

*Christ Church New
Southgate & Friern Barnet*

6 February 2022

Welcome

Song: All creatures of our God and king

Reading: Isaiah 6.1-4

6 In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord, high and exalted, seated on a throne; and the train of his robe filled the temple. ² Above him were seraphim, each with six wings: With two wings they covered their faces, with two they covered their feet, and with two they were flying. ³ And they were calling to one another: “Holy, holy, holy is the Lord Almighty; the whole earth is full of his glory.” ⁴ At the sound of their voices the doorposts and thresholds shook and the temple was filled with smoke.

Song: Holy, holy, holy is the Lord

Reading: Isaiah 6.5-8

⁵ “Woe to me!” I cried. “I am ruined! For I am a man of unclean lips, and I live among a people of unclean lips, and my eyes have seen the King, the Lord Almighty.” ⁶ Then one of the seraphim flew to me with a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with tongs from the altar. ⁷ With it he touched my mouth and said, “See, this has touched your lips; your guilt is taken away and your sin atoned for.” ⁸ Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, “Whom shall I send? And who will go for us?” And I said, “Here am I. Send me!”

Prayer

God is calling us to come and join the story, to come and play our part.

When God asks: ‘Whom shall I send?’

Can we say: ‘Here I am, Lord, send me?’

Here we are, Lord,

with our gifts and our gaps,

our successes and our failures,

our enthusiasm and our doubts,

our passion and our unworthiness.

Help us to hear your call

and to have the courage to say,

‘Here I am, send me.’

In Jesus’ name. **Amen.**

Confession prayer

Song: All my days I will sing this song

Reading: Luke 5.1-11

5 One day Jesus was standing on the shore of Lake Gennesaret while the people pushed their way up to him to listen to the word of God. ² He saw two boats pulled up on the beach; the fishermen had left them and were washing the nets. ³ Jesus got into one of the boats—it belonged to Simon—and asked him to push off a little from the shore. Jesus sat in the boat and taught the crowd.

⁴ When he finished speaking, he said to Simon, “Push the boat out further to the deep water, and you and your partners let down your nets for a catch.”

⁵ “Master,” Simon answered, “we worked hard all night long and caught nothing. But if you say so, I will let down the nets.” ⁶ They let them down and caught such a large number of fish that the nets were about to break. ⁷ So they motioned to their partners in the other boat to come and help them. They came and filled both boats so full of fish that the boats were about to sink. ⁸ When Simon Peter saw what had happened, he fell on his knees before Jesus and said, “Go away from me, Lord! I am a sinful man!”

⁹ He and the others with him were all amazed at the large number of fish they had

caught. ¹⁰The same was true of Simon's partners, James and John, the sons of Zebedee. Jesus said to Simon, "Don't be afraid; from now on you will be catching people."

¹¹They pulled the boats up on the beach, left everything, and followed Jesus.

Sermon: Liberating fish

It had been a difficult night; we hadn't caught any fish. Fisherman Simon Peter – I've won prizes for fishing, I'm good at fishing, I am supposed to be able to catch fish. What made that night all the more annoying was that we knew where the fish should have been because we'd fished that lake for decades. If there was anything to know about that lake, we knew it. We made a good living from fishing and we were comfortable in our lives. But we were facing going home without any fish, going home without being able to sell and fish, and that meant no money for the day. I was quite grumpy.

Now we owned our boat, we worked in partnership with James and John. We offered local, organic fish fresh from the shores of Galilee or Gennesaret - whatever you want to call it. So, no fish for one night was a pain and explaining to the customers why they couldn't have their regular order wasn't pleasant, but we were not going to starve. We were, however, fed up. And a bit put out, we thought we knew everything about fishing and that night we didn't.

I'd met Jesus before, he'd been at my house a few times. He had healed my mother in law. I'd heard him teaching in the synagogue. So after our dull night, we were glad to see him coming down to the lake with a crowd following him as normal. Turning a boat into a pulpit was an obvious choice, the beach became like a little theatre and then everyone could hear him at least.

We'd just finished washing the seaweed off our linen nets when Jesus told us go fishing again. The type of nets we use are called trammel nets. They are made of linen, with little weights all round the edge. They are night fishing nets. The fish cannot see them at night, but they can see them in the day. I remember thinking: Jesus you don't know squat about fishing. But he had made my mother in law better, so we thought we might as well.

And then right there in the middle of the lake, we hauled in the biggest catch ever. There were just so many fish, too big for us – we called to James and John. There were so many fish our boats were sinking, they were taking on water. It was then I realised the truth about Jesus: he wasn't a magician or a faith healer. As those beautiful fish flapped about in the nets, as we hauled our nets in with every ounce of strength we had – I felt my knees go.

