

Worship@Home 22nd January 2023 with Revd David Speirs

Opening Prayer:

Holy God, you call us into relationship with you through your son Jesus Christ, our Lord, friend, and saviour. By your Holy Spirit equip and enable us to follow him so that we can be his faithful disciples and spread his message of love in word and in deed. In Jesus name we pray, Amen.

StF 28 - Jesus calls us here to meet him

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yulQuvsFD00k>

Jesus calls us here to meet him, as through word and song and prayer we affirm God's promised presence, where his people live and care. Praise the God who keeps his promise; praise the Son who calls us friends;
praise the Spirit who, among us, to our hopes and fears attends.

Jesus calls us to confess him, Word of Life and Lord of All, sharer of our flesh and frailness, saving all who fail or fall. Tell his holy human story; tell his tales that all may hear; tell the world that Christ in glory, came to earth to meet us here.

Jesus calls us to each other: vastly different though we are; creed and colour, class and gender, neither limit nor debar. Join the hand of friend and stranger; join the hands of age and youth; join the faithful and the doubter, in their common search for truth.
[Verse 4 omitted]

John L. Bell (b.1949) and Graham Maule (b.1958)
Words from *Love Below* © 1989, WGRG, Iona Community, Glasgow, G2 3DH, Scotland, www.wgrg.co.uk

Please read:

Matthew 4:12-23

<http://bible.oremus.org/?ql=253242247>

Time to Reflect

The beginning of Jesus ministry in Matthew's Gospel begins around the small fishing town of Capernaum, on the shore of the Lake of Galilee, with a group of ordinary people. Like John the Baptist, Jesus begins his preaching ministry with a call to repentance and then goes on to recruit his disciples to become part of his new movement, as citizens of God's Kingdom.

Simon, Andrew, James, and John are all fisherman at work on the lake. The former are casting their nets in the lake and the latter mending their nets in preparation for their use. Their lives are ordinary and familiar, undertaking work that is likely to have been done in their families for generations. James and John are both in the boat with their father Zebedee when they receive the call. Zebedee's reaction to the sudden departure of his sons, to follow Jesus, is not recorded. What is striking is that Jesus words 'Follow me, and I will make you fish for people' moved them to abandon the life that they knew by the lake to begin a new one with Jesus.

Jesus' call is very clear in its expectation of what he is asking of his disciples. Their discipleship with Jesus will lead them to drawing new people to him, encouraging them to become disciples as well. However, to do this the fishermen have to let go of everything: To leave their families, livelihoods, and homes behind them. To become wanderers with Jesus.

Jesus call to repent is tied up with an expectation of change. Jesus disciples must leave the familiar behind and use their skills and talents for a new purpose; to work for the Kingdom of God. They do so in a hostile environment, where the land is controlled by a foreign empire, Rome, and its powerful army, whilst the anxious religious authorities, reactionary and conservative, are wary of any potential threats to their power and influence. However, it is Jesus presence and his friendship that will encourage them in the work that they are given.

Jesus call to his disciples has a prophetic element, in that they are asked to give up and turn away. The cry that the Kingdom of God is near refers to the nearness of God's rule but also the fact that Jesus himself embodies the Kingdom and all that it is about.

Through the incarnation the King is with them and God is directly amongst them. Jesus asks his disciples to behave as citizens and representatives of this Kingdom which is very different from the Roman Empire. Whilst Rome sought to exploit and control its subjects,

Jesus disciples would be treated as friends of the King. Whilst Rome sought to extract resources from others Jesus ministry would be one of empowerment enabling people to be their full selves. Whilst Rome ruled through fear and coercion, Jesus rule would be marked by love and self-sacrifice. Jesus' disciples are therefore being asked to be part of a Kingdom which is very different from the earthly one that they have encountered and known. A kingdom that invites them not only to leave behind their former lives but to take up an entirely new way of being and living, in relationship with Jesus and each other.

As disciples living in the 21st Century we too are called by Jesus to let go and leave behind that which is familiar to us in order to go on a journey with Jesus, that will take us to new places and unexpected people. It involves being part of a Kingdom where we have an active role in bringing the good news of the Kingdom to those that we encounter and forming a community where people can know and experience the love of God in Christ. In all this Christ is present with us, through the Holy Spirit, enabling us in this work in a world that can still be cruel, hostile, and exploitative.

Jesus first disciples were just ordinary fisherman called to be part of something extraordinary. We received the same call as Jesus' disciples today and are asked to share in the work of Jesus and God's Kingdom. Let us pray that we would leave behind what we need to and follow where Jesus leads us, that we might receive the power of the Holy Spirit that enables us to live differently, and practice the Kingdom's way of love. Amen.

Prayer of Intercession

You are invited to pray silently for:

The needs of the world...
The Church and its calling...
Loved ones going through difficult times...
For peace, justice, and reconciliation...
In Jesus name. Amen.

The Lord's Prayer

Our Father, who art in heaven...

STF 407 – Hear the call of the Kingdom

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=65AuT49d1o8>

Hear the call of the kingdom, lift your eyes to the King; let his song rise within you as a fragrant offering of how God, rich in mercy, came in Christ to redeem all who trust in his unfailing grace.

Hear the call of the kingdom to be children of light with the mercy of heaven, the humility of Christ; walking justly before him, loving all that is right, that the life of Christ may shine through us.

[Refrain]

King of heaven, we will answer the call.

We will follow, bringing hope to the world,

filled with passion, filled with power to proclaim salvation in Jesus' name.

Hear the call of the kingdom to reach out to the lost with the Father's compassion in the wonder of the cross, bringing peace and forgiveness, and a hope yet to come:

let the nations put their trust in him.

[Refrain]

Keith Getty (b. 1974), Kristyn Getty (b. 1980) and Stuart Townend (b. 1963). Words and Music: © 2006, Thankyou Music.

Final Prayer

Lord, send us as renewed people.

Help us to turn away from what is wrong

and turn to what is right. Help us to turn towards our neighbours and to all who are lost. Help us to turn away from distractions and towards more adventuring with you. Help us now and always. Amen.

Adapted from *Roots Worship 'About Turn'* 22-28 January at:

<https://www.rootsontheweb.com/>