

The Call and the Choice and the Cost – the Purpose.

Fifth Sunday after Trinity 2014

The Collect;

GRANT, O Lord, we beseech thee, that the course of this world may be so peaceably ordered by thy governance, that thy Church may joyfully serve thee in all godly quietness; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

The Epistle is written in Peter's first - chapter 3: beginning at the 8th verse.

1 Peter 3: 8-15

⁸ Finally, all of you, have unity of spirit, sympathy, love for one another, a tender heart, and a humble mind.

⁹ Do not repay evil for evil or abuse for abuse; but, on the contrary, repay with a blessing. It is for this that you were called—that you might inherit a blessing.

¹⁰ For 'Those who desire life and desire to see good days, let them keep their tongues from evil and their lips from speaking deceit;

¹¹ let them turn away from evil and do good; let them seek peace and pursue it.

¹² For the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous, and his ears are open to their prayer. But the face of the Lord is against those who do evil.'

¹³ Now who will harm you if you are eager to do what is good?

¹⁴But even if you do suffer for doing what is right, you are blessed.

Do not fear what they fear, * and do not be intimidated,

¹⁵but in your hearts sanctify Christ as Lord. Always be ready to make your defence to anyone who demands from you an account of the hope that is in you;

Here ended the Epistle

The Holy Gospel is written in the 5th chapter of St Luke beginning at the 1st verse.

Glory be to You O Lord

Luke 5: 1-11

¹Once while Jesus was standing beside the lake of Gennesaret, and the crowd was pressing in on him to hear the word of God,

²he saw two boats there at the shore of the lake; the fishermen had gone out of them and were washing their nets.

³He got into one of the boats, the one belonging to Simon, and asked him to put out a little way from the shore. Then he sat down and taught the crowds from the boat.

⁴When he had finished speaking, he said to Simon, 'Put out into the deep water and let down your nets for a catch.'

⁵Simon answered, 'Master, we have worked all night long but have caught nothing. Yet if you say so, I will let down the nets.'

⁶When they had done this, they caught so many fish that their nets were beginning to break.

⁷So they signalled to their partners in the other boat to come and help them. And they came and filled both boats, so that they began to sink.

⁸*But when Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, 'Go away from me, Lord, for I am a sinful man!'*

⁹*For he and all who were with him were amazed at the catch of fish that they had taken;*

¹⁰*and so also were James and John, sons of Zebedee, who were partners with Simon. Then Jesus said to Simon, 'Do not be afraid; from now on you will be catching people.'*

¹¹*When they had brought their boats to shore, they left everything and followed him.*

This is the Gospel of the Lord
Praise to you O Christ

Grave digger finds 6,000 year old polished stone axe in village churchyard [*our churchyard*]....

Fossilised forest remains emerging out of the sand at Druridge

From beneath the dunes at Low Hauxley;

- evidence of a huge tsunami which helped cut Britain off from the Continent 8000 years ago
- more than 10,000 flints which showing the area was well used by Stone Age people
- stone slabs from two Bronze Age grave chambers used later by the occupants of an Iron Age roundhouse to make a nice patio area

Things emerging from the ground have always been a passion of mine

that right here on our very doorstep
we find all these clues as to what's
gone on here over the generations

and now Dick Quinby has set up camp next to those same
dunes

***and I wonder what they are going to make of that in 8,000
years' time!***

Move;

On a drought-dried shore of the Sea of Galilee in January 1986 –
two brothers [both fishermen] found
an object poking up out of the mud.

Twelve days later - an ancient vessel saw the light of day for the
first time since it sank nearly 2,000 years ago.

Dick and I have seen those timbers [*first-hand*]
and with a little imagination you can just about
make out that there might have been just enough room –
... for about fifteen men –
.... the odd bit of fishing tackle –
.... and not much else.

No one knows exactly what that boat was used for –
or much less who used it –
but that still hasn't stopped it being branded the ***"Jesus Boat"*** -
and now - over a million Christians

have been there to see those relics for themselves

.... and put their own interpretation on them

For me the relevance of those bits of decayed cedar and oak
provide a direct *[an indisputable]*
link with the community – *[the ordinary people]*
who lived around the same time
when Jesus started out on his ministry.

