

## Bennochy church 24th February 2019

Jesus was a better fisherman than the fishermen! He knew where the fish were. *Just go out a bit more and lower down your nets. That is where you will find them.* So many fish, the nets nearly break and the boat nearly sinks. Or did Jesus just get lucky? As I said a few weeks ago, what better way to impress a fishermen, than a net full of fish! Now he is at it again! You would think that experienced fishermen would be able to cope with a storm, or at the very least, see it coming and stay at home. Who seems to cope best out on the lake? It is not the fishermen. It is Jesus.

It was after all his fault in the first place. It was him that said to his disciples, the fishermen, *let's go to the other side of the lake.* An equivalent of going a wee run in the car. It was going swimmingly well. All was calm and Jesus even falls asleep. He must have been tired. His life all of a sudden had got very busy. Suddenly it all starts to go all wrong and they were soon wishing they had not set out on this journey. How good at their job were they, that fisherman are caught out by this storm? They must have done this journey hundreds of times. Did they not see the storm coming?

I wonder how long they battled the storm before waking Jesus up, who must have been a sound sleeper. One of these people who can fall asleep anywhere. Or, and I have no evidence for this, he was actually awake, one eye half open, wondering how

long it would be before the fishermen asked for help. Now would Jesus do such a thing?

The story is one of contrast. You have the storm on the lake, the ferocity of waves and wind, and the panic of the fishermen, contrasted with the sleep and calmness of Jesus. He seems quite oblivious to all that is going on round about him. *We are about to die!* It all seems very dramatic. Jesus is woken up and says to the fishermen, *give me a bucket and I will help bail out the boat. Come on guys, hurry up.* No he didn't. Above the noise of the storm, or maybe in just a whisper, he asks for calm.

I wonder if his words were as much directed to the fishermen, as to the storm. To internal emotion as well as external chaos. *Be calm. Be still.* Was the response instantaneous? The story does not say that. In a sense, it is not important. The point of the story cannot just focus on the miracle, there has to be more to it than that. The reason I say that is this, we cannot live our lives chasing miracles. If we do that, we will miss the ordinary and the mundane work of God.

I like to believe that the miracle of this story, is as much the reaction of the fishermen, not their amazement, the amazement will pass, that's fleeting, but in spite of the storm, an inner response of calm, to the words of Jesus. We are told many witnessed the miracles of Jesus, but lots of them then

went home, and just got on with life. The response of faith, has to have something more to it, than being amazed at a miracle.

I believe the miraculous of this story, is found in a question.

*Who is this man?* Even if the laws of nature have been set aside, the key point of the story is not the calming of the storm; we can't leave the story at that point, and go home. The key to understanding this dramatic event, is the question asked by the fishermen.

You see, that's a question we can all relate to. I am sure many of us have thought, at various times of life, in the midst of our 'storms', *who is Jesus?* But if we wait for the miracle, that question might never be asked.

It seems from the story, at least in Jesus mind, that the disciples lacked faith. What I take from that is this, if they had only waited, the storm would in time have passed. In a real sense, as fishermen, they should have known that. But in that moment of perceived danger, they panicked, and rushed to Jesus for help, instead of using their skills to get them through the storm. With Jesus on board, was their life really in danger?

One of the dangers of reading such stories is to over spiritualise them. To read more into them, than is actually there. We are all guilty of that. The bottom line is, this is a story with two layers, it is about who Jesus is seen to be, a man of miracle, and what does that say to Luke's readers, and, it is a story about what

faith is understood as. Hebrews 11: 1 says, *To have faith is to be sure of the things we hope for, to be certain of the things we cannot see.*

What did the fishermen hope for? To survive the storm, and in the midst of the storm, was their hope certain. No it was not. It was beyond their sight, so they woke up Jesus. That was their lack of faith. Waking up Jesus.

In the midst of the storm, do we have faith to see its end, no matter how much, 'in the moment', we feel in turmoil, and to know, that all we need is Jesus in the boat. We don't actually have to wake him up! Is that faith. Is that the point, in the words of Jesus, that Luke is trying to make? I will leave it to you, to think about! Amen.