The Scripture passages today have timely lessons for us about how to be a follower of Jesus and hold the values at the heart of Jesus’ way of life. We know Jesus’ own values and spirituality were formed in the Hebrew Scriptures that provided principles and models to follow.

In the Gospel. Jesus is forming his band of followers. Notice the clarity and purpose of the call. Jesus “summoned those who he wanted and they came to him … that they might be with him and he might send them forth to preach and to have authority to drive out demons …”

1. To be “with him” indicates a very personal relationship of heart-knowing. He looked them in the eye, put his hand on their shoulder – they felt known and they felt loved. This deep and real contact will compel them to leave all and start a new life with Jesus
2. From this personal relationship, Jesus can then confidently send them to continue his own call to preach, to touch, to heal- to reveal the reign of God; how to be Jesus-like with others.

Now we look to the reading from the Book of Samuel for an example, very familiar to Jesus: David’s way of dealing with Saul. I believe we have here, a growth in conscience. David could easily have dispatched his “enemy” (as he did the Philistine) but he stopped for a moment of reflection that guided a change of view, a change of heart.

“The Lord forbid that I should … lay a hand on the LORD’s anointed. … Be convinced that I plan no harm. … The Lord will judge between you and me.”

Saul recognizes that, “You are in the right rather than I: you have treated me generously while I have done you harm. …”

Hopefully a conversion … but wait! Didn’t we just hear yesterday Saul going after David with raging jealousy?

Wasn’t it only after Jonathan interceded that Saul relented and was brought back to his senses? Maybe “conversion” takes more than a one-time try.

In Jesus’ command to “love your enemy,” we hear the call to a nonviolence that Jesus modeled in his life over and over again.

Now to us, with all that is going on these weeks in our country.
Given my mutterings at the TV, I sure think I know who needs conversion, whose hearts need softening, who needs to be brought back to their senses! But that finger pointing outward has three pointing back to me.

So I ask: are my words, behavior or messages adding to the light or deepening the darkness? We have choices: at every meal or conversation, every time we open our phone or computer or TV.

Certainly, I pray for deep conversion in our whole society as well as in myself. Each one of us is part of this whole and has a place.

Are we a Jonathan? Are we an Apostle? Are we accepting Jesus’ “summons” to be “with him” in his ongoing work of healing and freeing for the reign of God?

In the *Give Us This Day* booklet, Susan Gunn reflects:

If our communities do not recognize and value all members, the light that is within each of us is scattered in the darkness.

If I do not make real human contact with the members of my community, do I miss Jesus when he calls me to come follow him?

If I do not act justly, show mercy, and love tenderly will there be justice, mercy and love for me, for anyone?

Let us pray: Jesus through your Spirit show us how – to hear the summons, claim the message and choose how to be the change, today.

Amen.