From that community came the very first followers; -

.... the followers who were willing
to cast out their nets as instructed by Jesus.

.... the followers who put behind them *[abandoned]*
all that they had – their livelihood – and - their families.

¹¹*When they had brought their boats to shore, they left everything
and followed him.*

Those remains *[on the shoreline]*
epitomise the call –
the commitment
and the cost of following Jesus!

Move

It had all started with
a bit of resourcefulness on the part of Jesus

It seems he'd begun to teach a group by the shore –

but the crowd got bigger [*and bigger*]
until they simply ran out of space for everyone.

So he improvised.

To this day there's a sequence of inlets
where you can push out a little from the shore –

and talking in a quite natural voice –
anyone on the slopes of the inlet hears you –
more clearly in fact –
than if you were right there on the shore with them.

Jesus was simply exploiting the geography of the area
[*and the ready availability of the boat*]

Having commandeered the boat –
he then proceed to put the fishermen on the spot

On this occasion they'd put a whole night-shift in
with little or nothing to show for their efforts;

the last thing they'd normally do
would be to start fishing again by daylight.

But what Jesus said – they did –

.... that's the sort of impression he made on people –
even on those hard-working –
no-nonsense fishermen.

The rest is as they say –

.... a huge catch –
.... quick messages for help from the other boat –
.... the struggle –
.... and then the moment of truth –

.... *an invitation???*

And Jesus said;

.... *"Don't be afraid; from now on you will be catching people."*

and that revelation must have
have been an even bigger surprise to them
than the catch they'd just landed!!

Pause

.... but if we pause a moment

[.... *if we pause*] might it be to recognise
an even more astonishing truth.

That this invitation is not exclusive to

Simon, Andrew, James and John

.... it's not a ***"once-and-for-them"*** bidding

This invitation [*this bidding – this summons*] extends even to this day

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This invitation is to each and every one of us here this morning!

.... and if that be the case
.... if that's a reality

It sort of begs the question –

.... could this be our moment

.... the moment –
that you and I
are being called to something fresh in our lives?

Move;

We know of course what happen next to those men

but what if *[[what if]*

Simon, Andrew, James and John had said simply

“[simply] NO”

what if they'd said

“.... get back to your work bench *[oh carpenter from Nazareth]*

What if they'd **“Chosen” NOT** to follow?

It was John Ortberg who wrote this in his book “The Life You Always Wanted” :-

Jesus confronted people directly with the choice to become a follower. He came with the gracious announcement that it is now possible to live in the presence and under the reign of God.

It is possible to live in such a way that when people see us, they will say to themselves, "Wow" I didn't know that a life could look like that!"

This is the race for which we were born. But we will not drift into such a life.

in other words;

.... we ***have a choice to make as well ...***

***.... to respond –
or not to respond***

***.... to follow
or to stay in the comfort and security of our boat***

***.... to count the cost
or not to count the cost***

Move;

And we make this ***Choice*** recognising that;

"following Jesus" - always involves a **cost**.

Jesus knew all about **cost**

right at the start of his public ministry –
the one called to prepare the way [*The Baptist*]
was arrested and brutally murdered in prison.

but this did nothing to deter Jesus
and nor did it discourage his early followers either

and nor should it deter us [*from*];

.... from taking on all the risk and the dangers –
.... the loss of material possessions
.... and all the implications of moving in
new and uncharted directions.

Christianity recognises common sense
and the place of thoughtful restraint –
but there are times when common sense and moderation
are the enemies of obedience.

Move;

I've mentioned the **call** – the **choice**, and the **costs**, but we mustn't
forget - the **purpose**.

"Follow me and I will make you fishers of people!"

Jesus has a job for each and every one of us –
[but that's for a whole different conversation]

for now it enough to know
no one is barred!

there can be no greater purpose than to allow ourselves
to turn to Him

and allow Him to turn us into the sort of people
who instinctively live to catch others for Him

and is that not what ***Discipleship*** is all about?

I going to leave it at that for this morning

.... other than to say

.... other than to say to each and every one of you;

Could this be our Time?

Your Time

My Time ...

To hear his call –

and abandon the security our boat –

And commit ourselves once more - to follow the Christ??

AMEN