



ST GEORGE'S

## **LUKE 5:1-11**

Woolacombe beach in the middle of August bank holiday. It's hot. Real hot and it's full. There are 5 ice cream vans on the actual beach itself. The loos have a queue where at the end you don't want to go in. A humble pasty will cost you £5 with complimentary sand and you try and stake out a bit of sand big enough to get the windbreak out, the pop-up tent and the giant inflatable unicorn that nobody is sure what to do with. You sit down and then...can you dig me a sandpit. It's crowded and it's hot. Then this guy gets out on a boat and starts talking about God

'Jesus was on the shore...and people were crowding around him and listening to the word of God....he got into one of the boats belonging to Simon and taught the people from the boat.'

Firstly, this is not normal. There are so many people on an actual beach – he's got to get in a boat so he can be heard and seen. Crowding around. We're early in the gospel and Jesus has healed a couple of people but his public ministry is only just beginning really. But popularity is growing because – people want to hear the word of God.

The word of God is interesting. People want to hear it. This is natural. It's part of how we're made. In our deepest parts of our being, we long for our Lord and for his love and approval. Ecclesiastes says, God has set eternity in our hearts – even when we don't understand it. An analogy of this is the way that the words of parents can impact a child. We care what our parents think. Positively our parents can encourage and support us but if your parent mocked the way you looked or spoke unkindly to you then the biological and spiritual bond of the child to their father and mother means it will have a bigger impact than the words of others. This is just an analogy

we know well. But the word of God is our root – God-speak is intrinsically fascinating. We're drawn to it.

'Jesus said to Simon, put out into deep water and let down the nets for a catch'.

Now to be clear Jesus the carpenter-y builder is talking to a the fishermen – Simon about actual water and actual fish, but St Georges I think this is a word for us here and for some of you individually, to go out to deeper waters together. Maybe you've been piddling about in the shallows for a while and it's fine and it's fun but...in your heart you know there's more, you long for the deeper things of God. You're sick of the routine - I go to church on Sunday, it's nice and I meet nice people and then...it's gone until next week – I want more. You know you're interested, more than interested...God has burned something on your heart that you want more...today is the day to start – he's set eternity in your heart and it's waking up.

See this story is about calling. God calling Simon out from where he has been into a new reality. To start with he's a bit reluctant.

'Master, we've worked hard all night and haven't caught anything...'

Uses the term 'master'. He doesn't really know this guy yet. And somehow he's found himself on his own boat and this guy – who clearly has authority – is telling him how to do his job. Now there are two things here – in his head - Peter is like – I've literally been up all night – it just aint happening bruv- It's gone. The fish hate me, today is not our day – you just pick yourself up tomorrow and who knows – this guy...he doesn't know what he's talking about. In his words and actions though:

'But because you say so, I will let down the nets'.

Classic Peter he can't see it yet but he takes the step of faith anyway. There are times in life when you want to be sure as sure can be. You buy a car, you do all your internal calculations – how many miles per gallon, tax costs,

seats, or just choose a pretty colour. But whether you're the most car savvy person, or the 'I just like the colour' person at some point you've got to figure out whether you trust the person or shop you're buying from. It's why dealers are more expensive than bloke down the pub – can I trust them? At some point, you either say yes. Or you say no. Faith is required in everyday life – do I trust this one?

Peter trusts Jesus and the results are amazing:

'They caught such a large number of fish that their nets began to break...

If this was in a movie, it would happen real smoothly then glide gently back to shore for a conversation. Here, it's manic. The nets are breaking – his livelihood breaking at the sheer number of fish – and they have to call others to help. The sheer weight of fish sinking boats. When God blesses people it can be overwhelming. When we hear of revivals, one of the consistent factors is that it's so overwhelming...they run out of seats, spaces, chairs, parking...its blows them away. When it comes, the blessing of God can be overwhelming, overrunning people and structures. It can actually scare people too. Like deep scares but most of the time we like to keep a lid on these things.

In our family, we love to go to Longleat, when I was a curate we had annual passes and once visited 52 times in one year....it's not even open every week of the year and they didn't even check our passes everytime. And when you see the tigers you forget their sheer muscular mass, the size of the paws and majesty of their presence. And you think. I'm glad I'm in the car, he definitely wants to eat me. With the tigers you sometimes you notice something strange....doesn't our cat do that? You know the cute, fluffy one at home who never sits on your lap but always looks at you in just the same way...that I'm pretty sure he'd eat me if he was big enough. This isn't paranoia, it's 14 years of cat ownership supported by studies. But somehow along the way we've done the same with God. Squashed him

down, domesticated him into a fluffy controllable thing that we can pet and bring out on Sunday mornings.

The actual power of God we're talking about week by week is ridiculous. Unimaginable, you can't get a grasp on it. So when Peter, gets back to shore and he seen just a glimpse of what Jesus can do –

'Get away from me Lord, for I am a sinful man'.

God is God and when he works amongst his people – our boats are full to sinking, lives are turned around, crazy stuff happens. The spirit of God is described as a fire – like a mighty wind – it's not something you can control. But you know, Jesus says to Peter,

'Don't' be afraid – from now on you're working with me'.

Same thing the angels always say – don't be afraid. Come with me. I'm going to show you stuff you didn't even imagine.

St Georges, let's put yourself in the story. Where do you want to be? Imagine yourself there on the beach. Where do you want to be? Standing on the side, fussing about with the windbreak and watching from a distance? Or in the boat? Jesus is calling you into the deep waters. And some of the things you'll see will scare the pants off you. You'll go to places you didn't imagine. But his promise isn't to be safe, little cat, with nothing happening his promise is to be with you. And he says to you – to you today – come follow me; I'll be with you.