We'd worked so hard, we thought we knew so much, and then we met Jesus. Jesus who knew where the fish were, Jesus who provided such an abundance of fish it was overwhelming. At that moment I glimpsed the very glory of god and his overflowing gift of creation to us. I sensed the sovereignty of God as our creator like I never have before. Do you ever feel like that?

You can be just walking along in a park, and suddenly a beautiful tree takes your breath away, a delicate flower in the middle of a scrub yard makes you smile, or so many fish pour into your boat that is going break? I saw the hand of God at work, I saw his power and his grace. I didn't feel like a loopy tree-hugger, I felt like the smallest most ridiculous person in the world. For when I saw just what Jesus could do, how intimate his knowledge of creation was, I felt small and even smaller for questioning Jesus. That's why I fell to my knees. For when I met with Jesus and sensed

his great love and power, it made me think about my life and it made me want to hide.

In all honesty I was scared. Why was Jesus hanging out with me? What would the road ahead look like? What was I gonna do with all these fish – did I even have enough salt and jars to brine them all? What was I going to do with the abundance of God’s provision and love for me?

I didn’t think I was worthy. My life was ordinary, some of my habits were questionable. I was not wise, or clever, not powerful or rich, what did Jesus want with me?

There were hundreds of people there that day, and yet Jesus spoke to me. And he said – do not be afraid. Now even I know, that when someone like Jesus says that – there is trouble ahead. Mary said that’s what the angel said to her before Jesus was born. And it’s all over the scriptures. I’d asked him to go away, and he said don’t be afraid. Then he dished out a dodgy pun – from now on you’ll be catching people. You see I’d been catching fish all my life, so now I’d be catching people. It didn’t make much sense to me either - what kind of net would work?

Roll on a few years, after Jesus died and rose again, he sent the Holy Spirit to us all. It wasn’t till that Pentecost day that I think I finally understood what he’d said all those years before. On that day 3000 people decided to follow Jesus because of my sermon. Catching people was about sharing God’s new life, offering everyone a chance for liberation and a fresh start with God. Just as I had met with Jesus on that boat, just as he had spoken with authority into my life, now I was calling on others to meet with Jesus in the same way and live in freedom.

Have you met with Jesus in that way? Have you come to a point when you suddenly

realise who God is and greatness of his creation? Do you know just how much God loves us? Have you felt something of the abundance of God’s grace overflowing every cup, vessel and boat with wonder? What did you do?

When I saw that my boat was breaking, creaking and groaning under so many fish. I found I had a bit of an itchy eye. Who am I kidding ?! Men cry too you know. As I saw my boat struggling, I saw that Jesus was right there with me. His power and love were overwhelming everything I knew and I couldn’t handle it. But I learnt that when I was honest with Jesus, he made me the best person I really could be. If he can use me – just a fisherman, to build the first church ever, imagine what he could do with you?

Response

As Peter falls to his knees he cries kyrie meaning Lord in Greek. This is the first part of kyrie eleison which means Lord have mercy on us. It is a phrase that has created songs and liturgies across denominations and churches around the world. We ask today what do we need to ask the Lord for mercy for? Let’s place our hands on our knees now and spend a short time in silence.

Eternal God

As Peter met with Jesus,
He became aware of his sin,
and knelt before him.
As we meet with Jesus,
Show us how to change
Help us not to hide from you.

Lord have mercy

Christ have mercy

Eternal God

Your love is forever
Through your Son Jesus,
You call us to love you
To love our neighbour
To love our enemy.

Lord have mercy
Christ have mercy

Eternal God
Your kingdom is justice and peace,
You call us to be citizens of hope,
Overflowing with integrity.

Lord have mercy.
Christ have mercy

Eternal God
In Jesus you show us that to be holy,
Is to sit with the outcast,
To welcome the unloved,
To love with heart and mind
With all our strength.
You call us to leave everything
And to follow you

Lord have mercy
Christ have mercy

Christ Jesus came into the world
to save sinners just like us.
To all who confess sin
and choose to lead a new life
Jesus says: our sins are forgiven.
And he also says: follow me.

Lord of the deep,
be with us when we feel out of our depth.
Lord of the waves,
send us where we are most needed.
Lord of the shore,
bring us safely home.
In Jesus' name.
Amen.

Song: Jesus you call us

Communion

Intercession led by Roger Oram

Song: God, the maker of the heavens,

Blessing

May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and
the love of God, and the fellowship of the
Holy Spirit be with us all, now and
evermore. Amen.