

Morning Praise @ Home 6th February 2022

Opening prayer

Blessed are you, God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, you have blessed us with every spiritual blessing; enable us by your power to be true to our calling and live holy and blameless lives before you all our days, through Jesus Christ our Lord, who is alive and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, for ever and ever. **Amen**

6

Confession Let us admit to God the sin which always confronts us.

Lord God, we have sinned against you; we have done evil in your sight. We are sorry and repent. Have mercy on us according to your love. Wash away our wrongdoing and cleanse us from our sin. Renew a right spirit within us and restore us to the joy of your salvation, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen
cf Psalm 51

Absolution May the Father of all mercies cleanse *us* from *our* sins, and restore *us* in his image to the praise and glory of his name, through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

6

Bible Readings **Psalm 138** **Luke 5: 1 – 11**

Reflection from Ruth

We are told that the Gospel reading today takes place at The Lake of Gennesaret, this is Luke's name for the Sea of Galilee. You will also hear about Simon, this is of course Simon Peter, who will become known as just Peter. The fishermen were cleaning their nets after a long night. They would have been tired and discouraged after a long, fruitless night. They were ready to call it a day. It was time to go home, to eat, and to get some sleep. The crowds on the other hand were pressing in on Jesus, he was the latest news and they crowded around like people today chase film stars, hoping for a significant word or a touch. Jesus had an answer to the crowd control issues, he 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" (v. 3). This is Simon's first appearance in this Gospel, and it is his first act of obedience. Given his fatigue and frustration, we could not expect Simon to be in the best mood. He was surely ready to go home—not back in his boat. Many fishermen don't really mind if they don't catch anything; getting away from it all in beautiful surroundings with birds and trees and all the joys of nature is sufficient benefit in its own right. For the disciples it must have been a very different matter, they were not fishing for fun, this was their livelihood and no fish meant no money, they would eventually go hungry if there was no catch. When Jesus told the disciples how to fish it is hard for us to understand just how fed up they must have been. Jesus' instructions to Peter were counter-intuitive. Peter was the fisherman. He knew better than Jesus the carpenter where to find fish. The fishermen had fished all night without results. The fish were not there, a fact of which they had ample proof. The fishermen were washing the nets, wrapping things up so that they could call it a day (v. 2). They were eager to go home. Peter's common sense told him that there was no reason to try again. He must have hated to ask the other men to get the newly cleaned nets dirty again. So Simon spoke out

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

He voiced his doubt to Jesus, but nevertheless he addressed Jesus as Master, a title used for Jesus only by the disciples. He then said, "Yet if you say so, I will lay down the nets" (v. 5). It was this obedience in the face of doubt that opened the door to an abundant miracle. The followers of Jesus are not necessarily expected to understand, but they are expected to obey. This is the kind of statement which Jesus must have wanted to hear. The disciples obey him not because it sounds like a good idea, or because they agree with him, they are obedient because it is Jesus who tells them.

How often are we prepared to do the same thing, to put out and do something which we might disagree with ourselves, just because we think that Jesus might want us to do it? This is real Christian faith in action and surely it is what has delivered abundant results for so many people who wanted to obey God throughout history. It is the same obedient commitment which empowered so many people through the Bible, people like Moses and David, Joseph and Paul. When I hear these words spoken by Simon, I remember the statement which Mary the mother of Jesus made at the first miracle in Cana. His mother said to the servants, "Do whatever he tells you." John Chapter 2:5. I am not surprised that Simon praised Jesus after the great catch of fish, but I am impressed by his willingness to put to sea with Jesus. Surely the greater miracle was not Jesus telling the disciples how to catch fish, it was Simon Peter obeying Jesus and putting out to sea?

So we have the message laid out for us, the pattern for Christian behaviour is about listening and obedience. The disciples hear the words of Jesus and they obey him, "Go into the deep water and let your nets down for a catch." (verse 4). The lesson is clear, it is only by listening to the words of Jesus that they are able to achieve real success. Surely we are supposed to ask ourselves how many of our failures can be traced back to the need for us to take time to hear God speak before we act on our own instruction.

Affirmation of faith

Do you believe and trust in God the Father, source of all being and life, the one for whom we exist?

We believe and trust in him.

Do you believe and trust in God the Son, who took our human nature, died for us and rose again?

We believe and trust in him.

Do you believe and trust in God the Holy Spirit, who gives life to the people of God and makes Christ known in the world? **We believe and trust in him. This is the faith of the Church.**

This is our faith. We believe and trust in one God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Amen.

Prayers of intercession led by Ruth

We pray for your church across the world as well as here in Burton. We pray for those who take the message of Christ to all communities in all countries. For those who teach, help, and care for others. For those who work without thanks or recognition from their fellow men, but who work for Christ's sake

Lord, in your mercy, Hear our prayer.

We pray for all people around the world. For those who are oppressed, who are ignored, whose voices are unheard by the majority. For those who feel they have no part in making decisions which affect them. We pray for the weak, for those who are old – and young. For those who are passed-by by today's society.

Lord, in your mercy, Hear our prayer.

We pray for those who suffer alone. For those who have no friends or relations who care for them. We pray for 'neighbours' throughout the world: for those willing to give a helping hand to strangers. We pray for those who work amongst people in society who have little or no material help. No food, no shelter, no friends, who have nothing except charity from others.

Lord in your mercy, Hear our prayer.

We pray for all who are without faith, hope or love. We pray for those who are sick, desperate or bereaved and for those who care for them and seek to bring them relief from their suffering. Give them your strength and courage to carry on and hope for the future. We pray especially for all those known to us who are in special need of our prayers, and we remember them now in a moment of silence ...

Lord, in your mercy, Hear our prayer.

We remember in our hearts those whom we love and who have died. As we look forward with hope, we know we have your love. We ask that we may help bring your love to those who have lost loved ones...

Jesus Christ is the light of the world, a light which no darkness can quench. We remember before God those who have died and light a candle to symbolise the light of Christ, which eternally shines and brings hope. We remember ...

You turn our darkness into light: in your light shall we see light.

Merciful Father, accept these prayers for the sake of your Son, Jesus Christ our Saviour. Amen

The Lord's Prayer As our Saviour taught us, so we pray

Our Father who art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name, Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us. Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory forever and ever. Amen

Closing prayer

God give you grace to become the people He has called you to be,
that you may live and work to his praise and glory,
and the blessing of God Almighty, Father, Son and Holy Spirit
be with us and remain with us always. **Amen.**

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord. **In the name of Christ. Amen**