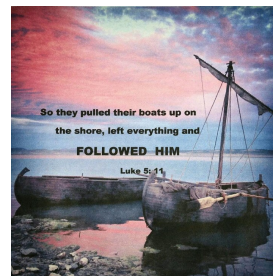


**Dorset South & West. Written Service.**  
**Sunday 9th February 2025.**  
**Prepared by Revd Jean Quick.**



**Call to Worship. Psalm 138:1** I will praise you, Lord, with all my heart;

### **STF 17**

With gladness we worship, rejoice as we sing,  
free hearts and free voices how blessed to bring;  
the old, thankful story shall scale thine abode,  
thou King of all glory, most bountiful God.

Thy right would we give thee - true homage thy  
due,  
and honour eternal, the universe through,  
with all thy creation, earth, heaven and sea,  
in one acclamation we celebrate thee.

Renewed by thy Spirit, redeemed by thy Son,  
thy children revere thee for all thou hast done.  
O Father! Returning to love and to light,  
thy children are yearning to praise thee aright.

We join with the angels, and so there is given  
from earth alleluia, in answer to heaven.  
Amen! Be thou glorious below and above,  
redeeming, victorious, and infinite Love!

### **Prayers of adoration and confession**

Dear Lord with the psalmist we praise you with our whole heart for your many blessings and love to us. When we think of your splendour and glory we are humbled and blessed that you think of us in such individual and wonderful ways. You are the king of glory and you delight in blessing us with so many precious moments and delights. We are not even able to number the blessings that you have showered upon us this past week and yet you still keep on giving and giving. We bring you our praise and thanksgiving for your amazing love. **Amen**

Lord it's our heartfelt desire to praise you by how we respond to your love. However you know our innermost desires and thoughts. Forgive us for the many times we fail to live up to your ways. When we are mean spirited and half hearted. When our actions and words do not reflect who you call us to be. Renew us by your grace and help us to be the people that you call us to be. **Amen**

### **Bible reading. Isaiah 6:1-8. Isaiah's Commission**

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. 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. And they were calling to one another: "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord Almighty; the whole earth is full of his glory." At the sound of their voices the doorposts and thresholds shook and the temple was filled with smoke. "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." Then one of the seraphim flew to me with a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with tongs from the altar. With it he touched my mouth and said, "See, this has touched your lips; your guilt is taken away and your sin atoned for." 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!"

### **Luke 5:1-11. Jesus Calls His First Disciples.**

One day as Jesus was standing by the Lake of Gennesaret, the people were crowding around 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 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 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**

How many disciples can you name? What struck me when I read this passage from the gospel reading was the words in the title, 'His first disciple's'. So there's more to follow. Secondly the last few words in the reading challenges us, 'So they.....left everything and followed him.' We are not told how many 'they'

represented, but they followed him unhindered. So I guess it is difficult to know or name all who left everything to follow Him. I wonder what caught your attention? This is a scripture we have read many times. Often when we read familiar texts something catches our attention as if for the first time.

My two thoughts also beg the question about what is a disciple? Obviously you have to respond and then be prepared to leave stuff behind. You have to be obedient too and do what you're asked to do.

It's the leaving behind that makes me ask lots of questions. Boats and fishing tackle don't come cheap and yet the fishermen respond to Jesus' request not once but twice in this passage of scripture.

Just imagine the scenario, they have fished all night and caught nothing. Tired, probably hungry and wanting to get the nets washed and stowed so that they can get some rest and refreshment. Then a traveling preacher gets into one of the two boats and asks to be taken out from the shoreline. He was obviously a crowd puller and someone who despite their immediate needs, had a commanding presence. One wonders what he was saying to the crowd? Then when he had finished speaking he asked Simon to pull back into deep water and let down the nets. Simon tells him it's a waste of time, they worked all night and caught nothing. It's a pointless exercise, they are tired, probably despondent and remember that they have just washed the nets. So putting them out again will mean more work and to what avail? Can you imagine being in that boat? You're tired, you have given your all and some stranger tries to tell you to get fishing again! You're the expert, you know your trade and your being asked to go fish by some perfect stranger. You have given him the use of your boat to speak to the crowd despite it being time for your rest after a hard night's work. Now he wants even more from you and to what purpose?

I guess we have all at one time or other tried to give advice or instructions to someone who we assumed knew nothing about the subject, only to find that they were the experts in that field. Now we are older and wiser we wouldn't presume to tell someone how to do their job. In the realm of fishing you could almost call that sort of person, 'a back seat fisherman.' I have been the driver on a few occasions where someone who doesn't drive has tried giving me instructions. Back seat drivers or just nervous passengers? So what do we have in the boat? Back seat fishing instructor or who?

This person seems to have insider knowledge because when they follow his instructions, they get the best catch of their lives!

