

# **CUTTING EDGE CAMELOT, No 191**

**Sunday 22<sup>nd</sup> January 2023**

**‘Virtually Church but with some way to go...’**

## **Welcome**

Welcome to this Sunday’s Cutting Edge Camelot. Jesus calls His first disciples to leave their occupation as fishermen but does that mean that their past skills and experience will no longer be of any use?

## **Scripture Passages**

*Matthew 4: 12-23*

Now when Jesus heard that John had been arrested, he withdrew to Galilee.

<sup>13</sup> He left Nazareth and made his home in Capernaum by the sea, in the territory of Zebulun and Naphtali, <sup>14</sup> so that what had been spoken through the prophet Isaiah might be fulfilled:

<sup>15</sup> “Land of Zebulun, land of Naphtali,

on the road by the sea, across the Jordan,

Galilee of the Gentiles--

<sup>16</sup> the people who sat in darkness

have seen a great light,

and for those who sat in the region and shadow of death

light has dawned.”

<sup>17</sup> From that time Jesus began to proclaim, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near.”

<sup>18</sup> As he walked by the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers, Simon, who is called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea - for they were fishermen. <sup>19</sup> And he said to them, “Follow me, and I will make you fish for people.” <sup>20</sup> Immediately they left their nets and followed him.

<sup>21</sup> As he went from there, he saw two other brothers, James son of Zebedee and his brother John, in the boat with their father Zebedee, mending their nets, and he called them. <sup>22</sup> Immediately they left the boat and their father, and followed him.

<sup>23</sup> Jesus went throughout Galilee, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the good news of the kingdom and curing every disease and every sickness among the people.

### *Luke 5: 3-11*

He got into one of the boats, the one belonging to Simon, and asked him to put out a little way from the shore. Then he sat down and taught the crowds from the boat.

<sup>4</sup> When he had finished speaking, he said to Simon, “Put out into the deep water and let down your nets for a catch.”

<sup>5</sup> Simon answered, “Master, we have worked all night long but have caught nothing. Yet if you say so, I will let down the nets.”

<sup>6</sup> When they had done this, they caught so many fish that their nets were beginning to break. <sup>7</sup> So they signalled their partners in the other boat to come and help them. And they came and filled both boats, so that they began to sink.

<sup>8</sup> But when Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus’ knees, saying, “Go away from me, Lord, for I am a sinful man!” <sup>9</sup> For he and all who were with him were amazed at the catch of fish that they had taken; <sup>10</sup> and so also were James and John, sons of Zebedee, who were partners with Simon.

Then Jesus said to Simon, “Do not be afraid; from now on you will be catching people.” <sup>11</sup> When they had brought their boats to shore, they left everything and followed him.

### *John 21: 3-6*

Simon Peter said to them, “I am going fishing.” They said to him, “We will go with you.” They went out and got into the boat, but that night they caught nothing.

<sup>4</sup> Just after daybreak, Jesus stood on the beach; but the disciples did not know that it was Jesus.

<sup>5</sup> Jesus said to them, “Children, you have no fish, have you?”

They answered him, “No.”

<sup>6</sup> He said to them, “Cast the net to the right side of the boat, and you will find some.” So they cast it, and now they were not able to haul it in because there were so many fish.

## **Reflection**

Last week, we looked at John’s account of the calling of the first disciples. This week we again look at this same subject. However, this time we see their calling through a different but complementary perspective in Matthew’s gospel.

Both John and Matthew’s gospels emphasise how the first disciples, in order to take up their calling with Jesus, need to leave their past life behind. In John this is demonstrated by how the disciples leave the fellowship of John the Baptist in order to join Jesus. For Matthew it is the need for the disciples to leave their former occupation as fishermen. In both cases, the message is that a complete break with the past is needed.

And as we think of the first disciples leaving their occupations as fishermen it does seem like a sudden and complete leaving behind of all the gifts, expertise and talents that they must have built up over the years.

Jesus says to Simon Peter and to Andrew, 'Follow me'. And on hearing this they both instantly respond by leaving their fishing nets behind and following Jesus. The same happens with the next set of brothers, James and John, the sons of Zebedee. For them indeed the break with their past life that is needed seems to be even more radical and costly. Not only do they leave their fishing boat but also they leave their father, Zebedee.

We do not know how Zebedee responded to this sudden departure. But we may well think that suddenly being left on his own in sole charge of his family business would not have been easy for him. Perhaps ever since the birth of his sons his father would have hoped that at least one of them would have wanted to continue the family business. He may well have invested time and energy into training them up for this eventuality. And now in a moment all those expectations and preparations were just gone.

And from being fishermen the two sets of brothers are now drawn into a wholly different way of life. Jesus travels through Galilee teaching in synagogues and exercising a powerful ministry of teaching and healing. Peter and Andrew, James and John would no doubt have been present. They were being trained once more but this time not for the purpose of becoming fishermen but for being equipped for their future ministry. In this they would at first support Jesus and later on, after His death and resurrection, they would continue His ministry. This was another and very different form of family business.

So our questions might be 'What happened to all those years of acquiring skill and expertise as fishermen?' Were these just to be cast on the scrap heap and never used again? And if so what was the value and purpose of all that they had done in their previous lives?

But is this first impression quite right? For when Jesus calls the first disciples to follow Him, He does so with the words that instead of being fishermen he will make them fishers of men. Is this just a neat play on

words or does it point us to an underlying truth that despite the need to make a complete break with the past there may be ways in which their past experience will be used for the purposes of their future ministry? Perhaps their past skills will be transformed rather than simply wasted and thrown away.

