

## Bennochy church: 3rd February 2019

*Can I come into your boat? What's that you say? Can I use your boat? I want to speak to the crowd. Is that OK?*

I fancy , and it is pure speculation on my part, that Jesus and Peter, one of the many fishermen on the shores of Lake Galilee, had met before. This was not the request of a stranger. You see, the crowd were pushing in on all sides. At this particular gig, there was not much crowd control. Jesus needed space, and what better vantage point on a lake side, than a floating pulpit!

Here was a man with a growing reputation. The kind that gets noticed, authorities worried. People were following wherever he went, hanging onto his every word. No doubt hoping to witness a miracle. Wouldn't you? From Galilee to Capernaum, from Synagogues to a lake side, the crowds are gathering. from the authorities point of view, was there Revolution in the air. Was Jesus inciting the crowds?

We have no idea what he said, just, it just says, 'he taught the crowd'. That's disappointing. Would it not be good to know what Jesus said. Maybe he explained what his mission was about. What words like, '*Good news*', and '*Kingdom of God*' meant. We are just told he taught with authority and the people were amazed. Fancy being there? On the shore. Feeding off the excitement and the emotion of the crowd.

The story moves on a pace. The crowd melts away and we are left on a boat, listening in to a conversation. *Take the boat out a further and let down your nets. We tried that. It didn't work!* Some comments never change. These were words to trust in, so they let down their nets.

They got lucky or Jesus was a better fishermen than they were! Bursting nets. They needed help. They called another boat over. Now they were four. Men of old with strange names. Now be honest, is it only me that thinks of the 'magic roundabout' , when I hear the name Zebedee? The father of James and John. So many fish. Sinking boats, but they made it to shore. Exciting times.

They thought they knew these waters better than anyone else. That what they did. They caught fish, but here is this man of words and miracle, who shows then how it should be done. They were amazed. A healthy catch. Good income.

The reaction we need to note is that of Peter. He kneels down. *Go away. I am sinful!* Rewind. Amazement I can understand. The reaction of Peter, I do not. Unless, Peter already knew what Jesus had been talking about. Was that what the crowd heard? It that what Jesus was talking about? Peter, in some way, that is not clear to us, makes a connection between their breaking nets

of fish and himself. His response to Jesus is strikingly personal. *I am, a sinful man.*

That is all it took. Nothing more. A good catch, and they were 'hooked', off catching people for the Kingdom, instead of fish. If they did indeed leave everything, then this story is truly miraculous.

Within this miracle is the very ordinary. Indeed I would say, it has nothing to do with the supernatural at all. Life is full of ordinary miracles, but that does not make them any less special. I wonder if the crowd realised what was happening, or had they now begun to disperse. Maybe the boat was too far out and they missed history in the making, that moment, when those first disciples were being formed.

For Isaiah, it was so much more dramatic. The sight of God. The singing of winged beings. *Holy, holy, holy. The Lord Almighty is holy. His glory fills the world.* The temple shook and smoke was in the air filling nostril and lung. Now that is what you call, the presence of God!

Like Peter, he says he is a sinful man. No hope. Doomed. Nothing good comes from my lips or indeed the lips of my people. Yet I have seen God, and in the midst of the glory, comes the ordinary. A burning coal. A symbol of cleansing. It touches the lips of the prophet, as a sign of God's forgiveness. What a scene.

Let's bring the two stories together. If we were to meet God, what would you prefer, to witness the vision of glory in the temple of God, or the miracle of fish on a boat? It is not the context that is important, for in both stories, the presence of God is experienced, and witnessed in the ordinary. It was the touch of God on the lips of Isaiah that called him to be a prophet of God, not what was going on round about him. That was a side show. It was full nets, that Peter responded to. That's how you get the attention of a fisherman!

May we meet God in the ordinary, and not wait for moments of high Glory. May we meet God in the ordinary, and not wait for a miracle to take place. The proof of that? The words of Isaiah, *Whom shall I send? Who will be our messenger. . I answered, I will go, send me.* The proof, seen in the actions of the fishermen. They left everything and followed Jesus. There's your miracle. Amen.