

Worship for 5th Sunday in Ordinary Time (complete text. A video version is also online)
Keep safe. Keep caring. Keep praying.

A very warm welcome to everyone joining us in worship today.
Our thanks go to the many people who helped to prepare this service. The Bible readings are from members of Whitnash and Cubbington churches and Methodist Chaplain Andy Metcalf will be sharing his reflections on God's word. I am Pam Weston, your worship leader today.

THE PREPARATION

Call to worship

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?'

Amen.

Hymn: StF 250 – Jesus Calls Us! O'er the Tumult

- 1. Jesus calls us! O'er the tumult
of our life's wild restless sea,
day by day his voice is sounding,
saying: 'Christian, follow me.'**
- 2. As of old apostles heard it
by the Galilean lake,
turned from home and toil and kindred,
leaving all for his dear sake.**
- 3. Jesus calls us from the worship
of the vain world's golden store,
from each idol that would keep us,
saying: 'Christian, love me more.'**
- 4. In our joys and in our sorrows,
days of toil and hours of ease,
still he calls, in cares and pleasures:
'Christian, love me more than these.'**

- 5. Jesus calls us! By your mercies,
Saviour, may we hear your call,
give our hearts to your obedience,
serve and love you best of all.**

Cecil Frances Alexander (1818–1895)

Opening Prayers

As we draw near to you, Lord God, we remember how you approached your first disciples by the lake;
we follow you as they did captivated and in awe at being caught up in your story.

We adore you, O extraordinary God, who came among us as the Son of Man,
miraculous in your birth, miracles marking your passage through this world,
casting your nets to draw us in and drawing out the extraordinary in us.
We praise and adore you.

Lord, we confess that we fear getting in too deep.

When we feel you drawing us to you, calling us to leave the safe confines of life as we know it and plunge into the depths of life with you, we are afraid.

What will you ask of us, Lord? For we are ordinary people; we have no tongues to talk in clever parables, we have no miracles to perform. And, the fact is, we're quite content as we are; we're happy to serve you from the wings, we don't want the spotlight.

Yet you have drawn us into your story, and you call us to be all that we can be.

We confess that we are afraid of our potential;
afraid to unleash your power within us.
Forgive us, and grant us the courage to
overcome our fears and follow you.

Our Father in heaven forgives us for being less
than we might be;
for following half-heartedly when his son calls,
skulking in the shadows,
afraid of the power of the Holy Spirit to
transform us, and the world,
and to bring out the extraordinary within our
nature.

Thank you that you forgive our failings Lord, and
assure us of the great hope that is ours through
the death and resurrection of your son Jesus
Christ.

Amen.

The Lord's Prayer

We say the Lord's prayer:

**Our Father in Heaven,
Hallowed be your name,
Your kingdom come,
Your will be done,
On earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive our sins
as we forgive those who sin against us.
Save us from the time of trial
and deliver us from evil,
For the kingdom, the power and the glory
are yours, now and forever
Amen**

Hymn: StF 88 – Praise to the Lord, the Almighty,
the King of creation

**1. Praise to the Lord, the Almighty, the King of
creation!
O my soul, praise him, for he is thy health
and salvation!**

**All ye who hear, brothers and sisters, draw
near,
praise him in glad adoration.**

- 2. Praise to the Lord, who doth prosper thy
work and defend thee;
surely his goodness and mercy here daily
attend thee:
ponder anew what the Almighty can do,
who with his love doth befriend thee.**
- 3. Praise to the Lord, who doth nourish thy life
and restore thee,
fitting thee well for the tasks that are ever
before thee,
then to thy need he like a mother doth
speed,
spreading the wings of grace o'er thee.**
- 4. Praise to the Lord, who, when darkness of
sin is abounding,
who, when the godless do triumph, all
virtue confounding,
sheddeth his light, chaseth the horrors of
night,
saints with his mercy surrounding.**
- 5. Praise to the Lord! O let all that is in me
adore him!
All that hath life and breath, come now with
praises before him!
Let the amen sound from his people again:
gladly for aye we adore him.**

Joachim Neander (1650–1680)
translated by Catherine Winkworth (1827–1878) and
Rupert E. Davies (1909–1994)

THE MINISTRY OF THE WORD

Deuteronomy 18:15-20 (NIVUK)

¹⁵The Lord your God will raise up for you a
prophet like me from among you, from your
fellow Israelites. You must listen to him. ¹⁶For
this is what you asked of the Lord your God at

Horeb on the day of the assembly when you said, 'Let us not hear the voice of the Lord our God nor see this great fire any more, or we will die.'

¹⁷The Lord said to me: 'What they say is good. ¹⁸I will raise up for them a prophet like you from among their fellow Israelites, and I will put my words in his mouth. He will tell them everything I command him. ¹⁹I myself will call to account anyone who does not listen to my words that the prophet speaks in my name. ²⁰But a prophet who presumes to speak in my name anything I have not commanded, or a prophet who speaks in the name of other gods, is to be put to death.'

