



St Marylebone
Parish Church

5th Sunday after Trinity 2020, 8.30am BCP Holy Communion

Readings:

First Epistle of St Peter 3.8-15

The Holy Gospel according to St Luke 5.1-11

‘Launch out into the deep’. Those amazing words of the Lord to St Peter. As ever with St Luke, he is not simply talking about fishing. Those words are *heavy*.

We have all found ourselves in the deep of late. Uncertainties have sprung up where once we felt solid ground – different for each of us: worries about health, family, housing, money, public transport, talking to friends.

In strange new ways, we have found ourselves in deep water.

Let’s look again at St Peter.

He knew these waters, better than the lines on his own face. He had lived and breathed fishing these waters since he was a child.

And Jesus invites St Peter to find the unfamiliar in the familiar.

There’s our first lesson. In the deeps in which we have found ourselves as individuals, as a church, and as a society, we are being invited to discover something new.

St Peter discovers sustenance: buckets – boat loads! – of fish. Gift. Abundance of life in the form of the miraculous catch.

What St Peter *should* have done next is take the fish, sell it, buy two new boats and set himself up as the Donald Trump of the Sea of Galilee. This is the day

Simon Peter was made and established in the middle classes by a sudden windfall.

He doesn't though. He walks away from all he's ever wanted, all he was bred for, all his life has been about. To Follow the Lord. St Luke's economy with words is astounding. It deserves the 'doom doom doom' at the end of Eastenders: 'And when they had brought their ships to land, they forsook all, and followed him'.

The first lesson was that we are being called to discover something new in these deeps in which we find ourselves, brothers and sisters.

Here's the second lesson. Ss Peter, James and John had discovered that their daily bread for which they slaved night and day was *not* their priority anymore. The gift of wealth and security was no longer *enough*. That abundance of life in worldly terms was suddenly the *poorer* relation of what Jesus was offering.

And what was Jesus offering? We know.

3 years of wandering.

Hardship and poverty.

Mockery and abuse from crowds.

Ostracisation and condemnation by the right-thinking elite.

And in the end martyrdom and painful death.

And yet, they went.

And, even more importantly, a few years later, having met the risen Jesus, having realised what this meant, this disbelieving, squabbling, unreliable band of apostles, so fervent to begin with, and so quick to slink away into the night when things got really tough (remember St Peter by the fire outside when Jesus was in chains, inside, the night before He died? 'I do not know the man!') those men, that *same* Peter was unstoppable. Meeting the risen Jesus, and receiving the Holy Spirit, these men became unable to stop speaking of Jesus. The same St Peter who's words we heard in today's Epistle. When beaten and imprisoned, mocked and despised, even when threatened and delivered up to a long and gruesome death – they would not, could not, stop speaking about who Jesus is and what that means for the world.

Not only was a bunch of fish no longer enough, or financial security, or status and social acceptability, now **even life and death seemed unimportant in the face of the spread of the Good News** of what God is doing in the world through Christ. Death, where is thy power, now? Christ is Risen, and everyone is invited to the party.

St Peter, pray for us. Ss James and John, pray for us. That we too might see things as they really are, as you did. To see what God is showing us in these deep days in which we are living. And give us the wisdom and sight to see what is worth living for. And to follow you.