

Order of Worship for February 6, 2022

Prelude

P: The Lord be with you.

C: **And also with you.**

Opening Hymn: “*Lift High the Cross*” - Hymn #837

Confessing our sins and receiving God’s forgiveness

P: In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

C: **Amen. Lord God, we confess that we often are closed to the concerns of others. We are busy with what we feel we have to do. We center on our own problems. We avoid many opportunities we have to befriend people who are different from us. By our actions and even more by what we fail to do, we cloud people from seeing Your love which You made visible to us in Jesus, who died on the cross for all people. Almighty Father, forgive us for Jesus’ sake!**

P: Christ Jesus died for all. The love we fail to show He poured out for all of us by His sacrifice on the cross. By the command of the Lord Jesus I forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

C: **Amen.**

The Service of the Word

Entrance Psalm

P: Sing to the LORD a new song;

C: **Sing to the LORD all the earth.**

P: Sing to the LORD; praise His name;

C: **Proclaim His salvation day after day.**

P: Declare His glory among the nations,

C: **His marvelous deeds among all peoples.**

P: Ascribe to the LORD, O families of nations,

C: **Ascribe to the LORD glory and strength.**

P: Say among the nations, “The LORD reigns.”

C: **He will judge the peoples with equity.**

**All: Glory be to the Father, and to the Son,
and to the Holy Spirit, as it was in the beginning
is now and will be forever. Amen.**

Hymn of Praise: “*Allabaré*” - Hymn #799

Old Testament Lesson: Isaiah 6:1-8

R: In the year that King Uzziah died I saw the LORD sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up; and the train of His robe filled the temple. Above Him stood the seraphim. Each had six

wings: with two he covered his face, and with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew. And one called to another and said: “Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts; the whole earth is full of His glory!”

And the foundations of the thresholds shook at the voice of Him who called, and the house was filled with smoke. And I said: “Woe is me! For I am lost; for I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; for my eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts!”

Then one of the seraphim flew to me, having in his hand a burning coal that he had taken with tongs from the altar. And he touched my mouth and said: “Behold, this has touched your lips; your guilt is taken away, and your sin atoned for.”

And I heard the voice of the LORD saying, “Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?” Then I said, “Here I am! Send me.”

R: This is the Word of the Lord.

C: Thanks be to God.

Holy Gospel: Luke 5:1-11

P: The Holy Gospel according to St. Luke, the 5th chapter.

C: Glory to You, O Lord.

P: On one occasion, while the crowd was pressing in on [Jesus] to hear the word of God, He was standing by the lake of Gennesaret, and He saw two boats by the lake, but the fishermen had gone out of them and were washing their nets. Getting into one of the boats, which was Simon's, Jesus asked him to put out a little from the land. And He sat down and taught the people from the boat. And when He had finished speaking, He said to Simon, “Put out into the deep and let down your nets for a catch.” And Simon answered, “Master, we toiled all night and took nothing! But at Your word I will let down the nets.” And when they had done this, they enclosed a large number of fish, and their nets were breaking. They signaled to their partners in the other boat to come and help them. And they came and filled both the boats, so that they began to sink. But when Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, “Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord.” For he and all who were with him were astonished at the catch of fish that they had taken, and so also were James and John, sons of Zebedee, who were partners with Simon. And Jesus said to Simon, “Do not be afraid; from now on you will be catching men.” And when they had brought their boats to land, they left everything and followed Him.

P: This is the Gospel of our Lord.

C: Praise to You, O Christ

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Children's Sermon (8:30)

Sermon Hymn: “*O Christ Who Called the Twelve*” - **Hymn #856**

Sermon: “Fishing for People” – Luke 5:1-11

There are a lot of fish stories in the Bible. Jonah is probably the most familiar, the prophet who spends three days in the belly of a fish before being given a second chance to follow God’s call. What we hear today, the calling of the first disciples and the miraculous catch of fish, though, is probably a close second. In order to understand and think about this familiar story, though, I want us to think of three words. Those words are faith, fear, and follow.

The first word is faith. Of course it takes a lot of faith to drop everything and follow Jesus. But as we look closer, we see that, for Peter, there wasn’t just one giant step of faith, but was instead a series of smaller steps. The first step of faith is that Peter puts out his boat so Jesus can teach from it. He didn’t have to do that. He’d been out fishing all night, and had nothing to show for it. He was tired and sore, finishing the required maintenance on the nets. Yet when Jesus asks him to put the boat out, he does.

