

CUTTING EDGE CAMELOT, No 132

Sunday 7th November 2021

'Virtually Church but with some way to go...'

Welcome

Welcome to this Sunday's edition of Cutting Edge Camelot.

Scripture Passages

Jonah 3: 1-5, 10

The word of the LORD came to Jonah a second time, saying, ² "Get up, go to Nineveh, that great city, and proclaim to it the message that I tell you."

³ So Jonah set out and went to Nineveh, according to the word of the LORD. Now Nineveh was an exceedingly large city, a three days' walk across.

⁴ Jonah began to go into the city, going a day's walk. And he cried out, "Forty days more, and Nineveh shall be overthrown!" ⁵ And the people of Nineveh believed God; they proclaimed a fast, and everyone, great and small, put on sackcloth.

¹⁰ When God saw what they did, how they turned from their evil ways, God changed his mind about the calamity that he had said he would bring upon them; and he did not do it.

Mark 1: 14-20

Now after John was arrested, Jesus came to Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God, ¹⁵ and saying, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has come near; repent, and believe in the good news."

¹⁶ As Jesus passed along the Sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and his brother Andrew casting a net into the sea - for they were fishermen. ¹⁷ And Jesus

said to them, “Follow me and I will make you fish for people.”¹⁸ And immediately they left their nets and followed him.

¹⁹ As he went a little farther, he saw James son of Zebedee and his brother John, who were in their boat mending the nets. ²⁰ Immediately he called them; and they left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired men, and followed him.

Reflection

We can sometimes lose sight of what is truly important as we become caught up in the ‘busyness’ of life. Sometimes this is down to sheer forgetfulness as immediate concerns press in on us.

But at other times we may avoid addressing what is truly important more intentionally. Perhaps what is important is also difficult for us. And so, as an escape, we can occupy ourselves with occupations which in the end may be trivial. But at least we find them relatively easy to deal with.

When we connect what is important in our lives with what God wants us to do we often use the word ‘calling’. What, we ask, is God calling us to do?

The Old Testament prophet Jonah undoubtedly had a calling in his life. God had asked him to proclaim God’s message to the city of Nineveh. Nineveh was the capital of Assyria which was the sworn enemy at that time of Israel, Jonah’s own people. The message God wanted Jonah to bring was one of repentance, of warning the people of Nineveh to change their ways.

But Jonah did not relish this task. At this point he had a limited vision of God’s purposes. He did not want to acknowledge that God might be concerned with or care about any nation other than his own.

And so he tried to avoid his call. He ran away and got on a boat heading in the opposite direction to Nineveh. But God caught up with Jonah. God does

not make it easy for any of us to forget about or even deny what we are truly called to do. A storm blew up and, in order to save themselves, the sailors threw Jonah overboard. Jonah landed inside the belly of a whale and after three days the whale spewed Jonah up onto dry land.

This is the setting for today's passage from the book of Jonah. Having tried to evade God's call and to forget about what truly matters in his life, Jonah is given a second chance. God speaks again to Jonah telling him to go to Nineveh and proclaim God's message there. So, God recalls Jonah to his original task and calling of proclaiming God's message to Israel's sworn enemy.

And this time Jonah obeys, setting out for the large and important city of Nineveh. There he proclaims a stark and uncompromising message of judgement and destruction. In forty days Nineveh will be overthrown.

As Jonah proclaims a message of repentance to Nineveh, surprisingly enough they respond positively to this message. They proclaim a universal fast and put on sackcloth as a visible sign of repentance.

And in response God demonstrates the depths and strength of His compassion. Instead of bringing about the destruction which had been threatened for Nineveh, God changes His mind and spares this great city.

So Jonah learns that there are more dimensions to God's love than He had previously reckoned with. God's love extends everywhere not simply to his own nation.

As we reflect on Jonah's story we are reminded that our knowledge of God's purposes is always only very partial and provisional. We might be tempted to write people off thinking that some people will never change. But God knows more than we do and we need to be open to being surprised by what God chooses to do.

Our gospel passage also speaks of the importance and centrality of God's call on our lives. Jesus begins His public ministry by proclaiming the good news of the kingdom of God.

Like Jonah, his message is also one of repentance and the need for a change in lifestyle and attitude towards God. This message of repentance is not, however, proclaimed in isolation but as part of the overall message that the kingdom of God is near. The kingdom of God means salvation and healing, both spiritual and physical, for all who put their trust in Jesus.

And then Jesus begins to apply this message by calling different people whom He meets to follow Him.

So as He walks around the Sea of Galilee He begins to notice various people, Andrew and his brother Simon, James and John, the sons of Zebedee. There were surely other people whom He passed on His walk around the shoreline at this time and indeed other fishing boats in the sea. However, the Holy Spirit prompts Him to notice these particular people.

