

Sunday 10th May

Luke 5: 1 – 11

DO NOT BE AFRAID 2

Good morning and welcome to the 2nd message on the theme

‘Do Not Be Afraid’

The Scripture is from Luke 5: 1-11 and you may want to pause and read this text before reading on.

Before I talk about our story today let me test you on a few words. I wonder if you know what these words mean? They are all Phobias.

Aerophobia / Latrophobia / Siderodromophobia

One is a fear of flying, the second is the fear of doctors and the third is the fear of trains.

I know a few people that are scared of flying. Are you scared ? Isn't it amazing that millions of people are happy to get inside a machine and let a complete stranger take you up thousands of feet. What about trains? Have you stood and watched how fast these things go ? People are happy to get on and travel with no questions asked about the driver. But If I said get in my car and I'll drive you around at maximum legal speed some of you would pass on this offer. What about Doctors ? Are you scared to go to the Doctors ? Some of you may be blessed with knowing your doctor personally but I don't and if I went I would be placing myself in the hands of a complete stranger. I think it would be fair to say that most of us would get on a plane, go on a train and go to the doctors without too many problems even though we don't know the driver, pilot or doctor. Why is that ? There is an element of trust that we assume the Pilot is qualified, the driver is trained the Doctor knows their stuff. Think about other areas of life where this happens in your life?

We place so much trust in so many things and in so many people including strangers. Yet Phobias are irrational fears. I'm happy to pick up a spider but someone else might run away even though they are harmless in this country. So we're a strange lot us humans we trust strangers on one hand and yet we can potentially fear irrationally.

In today's story the scene is set by the Lake of Gennesaret also known as the Sea of Galilee where Jesus had been teaching. Simon, Andrew, James & John were washing their nets, they were experienced fishermen who knew what they were doing. Family businesses needed running, that were passed down by Parents like Zebedee the Father of James and John and John the father of Andrew & Simon Peter. They had been out all night (Luke 5: 5) and caught nothing, these guys knew what to do they just didn't catch anything. But this new Rabbi comes along that their friends and community have quite taken to and asks them to go back out to sea and let down those nets that they've just washed!!! What does this Rabbi – carpenter know about fishing? All credit to Simon the boys for agreeing. This Messiah was about to do something that was incredible and in a language that Simon Peter would fully understand – FISH !

They caught such a large amount of Fish that the nets were beginning to break. The boats were so full they began to sink under the weight of them. A fruitless night turned into a plentiful morning! Oh was Simon impressed like witnessing a miracle he suddenly felt helpless – it wasn't through his own ability he caught these fish it was down to the provision of God and he fell at the feet of the Messiah.

“Go away from me, Lord; I am a sinful man!”

Have you ever witnessed a miracle or felt so close to God that you felt so small, unworthy, helpless, on your knees in worship. Have you ever felt so close to God and his Holiness that you fully understood the impact of your sin and repented. Simon Peter didn't have an irrational fear, a Phobia of Jesus where he panicked for no reason, he wasn't just purely trusting a stranger for he knew about Jesus (Luke 4:14-15, Luke 4: 31 – 44). Jesus had been to his home and even healed his Mother in Law. At his home, he saw many healed and many demons coming out of people. It was this miraculous catch of fish that brought Peter to his knees, a language he understood. I find it interesting that when you listen to testimonies about how people come to faith in Jesus, very often God speaks to people where they are at in life and in a language they understand. How is God speaking to you today?

Simon Peter was in the Presence of the Son Of God. His Fear was rational, This Jesus could do anything including looking straight into his life and calling out the sin and hypocrisies. If Jesus stood before you and I today I think we too would be very conscious of the sin in our lives.

The response of Jesus was wonderful. I can picture Jesus looking at Simon Peter and seeing what the future was going to bring for him and the Church. From a Young Fisherman to the leader of the first Church. This moment and these decisions were going to be the start of an incredible journey and the world would never be the same again.

“Simon, Don’t be afraid; from now on you will catch men.”

There was no condemnation, rejection of Simon. Sinner verses Son of God. No! There was just the invitation to come and join the team, the family. Come with me, you don’t need a degree, attain a certain holiness. Jesus took Simon Peter as he was.

Simon Peter, Andrew, James & John pulled up the boats and left everything and followed Jesus (Luke 5:11). Their adventure was about to begin !

What can we learn from this story from 2000 years ago? What can we apply to our lives? There are 2 main points that I would like to make

1) A Godly perspective to fear

‘The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom, and knowledge of the Holy One is understanding’. Proverbs 9:10

We can easily get caught up with other people’s fears. We can easily get caught up with fear produced by the media. We can also get caught up with our own fears. But when we focus on Jesus all these things are put in the right context. Matthew 14: 22 – 36 sees Jesus walking on the water and Peter being invited to climb out the boat and walk towards him. It is only when Peter loses focus and starts getting afraid of the wind that he starts to sink. When we understand how amazing, incredible and powerful God is then things like illnesses, uncertainties and problems are put in their rightful place. Should I fear Corona virus more than I should fear God ? NO !

“Instead of just telling God how big your fears and worries are

Tell your fears and worries how big your God is!”

Simon was afraid of Jesus because he realised he was a sinner and he realised just who Jesus was. Jesus the Son of God in return took Simon as he was and wanted to use him and do something with his life. He loved and forgave Simon.

What are your fears? What are your sins? In Jesus Christ you are forgiven. God is not finished with you, and in Romans 8:28 we are told that in all things God works for the good of those who love him.

So turn your eyes upon Jesus
Look full in his wonderful face
And the things of earth will grow strangely dim
In the light of his glory and grace.

2) Obedience

Simon Peter was an experienced fisherman and yet when Jesus asked him to go back out to fish he could have said “No I’m tired”, “Why we caught nothing”, or even “I know better than you as I’m a fisherman”. Instead, he said to Jesus “Because you say so, I will let down the nets”. Simon Peter was obedient and witnessed the amazing work of God. It was costly as they were tired, they were cleaning the nets. It was time and it was effort. What is Jesus asking you to do? What is Jesus asking Park Road Baptist Church to do? Have you been putting something off that you know God is asking you to do? Are you trying to do something in your own strength like Simon with a fruitless night of work when you should allow God to do his work through his Spirit in your life?

I hope all is well wherever you may be. God is not finished with us! Let’s spend time worshipping him whatever language you speak in whichever way that you feel comfortable. Let’s focus on who Jesus is for perfect love will drive out fear and let’s be ready to hear the voice of Jesus and be ready to obey !

Amen

Prayer

Speak Lord your servant is listening

Speak Lord so I can follow.

Draw close through these darkened times

So that I can face tomorrow

Amen.

