

Donna Carter

## Two By Two

I am standing in the pulpit today for the first time to speak to you. Oh, I've read scripture, I've read litanies and I've prayed, but today I'm gonna speak . . . preach . . . if you will. Scarey, ain't it? Me, Donna Carter . . . preaching. Are y'all feeling the earth move yet? After today y'all will be saying . . . Donna didn't have to drive a truck into the portico to move this church from it's one foundation!

And Jesus called the twelve to him and sent them out two by two. Two by two. Do y'all see anything wrong with this picture? The one that has done it, all her life, one by one, gets to talk about doing it "two by two". Ironic you say? No. Payback is what I say. I am convinced that Chris Ayers stayed awake one whole night to come up with something for me to speak about that I may have problems with. Next your Reverend, you understand, gets to talk about unclean spirits. That's not fair. After all, who knows more about unclean spirits than our Right Reverend? And Dean Johnson gets to speak about not taking anything but a stick. Well, that's not fair either. Who knows more about sticks than little boys? Not putting you down here Deano – but you'll always be a "little boy" to me. I used to change his diapers, y'all!

Then it hit me . . . this passage is probably talking about community and what could I possibly say about community that hasn't already been said and taught to us by Rev. Ayers?

So, let's look at the scripture again. Jesus first called them (the twelve disciples) to him. First, you understand, they had to gather. They had to gather of like minds. The twelve & Jesus had to bond. Just like we do every Sunday. We are a group of people of like minds. We come together to get what we need. We need fellowship with each other, we need to hear hymns of praise, we need to voice and hear celebrations, we need to voice and hear concerns, we need to pray together, we need to tithe and we need the sermon. We need the sermon to remind us of what we are to do and to help us focus and to stay in focus. I bet that is what the disciples did. I bet they got "words of wisdom" from Jesus before he sent them out. I bet they caught up on all of the news – all of the stuff that had happened since the last time they were together. I bet Jesus told them their "mission". What they were supposed to do on this trip. I bet they prayed together. I bet they had communion. Oh, not the bread and wine – last supper stuff – because the last supper hadn't happened yet – but I bet they still had communion. You know the kind of communion we have every Sunday. Fellowship, love and beliefs shared . . . important stuff.

Then he sent them out two by two. Go out and do. Two by two. What in the world does that mean? Oh, I could take the easy way out on this part of the scripture. Go out two by two, you know multiples . . . more ground covered, more souls won, yada, yada, yada. Nope. I'm not gonna do it. I'm not gonna take the easy road. Jesus didn't. So why should Miss Donna. Earlier I referred to doing it – most of my life – one by one – on my own. It's been me. Mostly just me. Single mother, sole bread winner / provider for Jason. Nobody has helped me and I'm bad. Right?!?!? Who am I kidding? I can blow that smoke up somebody else's dress, right? Y'all know me better than anybody. I haven't been alone at all. It may not be the same presence every

day – day in and day out – like a husband or wife would be – it’s been different people. Different people to help me/us as I/we needed it. When Jason’s life and mine was threatened by his father – it was my sister, Judy, who moved in with us. To be with us. To help protect us. Wonderful people at important times. When I needed to get out of a relationship with an abusive man – it was my parents that were there to help put the pieces of our lives back together. Wonderful people at important times. When Jason needed help accepting that his father was in jail, God placed Gordon Poole in our lives. You see Gordon is a member at Park Road who had a son who was in prison at the time and Gordon had a prison ministry. Just what Jason needed. Wonderful people at important times. Twice divorced and in pain we found Wedgewood. Wonderful people at important times. When I came home one evening and found Jason having what was later determined to be his first seizure – when called – Vicky Ayers came immediately. She calmed me down and helped get Jason into bed. Wonderful people at important times. When I turned 40 and decided to try comedy – I received nothing but support from this group of people. Wonderful people at important times. When I broke my foot and needed a ride to the hospital – Donna Johnson was there. Wonderful people at important times. And most recently – when Jason needed rides to and from physical therapy – Chris Ayers, Mike Martin, Debbie Kidd and Paul Harter were there. Wonderful people at important times. When I need help keeping it all together emotionally – Tom O’Neal is there. Wonderful people at important times. We’re not two by two at all. We’re one by whatever’s needed.

The point is that two by two is nice in concept. After all it was used in the ark and probably a bunch of other times in the Bible. But two’s ain’t always the way it is. Although some of you are married or living with someone, there are times when you are alone too. I know you know what I mean. But the point of two by two is necessary. My point and I believe it was Jesus’ point is . . . Go out and be aware. Be very aware – because you never know when you’ll be the two to some ONE.