

CRIBB<S> NOTE – February 7, 2010

What would it take for you to give up everything you have and start over from scratch? Or, would you stop what you are doing and begin a new life in the service of God? Can you just walk away and do something new?

Every day we have an opportunity to stop and start over. Sometimes extreme circumstances compel us to make incredible changes. Fires, disasters, job loss, and a number of other possible events can redefine our life. There are scores of stories in the daily news about people who have lost everything they possess. They are forced to start fresh.

We have the option to make decisions about our lives without experiencing catastrophes.

Have you ever experienced the power of the Holy Spirit? Has God touched you in a deep, personal way that left you amazed and bewildered? Do you know what it means to submit your life to God? Have you done it? Do you want to? Can you do it?

In Porgy and Bess, the Broadway opera of 1935 written by George and Ira Gershwin, the lead male character Porgy sings about having nothing to lose:

**“Oh, I got plenty o' nuttin', an' nuttin's plenty fo' me.
I got no car, got no mule, I got no misery.”**

Porgy continues his song describing the traps of wealth:

**“De folks wid plenty o' plenty got a lock on dey door.
'Fraid somebody's agoin' to rob `em while dey's out a-makin' more.
What's for?”**

The fictional character sings about his life on “Catfish Row” where dock workers toiled under the blistering South Carolina sun without much hope for change. But, as he reflects on his lot, Porgy realizes he is free of misery while people of means are burdened with fear; afraid somebody is going to steal what they have.

It is quite fitting to acknowledge the visionary genius of the Gershwin brothers as they brought an African American cast to the New York stage at a time when Black Folk did not have many such opportunities.

In celebration of African American History Month, we remember “Porgy and Bess” features a story and music about Black life in the 1920's. Based on a novel, Porgy, written by Dubose Heyward and a play by the same name co-authored by his wife, Dorothy Heyward, the Gershwin's Porgy and Bess provided a glimpse into a social structure that formed community and inspired love and hope amid struggle and tragedy.

People who handle fish are also involved in the early ministry of Jesus of Nazareth. He started his band of disciples with Simon Peter and two brothers, James and John, all skilled fishermen who dropped their nets, left their boats, and walked into a new life as followers of Jesus. They gave up everything for Christ.

Would you do that? Can you leave everything behind and enter the ministry? What would it take?

-Pastor Art Cribbs