

Pentecost 3 – June 21, 2020  
Text: Matthew 10: 21-33  
Theme: "Your Best Life" Ain't Good Enough

**Right now people talk a great deal about feeling safe. They don't feel safe to be around other people or they don't feel safe with riots going on in their neighborhoods. Everyone wants to feel safe but Jesus makes it clear in the Gospel that while we are secure, we are never safe. There is a difference between security and safety. You can be secure without being safe. I can be secure in my position while facing enormously difficult odds. I think of a devout Christian who is riddled with cancer. She knows that it is highly unlikely that she will survive the disease but she is totally secure in knowing the eventual outcome is that she will rise from the dead in a perfect, holy and healthy body. Or think of being a parent. When Neal had been with us for a year, the statute of limitations expired in which the birth mother could legally seek his return to her. Danya asked our attorney if we were safe now, and he said, "Oh no. You're a parent. You'll never be safe again. This just means that there is a better chance of him being run over by a bus than being returned to his birth mother." Parents know that we never stop being concerned over the safety of our children, but that doesn't mean they are not secure in the loving arms of God.**

**There is also a difference between being content and being happy. I am not happy that the church is not overflowing with standing room only, that a pandemic causes people to have to worship from home or that some people who could be here have chosen to do something else or that people who could be here don't even know that we exist or what we offer. But I am content that all the people who are here and who are watching at home have been led by God to worship together and have their faith strengthened.**

**In our prayer of the day today, we do not ask that God make us safe and happy. That is a shallow prayer of a Christian who thinks that life in this world is the main thing. I have to strive to be sure that every situation safely makes me happy because I am "living my best life." It is hard for me to verbalize how disappointed it makes me when I hear people, particularly Christian people, use that phrase, "living my best life." It's on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter incessantly. Someone is on a beach with a cocktail in their hands and the caption is "Living My Best Life." Well folks, if your idea of "your best life" is centered on drinking alcohol on a beach then I'm sorry for you. If you must use that phrase, at least be doing something worthwhile in the photograph! Be packing meals for "Feed My Starving Children," or handing out bags of groceries with Ms. Dickson at New Canaan Missionary Baptist Church in**

**Englewood. That would be leading a best life! Drinking on a beach is at best avoiding real life. But because we get safety and happy confused with secure and content, we also get confused about our purpose on this earth and what really constitutes a best life.**

**In the Gospel, Jesus pulls no punches.**

**“Brother will deliver brother over to death, and the father his child, and children will rise against parents and have them put to death, and you will be hated by all for my name’s sake.” It is neither safe nor happy to be a Christian. If you want safety and happiness you have to worship Satan. He will gladly give you both. But because this world is a broken place where demons roam freely, the Christian is usually unsafe and often unhappy.**

**However, Jesus also says,**

**“And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather fear him who can destroy both soul and body in hell. Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? And not one of them will fall to the ground apart from your Father. But even the hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear not, therefore; you are of more value than many sparrows. So everyone who acknowledges me before men, I also will acknowledge before my Father who is in heaven....”**

**You are secure because you know the end of the story. No matter what disease might ravage you; no matter what hardship might befall you, in the end you will be raised up and live for all eternity in paradise with everyone you have loved who died in faith and with Jesus. You don't have to worry about safety because you know how it all ends and you are secure.**

**You are content because you know that if whatever comes is good, it is a rich blessing from God in order to give you rest and restoration for the battle that comes tomorrow, and if whatever comes is bad, it is only temporary, and God will strengthen you to endure it. You can rejoice in whatever you have wherever you are because you are not here for vacation but for work. Sure, we all have in our minds what we think our ideal situation would be but who really knows? Your ideal might actually be a probable Hell. But God's ideal is certain. He has placed you in the situation in which you find yourself to serve him and glorify him.**

**Not only that, but he has provided his Word to teach you, Holy Baptism to wash you and his own body and blood to nourish you for the fight. That's why you are here. An army marches on its stomach and a Christian marches on his faith. You are here to be fed and readied for battle. Today is the Sabbath. Today you rest and by rest we don't mean binging on Netflix in your sweatpants and fuzzy**

**slippers. We mean feeding and nourishing your faith so that you are content and secure and ready to wade back into the fray for your Lord. That is your best life on this earth.**