Luke 5:1-11 (NIVUK) and Mark 1:14-20 (NIVUK)

Jesus calls his first disciples

5 One day as Jesus was standing by the Lake of Gennesaret, the people were crowding round him and listening to the word of God. ²He saw at the water's edge two boats, left there by the fishermen, who were washing their nets. ³He got into one of the boats, the one belonging to Simon, and asked him to put out a little from the shore. Then he sat down and taught the people from the boat.

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

⁵Simon answered, 'Master, we've worked hard all night and haven't caught anything. But because you say so, I will let down the nets.'

⁶When they had done so, they caught such a large number of fish that their nets began 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 full that they began to sink.

⁸When Simon Peter saw this, he fell at Jesus' knees and said, 'Go away from me, Lord; I am a sinful man!' ⁹For he and all his companions were astonished at the catch of fish they had taken, ¹⁰and 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.' ¹¹So they pulled their boats up on shore, left everything and followed him.

Mark 1:14-20 (NIVUK)

Jesus announces the good news

¹⁴After John was put in prison, Jesus went into Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God. ¹⁵'The time has come,' he said. 'The kingdom of God has come near. Repent and believe the good news!'

Jesus calls his first disciples

¹⁶As Jesus walked beside the Sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and his brother Andrew casting a net into the lake, for they were fishermen. ¹⁷'Come, follow me,' Jesus said, 'and I will send you out to fish for people.' ¹⁸At once they left their nets and followed him.

¹⁹When he had gone a little farther, he saw James son of Zebedee and his brother John in a boat, preparing their nets. ²⁰Without delay he called them, and they left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired men and followed him.

Sermon

Our first reading was from Deuteronomy in the Old Testament which was written it is thought by Moses about 1400 years before Jesus came. In Deuteronomy Moses prophesies that God will send someone like themselves and God says he will – 'put my words in his mouth, and he will tell them everything I command him.' This was a prophesy that God would send them prophets

and that ultimately God would himself come in Jesus.

When Jesus begins to call together his disciples, as we heard in Luke and Mark's New Testament gospels, they would have heard this prophesy in the synagogue from Deuteronomy and other Old Testament prophesies (that we find in Genesis, Daniel, Isaiah, and the Psalms) about a teacher- a Messiah who would come from God. (the Hebrew word "Mashiach," -Messiah means the promised one, the anointed one).

So, when these fishermen were called by Jesus, they were expecting and knew that someone very special was going to come from God. Some people it is said have a special presence about them - an 'aura' an energy that you feel when you are near them and people listen to them because of this presence that they feel and because of the way that they talk.

I remember reading about the photographer Adrian Steirn, who was asked to take a photograph of Nelson Mandela, the former South African President. As they were setting up the picture, he said that his crew were suddenly overwhelmed by the aura of the man who had led the struggle to overcome apartheid. Another person who had that kind of presence was Archbishop Desmond Tutu who died not long ago – in December last year. At a meeting some years ago, the commentator said 'He was absolutely incredible and had such an amazing aura around him from the moment he was introduced, and everyone in the concert hall stood up and applauded. He spoke with such authority and peacefulness that you could hear a pin-drop; such was the attention he commanded.'

I am sure it was that kind of authority and presence, but even more so that the disciples felt

when they first met Jesus. And we read that while they were out fishing, out casting their fishing nets, Jesus calls them. "Come, follow me," Jesus says and they realized very quickly from the strength of Jesus' presence and how he spoke to them that yes – this is the person that those prophesies were all about. This man standing on the shore really was the Messiah.

Now you may have been told in the past that these were simple fisherman who – 'At once they left their nets and followed him.' Which may sound a bit reckless- what about their livelihoods and supporting their families? But we learn from Mark's account that 'they left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired men.' They were in effect self-employed businessmen just like fishermen are today. (I say fishermen because I understand that even the few women who fish for a living are called fishermen.)

But it meant that the disciple's fishing business carried on when they left to become disciples and to follow Jesus. In the same way God does not expect us to neglect our responsibilities or to always radically change our way of life when we follow him through Christ's teachings.

My own work as a Chaplain working in Care and Nursing Homes for the past 12 years, is a different type of ministry. Every analogy that we might make breaks down at some point, but if we think about fishing it is not about catching-fish, or catching others of different faiths to convert them or change their belief to become Christian. Rather than catching them it is about swimming alongside people, getting to know and understand them, being there for them and having a social relationship with them. Along the way they may come to appreciate some aspects of my own faith, they may benefit from the connection I am making in God's name. This may correspond with their own concept of God if they

follow a particular faith, or it may help them to connect to -something bigger and stronger than they are – if they have no faith.

