

## Worship at Home Sunday 6 February

**Welcome** to Worship at Home for Sunday 6 February.

**Invitation to worship** God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble

**Prayer** Dear Lord, whenever we need help, we look for it in all sorts of places. But there are times when that other help is not available, for all sorts of reasons. And then we turn to you, our refuge and strength, for you are always there. We turn to you now. And whatever problems we have, we lay them before you now. And help us to worship you in Spirit and in truth. Praise be to you. **Amen.**

**Reading** Our reading this time is Luke 5, verses 1-11

One day as Jesus was standing by the Lake of Gennesaret, the people were crowding round him and listening to the word of God. He saw at the water's edge two boats, left there by the fishermen, who were washing their nets. He got into one of the boats, the one belonging to Simon, and asked him to put out a little from the shore. Then he sat down and taught the people from the boat.

When he had finished speaking, he said to Simon, 'Put out into deep water, and let down the nets for a catch.'

Simon answered, 'Master, we've worked hard all night and haven't caught anything. But because you say so, I will let down the nets.'

When they had done so, they caught such a large number of fish that their nets began to break. So they signalled to their partners in the other boat to come and help them, and they came and filled both boats so full that they began to sink.

When Simon Peter saw this, he fell at Jesus' knees and said, 'Go away from me, Lord; I am a sinful man!' For he and all his companions were astonished at the catch of fish they had taken, and so were James and John, the sons of Zebedee, Simon's partners.

Then Jesus said to Simon, 'Don't be afraid; from now on you will fish for people.' So they pulled their boats up on shore, left everything and followed him.

**Reflection** Do you remember singing in Sunday School 'I will make you fishers of men, fishers of men, I will make you fishers of men, if you follow me, if you follow me...'? Well, today's set reading is what it is based on...

That story of the calling of the first disciples is a very revealing passage. After Jesus had spoken to the people from the boat that Simon had lent him, he said 'Put out into deep water and let down the nets for a catch.'

And Simon rejects Jesus' suggestion, 'Master, we have worked hard all night, and haven't caught anything. But, because you say so, I will let down the nets.'

You can see why Simon immediately rejected Jesus' suggestion. They were frustrated and tired and were just longing to get home and have a sleep. But Simon did change his mind. Was it Jesus commanding presence? We just don't know...

Let's leave it there and sing our hymn: 'Jesus calls us' from Singing the Faith, 250.

Jesus calls us! O'er the tumult  
of our life's wild, restless sea,  
day by day his sweet voice sounding,  
saying, 'Christian, follow me':

as, of old, Saint Andrew heard it  
by the Galilean lake,  
turned from home, and toil, and kindred,  
leaving all for his dear sake.

In our joys and in our sorrows,  
days of toil and hours of ease,  
still he calls, in cares and pleasures,  
'Christian, love me more than these.'

Jesus calls us! By thy mercies,  
Saviour, make me hear thy call,  
give our hearts to thine obedience,  
serve and love thee best of all.

**Continuing...** So back to Simon and his objections. So often, when the Lord wants us to do something, it seems so pointless and unrealistic. But there is always time to review that situation and come up with an acceptance, or even a revised proposal. That is particularly relevant for us now as a church as we move on from lockdown into stage two of our Community Links project...

But there are implications for us, too, as individuals:

Someone needs a phone call from me, because I haven't rung them for ages. I ought to do it, but, when you ring them, you can never get them off the line. And I've got a lot to do. I'll do it tomorrow. Someone probably needs some shopping done, but, if I contact them, it always takes a long time for them to decide what they want. So I'll leave it for the moment.

There's a long overdue letter to someone living at quite a distance. They are not expecting anything, so if it doesn't get written or posted today, they won't notice.

We can all think of valid reasons or excuses for not getting round to doing what the Lord requires of us. But, when we do do it, then another building block of God's kingdom is put in place. It may be invisible, unlike the great catch of fish that was made when Simon and the fishers put down their nets. But however small it may seem to me, it is still significant. The Kingdom of God is still growing and we are modest contributors to it.

### **Prayers of Intercession**

We come to our time of prayer. Lord, we are deeply aware how often it is that we do not get around to doing what you require of us. We find excuses and lose opportunities to make our contribution to your kingdom of love and justice. Forgive us and give us greater determination to do your will day by day. We know that you forgive us all our sins and shortcomings, and we are grateful for that liberating truth. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer**

Racial Justice Sunday is next Sunday, but it is never inappropriate to pray for racial justice. We know, Lord, that there is much racial injustice in the world. We confess that we ourselves, because of the world we grew up in and still live in, often harbour prejudices and racial discriminatory thoughts. Help us to be aware of that and never let them determine our actions. And we pray for all those campaigning for racial equality. Even when progress is slow, help them never to be discouraged and renew their determination for justice. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Lord, we pray for the people of Tonga dealing with the aftermath of that underwater volcanic eruption. It may be now disappearing from our headlines, but we know that they will be having to deal with it for many years to come. And we pray for disaster relief and aid workers as they bring relief to those stricken islands. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Lord, we think of all those having to deal with climate change, rising temperatures, rising sea levels, decreasing rainfall and failing crops, too much rain and flooding, And we pray for all governments as they deal with climate change. We pray for ourselves: help us not to contribute unnecessarily to climate change and be faithful stewards of your earth. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Lord, we think of those places when there is conflict or the threat of conflict. Raise up peacemakers there we pray. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Finally, Lord, we pray for all those who particularly need our prayers at this time, because of illness, bereavement or some other reason. We name them before you now ... [pause]... Bless and comfort them we pray.

### **Blessing**

Lord, you are with us all our days. May we all know your peace in our hearts. And the blessing of God Almighty, Father, Son and Holy Spirit be with us all now and in the days to come. **Amen**

*Revd Tony Coates*