The second step of faith is in trusting Jesus when he tells them to take the boat out to the deeper water and lower their nets for a catch. They’d fished all night with nothing to show for it. What did this son of a carpenter, this itinerant preacher and teacher, know about fishing? Yet Peter takes a step of faith. “At your word, I will lower the nets.” He takes the boat back out to the deeper water, lowers the net, and a miracle happens. Those little steps of faith lead to a big catch, and lay the foundation for an even bigger step of faith.

The miraculous catch of fish is proof that the catch isn’t from Peter’s efforts. If it were, he wouldn’t have empty nets to show for a night’s work! But instead, the miraculous catch of fish is proof that Jesus is someone different than anyone else Peter has met. It’s proof of God’s provision. It validates Peter’s faith.

The next word is fear. Peter is afraid. At first, he’s afraid that he doesn’t have a catch to show for his night’s work. He’s afraid he won’t be able to provide for himself, for his family, for his partners. Then, after Jesus sends them out to deep water again and they start drawing up the overflowing nets, he’s afraid that the nets will break, and the boats will sink, due to the miraculous catch of fish. But even more, he’s afraid to be in the presence of someone who can do what Jesus does. He’s afraid to be in the presence of the holy God.

We see that in the Isaiah reading, as well. Isaiah knows his sin, and knows he has no right to be in the presence of the holy God. God’s holiness should drive away any sin, any sinner. In contrast to that attitude, Isaiah knows that he’s not worthy to approach the throne of God. He knows what happens to people who rush in where angels fear to tread. When God appears to him, Isaiah is frightened. He cries out, “Woe is me! For I am lost; for I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips.” The holiness of God makes Isaiah aware of his own unholiness. Isaiah is purified, made holy enough to be in the presence of God.

Jesus tells Peter not to be afraid. Jesus responds to Peter’s confession of sin not with forgiveness but with comfort and with purpose. “Do not be afraid.” This isn’t judgment; it is mercy. “From now on you will be catching people.” Jesus doesn’t deny what Peter is – a fisherman – he

enlarges it, meeting Peter where he is at and, rather than condemning him, expanding his vision, drawing him into God's kingdom vision of who and what Peter might be.

Now, don't be afraid is one of the most common commands in the Bible. One source notes that it occurs 366 times, once for each day of the year, including leap year! It's the most common command because being in the presence of God is a frightening thing. Often, when God calls someone, when an angel appears to someone, it's a sign that something strange is going to happen. The call often comes with great changes. People uproot their whole lives in order to follow God's call. But with the call comes God's promises and presence. We don't have to be afraid because God promises to be with us.

That leads us to our last word. Follow. Peter, James, and John leave everything behind to follow Jesus. God called Peter, Andrew, James and John and turned their fishing for fish into fishing for people, using the same work ethic they had as fishermen to prepare them for the long, hard work of being disciples and discipling others.

They will follow Jesus, but this is not the end of their journey. It's only the beginning. As we've spent the last couple weeks looking at Peter in the Sunday Bible class, we've seen that Peter will have moments of great faith, and moments of great doubt. He's the one who gives the great confession of faith, "You are the Christ, the son of the living God!" Yet a few short verses later, he's trying to talk Jesus out of the necessity of the cross, and gets told to get behind me, Satan. He's the one who has the faith to walk on water, yet starts to sink when he takes his eyes off of Jesus. Peter is the one who says he will never abandon Jesus, and even shows his resolve by cutting off a servant's ear when Jesus is arrested, yet later denies Jesus three times.

This is also a time of great fear. Wars and rumors of war continue to come. Anxiety about the economy and workplaces continue, as well as fear of the pandemic that's been with us over two years. Fear sells, and as the midterm elections start ramping up, we'll hear more reasons to be afraid of what will happen if the other party or the other candidate is elected. Yet Jesus tells us to not be afraid. We are sent out into the world not to make people afraid, but to share the hope that we have. We don't behave rashly, but we don't live in fear, either. We trust in God's promises. We rejoice in God's presence with us, as we experience God with us in tangible ways as we join together in Holy Communion and hear God's word of promise and forgiveness.