Going back to the first disciples yes there are those who devote their whole lives to preaching and teaching as the disciples went on to do, but most of us live normal lives – normal but with one big difference. The difference is we have encountered and have recognized the Messiah! The strength of his magnetic presence through God's Holy Spirit in our lives has changed our whole way of living and our outlook on life.

This relationship with God through Jesus Christ gives us a clear guide to how we should live- which is to love one another, to love others in the same way as we love ourselves and to serve others. And hardest of all, to love those we don't get along with. But the greatest thing that brings about a change in our lives is that through Jesus we know that our life has purpose and meaning. We know that our life is just part of the journey we are on towards God, and at the end of our lives here, whether it be tomorrow or in many years' time we shall be at peace in his love.

But before that time, it is having that relationship with God which gives us hope, strength and encouragement to live as full a life as we possibly can, as God wants us to do. It is that what we are all called to do by God, through Jesus Christ- are we -are you prepared to follow him?

Amen

Hymn: StF 673 – Will you come and follow me

- 1. 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?**

- 2. 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?**
- 3. 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?**
- 4. 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?**
- 5. 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.**

John L. Bell (b. 1949) and Graham Maule (b. 1958)

THE RESPONSE

Prayers of thanksgiving and intercession

You challenge us to follow you, not by staying where we are but by stepping out in faith, casting our net into deeper water, as did the fisherman Simon Peter.

You challenge us to trust you and be prepared for all eventualities, even when the load is heavy and the journey hard.

But with your challenge comes blessing, as flimsy nets are filled and broken lives made whole, as emptiness becomes abundance.

Thank you for this challenge.

Grant us faith enough to follow and strength enough to endure.

Through Christ alone we ask.

Amen.

God of love and grace and beauty,
we give you thanks for your hospitable love
which welcomes all people.

In our prayers today we remember those who
feel alienated and unwelcome.

We pray for those who weep because they have
had to leave home and all that is dear to them;
for those who seek asylum, fleeing persecution,
poverty and oppression;

for those who live in exile, forced to leave the
familiar and to rely on the kindness of strangers.

When people cry that they cannot sing the Lord's
song in a strange land, may we help them find a
voice. Gracious God:

Hear our prayer

We pray for those who weep because they have
no home

for those living in poor housing conditions and
fearing for their children;

for those who fall through the cracks of welfare
and charitable support.

When people cry that they cannot sing the Lord's
song in a strange land, may we help them find a
voice. Gracious God:

Hear our prayer

We pray for those who weep because they are
not free to worship as they wish;

for those whose faith is a struggle in the face of
persecution

and for those who find that their faith seems less
relevant or vibrant than it once was.

When people cry that they cannot sing the Lord's
song in a strange land, may we help them find a
voice. Gracious God:

Hear our prayer

We pray for ourselves, for our own sense of
dislocation;

for those times when words fail us and we feel
lost and unwelcome;

for our own need to belong and feel at home in
our families and in church.

When we cry that we cannot sing the Lord's song
in a strange land, may we find a voice. Gracious
God:

Hear our prayer

Amen.

The Offering & prayer

May the use of our gifts and the offering of our
lives be for your glory;

through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

THE DISMISSAL

Hymn: StF 594 – Lord Jesus Christ, you have come
to us

- 1. Lord Jesus Christ,
you have come to us,
you are one with us,
Mary's Son;
cleansing our souls from all their sin,**

**pouring your love and goodness in;
Jesus, our love for you we sing,
living Lord.**

- 2. Lord Jesus Christ,
now and every day,
teach us how to pray,
Son of God.
You have commanded us to do
this, in remembrance, Lord, of you;
into our lives your power breaks through,
living Lord.**
- 3. Lord Jesus Christ,
you have come to us,
born as one of us,
Mary's Son;
led out to die on Calvary,
risen from death to set us free;
living Lord Jesus, help us see
you are Lord.**
- 4. Lord Jesus Christ,
we would come to you,
live our lives for you,
Son of God.
All your commands we know are true;
your many gifts will make us new;
into our lives your power breaks through,
living Lord.**

Patrick Appleford (*b.* 1925)

Prayer & blessing

May God bless us with encounters that turn
strangers into neighbours,
that turn fear into friendships, that turn hatred
into hospitality,
that turn pain into peace.
Amen.

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StF 673 – Will you come and follow me

John L. Bell (*b.* 1949) and Graham Maule (*b.* 1958)

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StF 250 – Jesus Calls Us! O'er the Tumult

Cecil Frances Alexander (1818–1895)

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StF 88 – Praise to the Lord, the Almighty, the King of creation

Joachim Neander (1650–1680)

translated by Catherine Winkworth (1827–1878) and Rupert E. Davies (1909–1994)

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StF 594 – Lord Jesus Christ, you have come to us

Patrick Appleford (*b.* 1925)

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Bible Verses

NIV

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