

+WEEKLY SERMON

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Be brave and go fish!

Jesus said to Simon, "Do not be afraid; from now on you will be catching people." *Luke 5:1-11*

Our world does not always feel like a safe place to be. There is war, terrorism, world politics and crime in our local neighbourhoods. Media outlets produce alarmist headlines from anything about people who may have done some terrible things to the cancer-causing properties of certain foods. Our world seems disconcerting and unpredictable.

Simon in this week's gospel seems fed up, it has been a long and unsuccessful night where they haven't caught any fish. They have finished their nights work and are clearing up, they are tired and disheartened. Likely they are worried the lack of fish means they won't have enough money to live, or even enough to eat.

We are not told why Simon agrees to take Jesus out into the Lake, when he would much rather have been at home and in bed, but he does.

Once Jesus had finished speaking, he encourages Simon to go out further, to the deeper waters and put down his nets. Unsurprisingly Simon doesn't want to. They have tried all night and haven't caught anything, now isn't the time to be fishing, now is the time to be sleeping. Simon, however, takes a chance and does as he is asked. An exuberantly bountiful catch ensues, there's so many fish that the nets cannot take the strain, and the fish become a danger to the boats.

It took a bravery for Simon to be obedient to Jesus. As an experienced fisherman he knew they weren't going to catch any fish. It took bravery to leave behind what he knew and try something new. It took bravery, to keep hold of the catch when those fish could have sunk his boat and his livelihood. It took bravery for Peter to say to Jesus 'I am a sinful man.'

Jesus said to Simon, "Do not be afraid; from now on you will be catching people."

It takes bravery for us to go out and 'catch people'. It takes bravery for the church to venture out into the deeper waters to create inclusive and welcoming communities of hope. Communities where all people can be safe, feel at home, be nurtured, grow, develop and flourish. It takes bravery for us to trust in that the abundance of God's love is stronger and more powerful than all those things which cause us fear and harm.

Jesus is saying, "Do not be afraid! Throw off what we think we know, get out into the deeper waters, cast your nets and trust in God's love for all humanity"

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HEALTHY CHURCHES TRANSFORMING COMMUNITIES