Whatever the preacher had said before the catch suddenly took hold of Simon as he not only hears but sees with his own eyes Jesus' power and presence. Simon's response is similar to Isaiah's encounter with God's presence in the temple. In Isaiah 6 there's that wonderful poetic retelling of the experience, '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.'

Both Isaiah and Simon are so overawed that they see themselves in a pale reflection to God's glory. Simon says, "Go away from me, Lord; I am a sinful man!" and Isaiah, "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."

I wonder what our experience's have been when we have been in the presence of true greatness? I would like to say in the presence of God, but maybe that's too personal. So let us stay with true greatness.

I used to in my youth be a royalty watcher and follower. Especially the Queen and particularly on Maundy Thursday. I would travel to wherever she was going to be and stand with the crowds just hoping to get a photo and a good view as she passed by. I remember when she came to Worcester and I got a front position at the barrier outside the cathedral. I had my little instamatic camera ready but I was definitely not ready for what happened. She left the cathedral and walked right across the roundabout to where I was standing with the crowd. I was speechless and she knew it, but she did the most amazing thing. She took hold of our awestruck silence and said to me, "I am going to explain to everyone here and show them what is in my nosegay while you take some lovely pictures." I have never forgotten that moment and how gracious and thoughtful she was. All I could think about was perhaps my old duffel coat and warm clothes were not what I would have wanted to have worn in the presence of her majesty. I wished I could have said something worthwhile. However she accepted us in the crowd just as we were and gave us a moment of sheer joy.

Now if that is how great people of our time can make us feel, how much more when we are in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ? It's no wonder two pillars of the Old and New Testament as they were to become, had the same reaction in the presence of the greatness of God. To feel utterly unworthy and out of place. And yet neither are made to feel that they are rejected or undesirable. Who knows, possibly both had something that they were ashamed about. Isaiah said he had unclean lips. Oh we wish we could say nice things and not things that are unpleasant or unkind. Untruthful or disrespectful. Unclean lips! Simon tired and worn out from the arduous task of fishing with nets. One can imagine his lips might not always say the right things. Later in Mark 8:33 we read, But when Jesus turned and looked at his disciples, he rebuked (Simon) Peter. "Get behind me, Satan!" he said. "You do not have in mind the concerns of God, but merely human concerns." The incident is also in Mathews gospel and in Luke we read about Peter taking a sword to try to protect Jesus. Simon Peter was definitely someone who often spoke or acted without thinking about the consequences. He opened his mouth before engaging his brain! More kindly one commentator recently suggested he might have had what we know as ADHD. Noteworthy it is to Simon Peter and his confession of faith that Jesus promised to build his church upon, despite his faults and failings.

Coming back to our gospel reading today and this thought that they left everything to follow Jesus. I guess I might have wanted to stow the boats and fishing tackle away safely first. As I said before they are costly

items. You don't just want to leave them rotting and festering on the lakeside. However at the beginning of the passage the fishermen, albeit temporarily, had left their boats whilst washing their nets. The task in hand was more important than holding onto what could be perceived as their treasured possessions.

When we think back over our lives there are many things we have had to abandon whether temporarily or permanently as life changes the way we are headed. St Paul wrote to the church in Corinth, "when I was a child I spoke like a child, thought like a child...". We know full well what he meant. We can't begin to count the things we have grown out of. Sometimes life experiences whether traumatic or joyful have meant that our lives have changed course and some things or ideas we thought we could not live without have had to be discarded. Are there some things we have hung onto that we should have left behind? Things that make us feel like Simon or indeed Isaiah, that we are sinful and unworthy?

I began by asking how many disciples can you name as the passage just tells us about the first ones. There are of course the disciples we can name from the scriptures. St Paul even claims that he was called "as one untimely born". He of course was not one of the disciples of Jesus' time but one of the early church's earliest disciples. Since then more people than we can number have left everything in order to be a disciple. Perhaps one or two of the most influential figures I can recall are: Martin Luther King Jr. His life seemed to be a consistent lesson in "do the right thing in the right way." Or Mother Teresa. She made sacrifices most of us would never attempt. She helped the poorest of the poor. One last example but there are many many more, Nelson Mandela: He gave us one of the all-time greatest lessons about forgiveness.

No doubt there have been innumerable numbers of people who have left everything to be disciples. I am always humbled when I read rolls of honour about missionary's who left everything to go to far and distant places. In the early years many did not make, as we might say, 'old bones'. We will have met many many more people in our own lives who we describe as 'saints'. Their names are not recorded on any rolls of honour but we know that they exemplified everything that Jesus asks of us. To let go of what encumbrances hold us back and to follow the way of Christ.