Certainly, I can see this happening when I reflect on times of transition in my own life and perhaps especially on my journey into ordained ministry. At such times a complete break is indeed needed. However, as time goes by the ways in which past experience can be valued and used often becomes more apparent.

And if we think more broadly, perhaps we can conclude that there is no experience which is completely wasted. Even if we have taken a wrong turning in life we can recognise this and ask ourselves how we might respond differently in the future.

However, there are also dangers when we seek to draw on our past skills and experience when we are fulfilling God's call. The danger is of placing our confidence in the knowledge and expertise that such experience gives us instead of placing our confidence entirely in God.

Many of us will have had the experience of starting off a new job. In this initial period, we can often feel very vulnerable. There are many practical questions which we have and we need the goodwill of our new colleagues to help us. These questions may be relatively minor such as where to find the photocopier. Or they may be more substantial issues where we need to 'learn on the job'.

So this time can be a humbling one. We realise that we do not have the resources by ourselves to do the tasks that we need to do. Rather we have to call on the help of other people and of God.

And yet as time goes on more and more aspects of our job become well known and routine to us. This presents a different kind of challenge. This consists in the temptation to become complacent and to believe that we can do everything ourselves without anyone else's help.

Maybe this explains why elsewhere in the gospels, we see that though they were very experienced in this occupation Peter and the others nevertheless needed the help of Jesus in order to bring them success as fishermen. Even in the area of life where they felt strong and confident they needed to realise that they were in fact wholly dependent on God.

The first time this occurs is in a third account of the calling of the first disciples. This comes in Luke's gospel. Here, Jesus is actually using Peter's boat for the purpose of teaching. And when he has finished teaching, he asks Peter to fish. Peter, drawing on the wisdom of his past experience, responds by telling Jesus that they have fished all night and caught nothing. However, if Jesus says so he is prepared to let his nets down one more time. Perhaps he thinks that nothing will come of this and that he will then be able to explain to Jesus what fishing is all about.

And yet the very opposite occurs. Miraculously when Peter obeys Jesus there is a catch of so many fish that the nets begin to break and the boats to sink. At this Peter is awed and astonished. He falls at Jesus' feet. And then, just as in Matthew's account, Jesus commissions Peter and the others to become fishers of men.

And the second time is an echo of the first. It comes at the very end of John's gospel. After Jesus' crucifixion Peter and the other disciples have gone back to their old occupation of fishing. Perhaps they think that their work and ministry with Jesus has ended with Jesus' death.

But once more despite all their efforts they catch nothing all night. And then the risen Jesus comes and stands among them directing them to put

out their net once more, this time on the right side of the boat. And once again there is an abundant and miraculous catch of fish.

The message from both these accounts of miraculous catches of fish, one at the beginning and one at the end of Jesus' earthly ministry, is that without Jesus the disciples are nothing. Even where they may feel that they have natural expertise and strength they need Jesus' help in order to succeed.

As we reflect on the call of the first disciples, perhaps it brings to mind times of transition in our own lives. Have such times involved a clean break with all that has gone before or have they been more gradual and gentle transitions? Have we had a sense of loss as we find that perhaps past gifts and experience are no longer valued or used? Or have we found that such gifts and experience have come to be used in a different way?

Most of all, have such times of transition resulted in our becoming more dependent on and closer to God? For like Peter and the other fishermen who found that they could catch nothing without the help of Jesus we too may have had similar experiences. We will, no doubt, not have found this comfortable. And yet if through such times we can respond with faith and trust in Jesus we will find that they enrich us and become a blessing.

*Tristram*

## **Points for Prayers**

- Finding God's will at points of transition in our lives
- All those facing hardship this winter, needing to choose between food and heating
- Those seeking to help those facing hardship through projects such as the Lord's Larder and other foodbanks, community fridges and the provision of warm spaces

- Disruption caused by flooding and cold weather
- Resolution to various industrial disputes, especially those involving the NHS
- Conflict between Russia and the Ukraine and those who are refugees from this conflict
- Those whom we know who are facing illnesses of all kinds and have recently been bereaved
- For Elliscombe House in Higher Holton and its residents
- For teachers, children and parents of North Cadbury church school

## Hymn

A hymn which speaks of finding God in the whole of our lives is 'Teach me, my God and King'.

## Services for this week and next

Sunday 22 <sup>nd</sup> January	8.00 am Communion, Blackford
Sunday 22 <sup>nd</sup> January	9.30 am Communion, South Cadbury
Sunday 22 <sup>nd</sup> January	9.30 am Matins, Compton Pauncefoot
Sunday 22 <sup>nd</sup> January	9.30 am Morning Worship, North Cheriton
Sunday 22 <sup>nd</sup> January	11.00 am Communion, North Cadbury
Sunday 22 <sup>nd</sup> January	11.00 am Communion, Holton
Sunday 22 <sup>nd</sup> January	11.00 am Sunday Worship, Yarlinton
Sunday 22 <sup>nd</sup> January	4.00 pm Evening Service, Galhampton
Sunday 29 <sup>th</sup> January	8.00 am Communion, Blackford
Sunday 29 <sup>th</sup> January	9.30 am Family Service, North Cheriton
Sunday 29 <sup>th</sup> January	11.00 am Matins, Maperton



Sunday 29<sup>th</sup> January

11.00 am Sunday Worship, Bratton Seymour

Sunday 29<sup>th</sup> January

4.00 pm, Evensong, 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 December and January editions of Excalibur have now been published online at [camelotparishes.co.uk](http://camelotparishes.co.uk).

## **The Parish Office**

If Rob is not in the Office during normal office hours please contact him via email ([office@camelotparishes.org.uk](mailto: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)