



TOGETHER

NewarkandSouthwellMethodist.org.uk

Fishing on the other side

Reflections on Luke 5:1-11 by Rev Peter Hibberts

I've done very little fishing in my time. I vividly remember a trip when I was in Fitzgerald, South Georgia in the mid nineties (as a young teen). I was invited by a church member to visit their 'pond' (which was local speak for a fully stocked fishing lake!) The chap took me out onto the pond in a tin boat with a rod each and 'lures' on the end of the lines to catch catfish (a South Georgian special). I have to say, it wasn't difficult. The Lake was so well stocked that if I'd reach into the water I would probably have felt several fish brushing against my hand. I have a wonderful picture of my catch, held at arms length towards the camera to make it look even bigger - proud as punch!

I have no idea what it is like for a professional fisherman, the type that crews a trawler in deep water, at night with huge nets (nowadays on motorised winches) let alone what it would have been like to be a fisherman like Peter, James and John in the time of Jesus' earthly ministry. Luke 5 catches a wonderful exchange between Jesus, James and John before they were even disciples. I wonder how many times they had put out their nets that night, faithfully casting the nets. They were certainly weary, disappointed and if the financial climate for them was anything like today, worried about making ends meet after coming to the shore empty handed.

I wonder if we're in a similar position as a church. It's not actually a COVID thing, but I think COVID has exacerbated it. You see we've been faithfully 'fishing' for so long. Many of you have been fishing in your church and community for the last 10, 20, 30 years (maybe more). Others have fished elsewhere for as many years. I wonder what that's looked like... stewarding, leading, church councils, tea and coffee making, serving in community groups, perhaps leading worship and preaching, making repairs to church properties, giving of your hard-earned finances. I think many of us are weary, like the disciples were. We've had many 'catches' but I don't think church has ever been so difficult. We've tried so many things and perhaps we feel ready to pack in. (The disciples had given up fishing when Jesus met them!) But the message of this passage is that God wants us to trust him, and fish some more; on the other side of the boat. I wonder where your 'other side' is. Perhaps there's something in the life of your community or the life of your church family that God is asking you to be part of. He didn't call spectators, he called participators. Weary faithful and excited newcomers alike - let's trust God and put out our nets. God commands us to, God sustains us to, God equips us too; and may God unite us to.



1. Online Service

This week (14th February) our online circuit service will be led by Rev Peter Hibberts.

Find it on the 'Newark and Southwell Methodist Circuit' YouTube Channel (<https://www.youtube.com/NewarkSouthwellMethodistCircuit>) why not invite a friend to watch it with you and share the link with them on your social media or by email! (Also available to watch back at any time).

2. 'Zoom' Opportunities

If you're feeling isolated, are not ready to be face to face yet, or can't, but are happy to meet on Zoom, there is a weekly coffee time at 3pm on a Monday run by Charles Street but open to all, email Mel Watson for more details: mellwatson42@gmail.com.

There is also still a weekly Zoom fellowship called 'The Gathering' which is part of Southwell Methodist Church and run by Philip and Francine Holmes. You'd be most welcome, contact Philip to connect: philipholmes8100@gmail.com.



Where is church?

Circuit Service Message | Matthew 5:13-16 | Rev Peter Hibberts

There were three ministers talking about their churches and the first one asked the others where their church was. The first talked about how their church was on the high street, near the shops. They talked about how it had a great glazed entrance that was visible amongst the shops and it meant that when the town was full of people they were able to get some passing interest from the shoppers. The second described his. It was a church that wasn't in the centre but it was next to a large housing estate and a school. They were enjoying being near the housing estate as they felt part of the community and were able to conduct assemblies in the school to invite the children to come to church. They were planning on having a Messy Church to get more children into church. The third sat back and thought for a moment. 'Where is your church?' the first and second ministers asked. 'Well, let's see,' said the third, 'It's about 9:30am on Monday morning, some will be just getting back from the school run, some will be just getting to work. I have one or two who volunteer at the local care home and some will be in school.'

It's a challenge, isn't it. What is church?

We spend a significant amount of our time facilitating gathered worship (the hour or so we spend together on a Sunday morning - or whenever). We worry about whether we've chosen the right songs, whether we've picked the right words for the sermon. We look at numbers and wonder if we're growing (or worry that we're not). We worry about if we're relevant as a church, connecting with community and so often we judge this on who comes to gather with us. I think sometimes that we're so busy maintaining the mechanism that we call church that we forget to be the organism that is church.

We're given two analogies here for what it means to be church (what it means to be disciples of Christ). Salt and Light.

You'll no doubt have heard many messages about what salt and light are, their characteristics and how we should be like them.

We can say a lot about salt and light. We can glean a lot from them as illustrations. But actually I don't think the most important lesson for today comes from their characteristics.

I have many salt containers in my kitchen, at home (a grinder a dish, pink salt, sea salt...) but they are nothing until they enter the food. I could collect salt containers, different salts, exotic, decorative... but they'd be pointless until they actually leave the salt cellar. They exist to leave the cellar and be used in the world. And Jesus even spells it out with the light. We don't collect light, store light, hold light. I have a wardrobe that has its own light, it comes on automatically when I open the door (like a fridge). It's clever because the light in my wardrobe is pointless until I open the door; if it came on when I closed the door and off when I

opened it, it would be a total waste of time and money!

Salt and light are both only any good when they leave the container. Yet when we talk about church we often get tied up either with the building or the activities we do together. We 'go' to church, or we 'attend' church so that's often how we picture it.

The salt is not the salt cellar, the light is not the bulb.