Finally, we follow. We continue to learn what it means to be caught by God. Jesus calls us to "catch people"--that is, to seek out relationship with people and invite them into the community we share in Christ. It's often easy for us to be in relationship with people we know--friends and family, neighbors across the street, people who share our values. But the call to "catch people" draws us out of ourselves and into the unknown--perhaps to listen to someone who does not share our political views or to accompany a friend who is wrestling with questions of faith.

Following Jesus isn't easy, though, and never has been. Dietrich Bonhoeffer wrote that "[w]hen Christ calls a man, He bids him come and die." Jesus showed his disciples that when He went to the cross to die for the sins of the whole world, for all the sinful people, all the people with

unclean lips, everyone. And after He rose on Easter morning, Jesus went and found His disciples, who were back fishing for fish. He called them again, caught them again, and sent them out again, to catch people for God.

We, too, have been called and caught by God. Drawn through water at Baptism, we are called to catch people, too. God continues to catch us. Sometimes, it's to be caught in our sin and see our need for a Savior. Other times, God catches us when we fall, are lonely or afraid, bringing us out of the depths into the light. And God uses us to catch others. And so, we step forward in faith. We face our fears. And we follow Jesus, the one who continues to call us to follow him.

The Prayer for Mission to All People:

P: Lord, we pray that You will open our eyes to see how we can witness to so many people You have gathered here in our community from all over the world. Give us the attitude of Abraham who welcomed strangers into his tent with the words:

C: "Let a little water be brought forth, and then you may all wash your feet and rest under this tree. Let me get you something to eat, so you can be refreshed."

P: We thank You for Your mercy which extends to all people, for You reach out to all the world with Your Kingdom as Jesus told us:

C: "People will come from east and west and north and south, and will take their places at the feast in the Kingdom of God."

P: Help us to see that the good news of Jesus is for all people and all cultures as Peter discovered when You sent him to Cornelius:

C: "I now realize how true it is that God does not show favoritism, but accepts people from every nation who fear Him and do what is right."

P: Help us to be a part of how You break down the barriers that divide us through the unifying message of Jesus:

C: "Here there is no Greek or Jew, circumcised or uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave or free, but Christ is all, and is in all."

P: Give us the courage of the young Hebrew slave girl who pointed her sick master Naaman, general of the Syrian army, to Your prophet with the words:

C: "If only my master would see the prophet Elisha who is in Samaria! He would cure him of his leprosy."

P: Grant us the patience and the understanding to try to understand the many people in our community who are from different countries and cultures, so that we have the attitude of St. Paul who said:

C: "I have become all things to all peoples so that by all possible means I might save some. I do this all for the sake of the Gospel, that I may share in its blessings."

(The pastor will continue with other petitions)

P: Bless us with thankfulness for the wonderful opportunities You give us to share our faith with people from all over the world so that we can join the hymn of praise:

C: “At the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.” Amen.

The Service of the Sacrament

P: The Lord be with you.

C: And also with you.

P: Lift up your hearts.

C: We lift them up to the Lord.

P: Let us give thanks to the Lord, our God.

C: It is good and proper so to do.

Prayer of Thanksgiving

P: Christ Jesus we thank and praise You for coming into this world to save all people. You reached out to the Canaanite woman, the Roman centurion, the tax collectors and sinful women, the possessed, and even Judas who betrayed You. We now join in praising You as we approach Your altar to receive Your true body and blood in Holy Communion. Bless us as You forgive us and as You strengthen our faith to share You with people all over the world.

The Words of our Lord and Lord’s Prayer

Distribution:

Choir Anthem:

“When I Behold Jesus Christ” - Hymn #542

“Hark the Voice of Jesus Crying” - Hymn #827

The Closing Prayer:

C: Open our eyes, Lord, to the light of Your Word. Give us a vision for our mission as God’s people that would include all people and all nations. Give us now and every day an understanding of our oneness with fellow believers in Christ Jesus everywhere. Strengthen our common commitment to proclaim Christ to the world. In Jesus’ name we pray. Amen.

Christ commanded us: (spoken in various languages) “Go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And behold I am with you all the days, even to the ends of the earth.”

Blessing (Pastor)

C: Amen.

Closing Hymn: *“Listen, God is Calling” - Hymn #833*

Postlude