Mark 1:14-20, John 1:43-51

January 21, 2017

 We all have towns that we cannot stand, right? It may be warranted, but most likely not. The first town that I came to dread was the city of Mosinee. Mosinee is about 8 miles south of my hometown. You drive into the city and you smell the most horrid smell ever. It is the smell of the Mosinee paper mill. There is a paper hill just down the hill from my parents’ house and it doesn’t really have much of a smell. But the one in Mosinee makes colored paper and apparently the process makes the worst smell imaginable. I always wondered how anyone could live there with that awful smell. Perhaps they put up with it since it is a major employer in the city. The second city I came to hate was the city of Marshfield. Marshfield is about 45 minutes away from my hometown. A charming little city with 20,000 people. My hatred began because their high school is a main rival of our high school. We always played hard against each other. Games were back and forth and their players were dirty. They are cheaters! They have the black and orange uniforms and they are the bad guy. But once I got to know a few of the athletes after high school, they weren’t so bad. For some reason, whenever I hear of Marshfield, I still get a bit of a chill.

 I ended up spending about 8 years in Minnesota. I have always disliked the Minnesota Vikings with a passion. Those awful purple uniforms. How they always choke in the big moments. While watching their playoff game Sunday, I was delighted to see them surrender their 17-point lead. I had a bit of a smile on my face watching the Vikings seemingly futile attempt to come back and win the game in the final seconds. Then the pass happens. Diggs goes up and catches the prayer that Case Keenum threw. Marcus Williams is right there to make the tackle and he whiffs. Diggs runs to the end zone to win the game. It’s the Minnesota Miracle. I can’t bring myself to be happy for them. I keep thinking that I will be happy to see their hopes rise and then fall when they get beat by the Eagles this evening. The word