I remember being invited to meet with Rev Elsie Chamberlain, a female Congregational Minister and radio broadcaster. She was the first woman minister in the RAF and a leader of the Congregational Federation of churches that formed in 1972. She had a very influential ministry, at the time I met her she was a Minister serving in Nottingham and a church in Devon travelling each week between two substantial congregations and in her 70's. Sitting in the Nottingham church cafeteria with this saintly but highly practical woman. The lady on the till loudly interrupted our conversation by shouting out to Rev Elsie, "he's run out without paying!" I was ready to make chase and catch him. Elsie held onto my arm and said, "God loves him and we must try." I often wish I had her Godly quick foresight to see what is important and what needs to be left behind so that we can follow the way of Christ unencumbered. If only we could see that our guilt and sin has been taken away and our sins atoned for." Then with the words of Isaiah we would be able to say, 'I heard the voice of the Lord saying, "Whom shall I send? And who will go for us?"' And we would be able to respond, "Here am I. Send me!"

### STF 673

Will you come and follow me  
if I but call your name?  
Will you go where you don't know  
and never be the same?  
Will you let my love be shown,  
will you let my name be known,  
will you let my life be grown  
in you and you in me?

Will you leave yourself behind  
if I but call your name?  
Will you care for cruel and kind  
and never be the same?  
Will you risk the hostile stare  
should your life attract or scare?  
Will you let me answer prayer  
in you and you in me?

Will you let the blinded see  
if I but call your name?  
Will you set the prisoners free  
and never be the same?  
Will you kiss the leper clean,

and do such as this unseen,  
and admit to what I mean  
in you and you in me?

Will you love the 'you' you hide  
if I but call your name?  
Will you quell the fear inside  
and never be the same?  
Will you use the faith you've found  
to reshape the world around,  
through my sight and touch and sound  
in you and you in me?

Lord, your summons echoes true  
when you but call my name.  
Let me turn and follow you  
and never be the same.  
In your company I'll go  
where your love and footsteps show.  
Thus I'll move and live and grow  
in you and you in me.

**Prayers of Intercession :** As we come to God in prayer for the needs of others let us ask God that we might accept His invitation to be ever-mindful of the needs of others, offering our prayers on behalf of God's

community in the church and the world.

Let us hold a brief silence while we contemplate the situations that are upper most in our minds.

Teach the church what it means to love and serve our neighbours, keep us from hypocrisy and fear that we may truly see and reach out towards all people. We pray for our churches that they might be places of worship and welcome. That in all our churches we might discern and carry out your will through our words and actions so that many might come to know the gospel. Lord in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Teach humanity to care for the earth as you care for it, help us to see the interconnectedness of the world and work to preserve what you have entrusted to us. We are fortunate to have more than we need. We easily forget the impact that our perceived needs can have upon our world. We pray for all who are trying to redress the balance of the many crises in our world. Whether through food banks and similar initiatives or those trying to reduce global warming and ecological destruction. Lord in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Teach our leaders the ways of justice and peace, and grant us all the humility to set the welfare of all over our own personal desires. We think of the many conflicts that are happening in the world today. We all need to find ways to live in harmony and peace. We pray for all working to bring peace and equality in our world. We pray for an end to all that dehumanises and destroys the lives of so many. Lord in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Teach us to reach out in love and support to those around us. Teach us how to best love and support those who are suffering in mind body or soul (*especially those known personally to us*) and grant us the courage to care for them. We thank you for the work and sacrifice of so many people in the various caring roles in our community. For all in the many different fields of medical practice, for care workers and those in supportive roles looking after the most vulnerable in society. Teach us how to walk in your ways and how to best serve the needs our communities and neighbours with the gifts and resources you have given us. Lord in your mercy, **hear our prayer. Amen.**

### **The Lord's Prayer.**

#### **STF 661**

Give me the faith which can remove  
and sink the mountain to a plain;  
give me the childlike praying love,  
which longs to build thy house again;  
thy love, let it my heart o'erpower,  
and all my simple soul devour.

I would the precious time redeem,  
and longer live for this alone:  
to spend, and to be spent, for them  
who have not yet my Saviour known;  
fully on these my mission prove,  
and only breathe, to breathe thy love.

My talents, gifts, and graces, Lord,  
into thy blessèd hands receive;  
and let me live to preach thy word,  
and let me to thy glory live;  
my every sacred moment spend  
in publishing the sinners' friend.

Enlarge, inflame, and fill my heart  
with boundless charity divine:  
so shall I all my strength exert,  
and love them with a zeal like thine;  
and lead them to thy open side,  
the sheep for whom their Shepherd died.

### **The Blessing**

The buzz of the world interrupts our lives and fills our ears  
Call us into Your way of life, O God  
The complaints of others settle in our mind and clouds our vision  
Lead us into Your vision of life, O God  
The cries of the poor, the oppressed and the outcast pierce our hearts  
Guide us in Your example of living for others, O God  
Fill our hearts, fill our eyes, fill our ears with Your love, O God  
Let us be Your hands and feet in the world, O God.  
And the Blessing of God Almighty,  
the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit  
be with us all evermore. **Amen.**