He sees these particular people. What is it that He sees? No doubt what lies within their hearts. And also perhaps the future destiny that each of them will have within God's purposes.

His call is very simple and unequivocal. He calls them 'immediately'. There is no great explanation of what He was calling them to do. There is no job description beyond the enigmatic 'I will make you fish for people', no contract other than the simple words 'Follow me.'

But there is a clear and clean break with the past. We find that both sets of brothers immediately leave their fishing nets behind them. In the case of James and John they go even further and leave their father Zebedee behind as well.

However the value of their past lives and occupations is not discounted. They are no longer to spend their lives catching fish, but they will be taught how to fish for and catch people. In this way Jesus affirms the value of their past skills and experience. Perhaps they will find that the patience and expertise which they have learnt in fishing will now be used in a new context and for a new purpose.

So when God calls us it affects the whole of our lives, past, present and future. The result of God's call may be that we pursue a different direction in our lives. However, so often we find that in this process our previous experience and gifts are used. To put this in our local context, we may have an aptitude for and experience in public speaking. It is possible that as we explore roles such as a Reader or a Lay Worship Assistant we find this being used in a new context and for a new purpose as we start leading worship services.

Both our gospel passage and our reading from Jonah speak in different ways about the importance of responding to God's call on our lives. As we think about our own lives I wonder how this relates to us.

For all of us it is possible that the simplicity of the original call from Jesus to come to and follow Him has been obscured by the immediate pressures of life. If this is so, then like Jonah we need to allow God to speak to us a second time so that we can recapture the joy and excitement of knowing what our lives are truly about.

And as we think of how the first disciples were to be transformed from fishermen to fishers of men perhaps we ask ourselves how are we using the gifts and talents that God has given us. Are we using these for our own purposes and as it suits us? Or have we placed these entirely in God's hands for Him to use and reshape as He thinks best?

Tristram

Points for Prayers

- To respond to God's call on our lives and to place our gifts and talents at God's disposal
- COVID plans for winter and our own planning for the Christmas period
- Continued thanksgiving for the care, skill and courage of NHS workers and that they will not be overwhelmed by the demands on them in the winter period
- Actions to be taken following climate change summit in Glasgow
- Those whom we know who are facing illnesses of all kinds and have recently been bereaved
- Bishop Ruth and the rest of the Diocesan staff as they take on additional responsibility in this vacancy in See
- For the choice of a new Bishop, someone who shares God's heart for this Diocese
- North Cadbury Church School and other local schools
- For Elliscombe House in Higher Holton as it prepares for reopening in the near future
- Prayers and thanksgiving for contributions to the foodbanks and for those helping to take these to the foodbanks.

Hymn

A hymn which emphasises the importance of persevering in God's call is 'O Jesus I have promised to serve thee to the end.'

Services in November

Sunday 7th November

9.00 am Communion, Yarlinton

Sunday 7 th November	9.30 am Camelot Matins, North Cheriton
Sunday 7 th November	11.00 am Group Communion, North Cadbury
Sunday 14 th November	10.50 am Remembrance Service, North Cadbury
Sunday 14 th November	10.50 am Remembrance Service, Yarlinton
Sunday 14 th November	10.50 am Remembrance Service, South Cadbury
Sunday 14 th November	10.50 am Remembrance Service, Compton Pauncefoot (joint with Blackford)
Sunday 14 th November	10.50 am Remembrance Service, Maperton
Sunday 14 th November	10.50 am Remembrance Service, Holton
Sunday 14 th November	10.50 am Remembrance Service, North Cheriton
Sunday 21 st November	9.30 am Communion, Compton Pauncefoot
Sunday 21 st November	11.00 am Communion, Maperton
Sunday 21 st November	11.00 am Sunday Worship, North Cadbury
Sunday 21 st November	4.00 pm Evensong, Yarlinton
Sunday 28 th November	8.00 am Communion, Blackford
Sunday 28 th November	9.30 am Communion, South Cadbury
Sunday 28 th November	9.30 am Morning Worship, North Cheriton
Sunday 28 th November	9.30 am Matins, Compton Pauncefoot
Sunday 28 th November	11.00 am Communion, North Cadbury
Sunday 28 th November	11.00 am Communion, Holton
Sunday 28 th November	11.00 am Sunday Worship, Yarlinton
Sunday 28 th November	4.00 pm Evening Service, Galhampton

Excalibur

Excalibur is back in paper form. It contains details of Camelot people, a record of baptisms, weddings and funerals undertaken through the church in the Camelot Parishes. The November edition of Excalibur has now been published online at camelotparishes.co.uk and on each parish's A Church Near You webpage.

The Parish Office

If Rob is not in the Office during normal office hours please contact him via email (office@camelotparishes.org.uk) or on 01749 850934.

Growing as a worshipper, a servant and a family

*We pray that 'we might live in love,
as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us'*

(Ephesians 5:2)