jesus said, "and I will make you fishers of men." ²⁰ At once they left their nets and followed him. ²¹ Going on from there, he saw two other brothers, James son of Zebedee and his brother John. They were in a boat with their father Zebedee, preparing their nets. Jesus called them, ²² and immediately they left the boat and their father and followed him. ²³ Jesus went throughout Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the good news of the kingdom, and healing every disease and sickness among the people.

1 Corinthians 1:17-18 ¹⁷ For Christ did not send me to baptize, but to preach the gospel-- not with words of human wisdom, lest the cross of Christ be emptied of its power. ¹⁸ For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.

How Foolish Are We Willing to Be?

There was an interesting article in the Toronto Star several Saturday's ago entitled: *Much To-Do about...too Much to Do*. The writer, Leslie Schriver, starts the article by quoting a man named Ben Nemtin who at aged 23 with a handful of his friends has been traveling the world over the last year or so doing the things they want to do before the die. You see they made a list. On the list were places to see, outrages things to do – like tell a judge, “You want the truth? But, you can’t handle the truth”, and good deeds like help a ailing old man redo his apartment. She asked him why and he replied, “We didn’t want to wait until we were older or even next year, to do the things we always wanted to do. Why would we put our ambitions on hold to follow career obligations? Why would we wait? We sort of felt like we had to face mortality. This question, what do you want to do before you die, cuts through all the BS. It cuts to the core.”

I read that and to be honest I said to myself, “What a bunch of rich little selfish brats. They have to have a lot of daddy’s or mommy’s money and credit cards to just up and go exploring. They haven’t yet earned the right! Besides, why are 23 year olds thinking about their own mortality?” But, alas I sound too much like my baby boomer big brother. I do understand a bit where Ben Nemtin and his friends are coming from. Those thirty-five and younger have a very difficult time believing that by the time they retire there’s going to be anything left on this planet to see. To them the future looks bleak so enjoy yourself now.

Leslie Schriver then goes on to say that his remarks sound an awful lot like his parents generation, the Baby Boomers – those born between 1947 and 1966. The first of these have just turned 60 and are financially well enough off to

retire a couple of years early at 62. For most of them the kids are out on their own and their elderly parents are passing. So, they're looking at each other and saying, “We got the money, honey, and we got the time.” Apparently, the first thing they do is head down to Chapters and buy one of those 1,000 things to see, do, eat, or drink before you die books. I bet you didn't know that there are now hundreds of these books of lists of things to do before you die popping of the press with more regularity than Metamucil can deliver.

The Baby Boomer psyche is interesting to say the least. Baby Boomers grew up in the age of Dr. Spock when most parents were affluent enough to make their children the center of their lives. As small children Boomers were told they were special and would grow up to achieve great things. So they need not be afraid to dream and follow those dreams because there's more to life than making a living and raising children. Life rather is a very personal quest to find satisfaction. Unfortunately, the Boomers like every other generation have a selfish side and they express it through an inordinate desire for self-fulfillment. Though Boomers started out very idealistic (they were the ones who stood against the establishment during the Vietnam War and the Civil Rights Movement), but somewhere along the way they got pragmatic and became as much as if not more career focused than their fathers were in the 50's and 60's. Today, Boomers are the richest generation ever and are finding that materialism and consumerism only leaves them wanting more.

So the burning question for today is what will the Boomers turn to next to appease their Utopian quest for personal satisfaction. Many have adopted slogans like make love a priority, live in the moment, and happiness comes from within. Many feel that they've still got an ample amount of time left so that their greatest contribution to humanity is yet to come. Others, readily admit that they know meaning arises from what you give to the world not what you take from it and certainly not from checking things off of lists. Hopefully, the Boomer generation is beginning to awaken. A light has begun to shine on them. It's called the spotlight. For all the problems of the world – global warming, terrorism, economic disparity, disease and famine – are now in their lap and await their idealism as a core component of the solution. Unfortunately, nearly all the Boomers who so beautifully were able to point out all the ills of the establishment are now part of the establishment...with a lot to loose. What do they do with the establishment now that is their establishment?

Back to the question, what will the Boomers turn to next to appease their Utopian quest for personal satisfaction. Well, I am a minister that's standing in a pulpit before a congregation that for it's wee small size is blessed to have a high percentage of Boomers. We are an anomaly because most Boomers have not turned to the Church for answers and rather have sought “spiritual” answers inwardly and calling it truly experiencing one's self. Statistically, being born in 1966 I am the last of the Baby Boomer generation, but I don't feel like one. In Canada there are 8.5 million Boomers and we are beginning to die at a rate of 108 per 24 hours. It's time to start thinking about the world we leave behind. Speaking personally, I look at William sometimes and say to myself, “What have we done? We have brought another life into this world that is at a crisis point.”

Being born in 1966 I am a baby Baby Boomer. I'm also the youngest in my family. The youngest is blessed with having seen the many ways the siblings have dealt with problems and so know that there is more than one way to skin a cat (not literally). Yet, the youngest is also cursed because no matter what we have to say, the older siblings won't listen to your suggestions.

So here I stand, a baby Baby Boomer minister with something to say to handful of Boomers. I don't expect you to listen to me because you all have been successful with your careers and like our parents you seem to believe that financial success ultimately determines Truth. But there is more than one way to define success. Nevertheless, I have been sent here to proclaim the Gospel. Not the false Gospel that caused so many Boomers to turn away from the church; that towe the line with Jesus or go to hell stuff. But the true Gospel, the one that Jesus preached, (you know the Jesus that you all think was a pretty good guy but his followers got him all wrong.) was “Repent, for the Kingdom of God is at hand.” That's what Jesus said and he for love of humanity took it to the cross where seemingly he looked like a fool and his teachings were foolishness. But, the cross is the power of God for salvation.

Jesus came to Peter and James and John who were just like you, like us, mid-lifer's, who had established themselves in their careers and had a bit to loose, and he said “Follow me.” And they actually did. What an idealistic; i.e. foolish thing to do. They actually followed him and saw the kingdom of God in action. If I were to give a suggestion as to what the Boomers should turn to next I wouldn't exactly say to what I would say to whom, Jesus the Christ, and follow him. As long as we remain a part of the establishment we will be part of the problem, part of the way of the world that hung Jesus on the cross, rather than a crucial part of the new creation that flows from it. Are we willing to put aside the pursuit of self-fulfilled personal Utopia and follow him into the world healing growth of his Kingdom? How foolish are we willing to be?

God's Own Fool by Michael Card

Seems I've imagined Him all of my life as the wisest of all of mankind.
But if God's holy wisdom is foolish to man, he must have seemed out of His mind.
Even His family said He was mad and the priest said a demon's to blame.
But, God in the form of this angry young man could not have seemed perfectly sane.
We in our foolishness thought we were wise.
He played the fool and he opened our eyes.
We in our weakness believed we were strong.
He became helpless to show we were wrong.
So we follow God's own fool for only the foolish can tell.
Believe the unbelievable; come be a fool as well.
So come lose your life for a carpenter's son for a madman who died for a dream.
And you'll have the faith His first followers had and you'll feel the weight of the beam.
So surrender the hunger to say you must know. Have the courage to say I believe.
For the power of paradox opens your eyes and blinds those who say they can see.

How foolish are we willing to be?