We should be spending more time considering who we are in Christ rather than what we do or the institution we belong to. But if what I'm saying is true then our gatherings need to change. They need to be about being in God's presence long enough to walk away brighter and saltier so that we can leave and brighten and season the world. They need to be about restoration together (like a spiritual hospital for the weary) about mutual support and accountability (learning and caring) and a place where we stay long enough to grow and be regularly planted out into the world where we really begin our worship.

I have some practical ideas for this. I'd like to see everyone who is part of our churches in a small group. A group that pastoral supports each other rather than designating those who visit. I'd like to see these groups co-lead (together) grass roots equipping grass roots to walk side by side, serve shoulder to shoulder, and lead on God and each other as we do. We need to think small (groups) as we dream big. Build the church bottom up, not top down. Then, as we gather, we excite, empower and equip each other as part of something bigger to scatter into our mission fields.

Our Gatherings should be simply to resource our scatterings, not the entirety of our church experience.

Pray with me and join me to challenge the institution that has made us weary to make it a place that is fit for purpose; pray with me and join me, to revolutionise what church is for us, to *be* the church wherever we are, shoulder to shoulder as a way of life. For the Creator's glory, in the Saviour's name and in the Spirit's power. **Amen.**

Prayers

From Roots

DEAR JESUS,

You told your disciples and the gathered crowd that your followers should be salt and light in the world. Salt is a preservative, and I know that believers have served this purpose, helping to preserve society, restraining evil and promoting good. But then and now, salt also adds flavour—and thirst. So I wonder how flavourful I am. Are people better because of their association with me? Do I add hope, joy, and love to life? And are people thirsty for you and your Word because they know me? I want to be useful for you, Lord; I want to be salty salt! You also used light as a metaphor. Light illuminates, highlights, and gives direction, all qualities that should describe me. My "light" should shine through my words and actions. People should praise you because of what they see in me. May it be so. I also want to illuminate the truth of your Word, to put the spotlight on you, and to guide sinners home. O Savior, help me be your light.

Amen

DEAR JESUS,

Reveal to us where our church is. Help us to be church rather than attend church. Challenge us to lay down our misconceptions of what church is and hear what you call us to be as we gather with our sisters and brothers in Christ as well as when we are scattered into our day to day lives. Season our gatherings and bring your church together in unity for worship, restoration and equipping but help us also to hear the prompting of your spirit as you scatter us for our daily worship.

Amen

EMAIL PRAYER CHAIN

If you would like to join a prayer chain and receive prayer requests or to submit a prayer request (with permission of the recipient) please get in touch with Colin Beckett colin1244@gmail.com. It is for those of any church or none!

Circuit Plan

The New Circuit Plan (March to May 2022) is on the way detailing the Sunday services across the circuit and more. Keep informed at

newarkandsouthwellmethodist.org

Songs included in this week's online worship

From the highest of heights (StF 48) [LINK](#)

Praise is rising (StF 64) [LINK](#)

Lord I come before your throne (StF 58) [LINK](#)

Master Speak thy Servant Heareth (StF 666) [LINK](#)

Longing for light, we wait (StF 706) [LINK](#)

Have you heard God's voice (StF 662) [LINK](#)

Discussion Questions

Church is best done together but we know that this isn't always possible - particularly if you're housebound, isolated or even shielding. But why contact a friend and arrange to watch the church service online or read the newsletter simultaneously and get in touch by telephone afterwards to talk about it. Below are some questions that might help you to reflect together!

1. Where is your church?
2. What is Church?
3. What is the purpose of our Gathering?
Why do we come together in one room?
4. Have you ever been part of a small group?
5. Have you ever considered facilitating a small group in your home or at your church?
6. What, in your journey, has been the most effective activities to brighten your faith, make you saltier and equip you to be the church? **I'd love to hear your answers!**

In-person worship across the circuit during the next three weeks...

December 2021 - February 2022		13th Feb Racial Justice	20th Feb	27th Feb Sunday before Lent
Balderton	10:30 am	Bates HC	LA	Bates
Charles Street	10:30 am	Mathews	LA	Falla
	6:00 pm	Falla HC	Bates	Beech
Collingham	10:45 am	Hall	Bates HC	Pearce
Elston	10:45 am	Hibberts		Hart HC
Hope Community	10:30 am	Beech at B'gate	Gibson at H'ville	LA at B'gate
Long Bennington	10:30 am	Hart	Dalby T	Cozens
North End	6:00 pm	Bates	Hardy	Bates
North Muskham	10:30 am	West		Hibberts
	2:00 pm		Bates HC / Café	
Southwell	10:30 am	Ward T	Hibberts HC	Winnington
	Other	Hibberts PicC / 2pm	LA 4pm	Hibberts Fringe
Sutton-on-Trent	10:30 am	Falla Breakfast / 9am		United at All Saints HC / 10am
	Other		Hibberts 2pm	
Lectionary Readings (Year C)		Jeremiah 17:5-10 Psalm 1 1 Corinthians 15:12-20 Luke 6:17-26	Genesis 45:3-11, 15 Psalm 37:1-11 1 Corinthians 15:35-38, 42-50 Luke 6:27-38	Exodus 34:29-35 Psalm 99 2 Corinthians 3:12-4:2 Luke 9:28-36 (37-43)

For full plan, visit the Circuit Website:

<https://www.newarkandsouthwellmethodist.org.uk/newsroom/circuit-plan-dec-21-jan-22.html>

Join a small group for Lent...

Lent is often the time to join a small group and is the perfect time to try one for the first time. This lent there will be opportunities across the circuit to be part of a lent small group either online (Zoom) or in person. I will be leading groups on Monday evenings and either Tuesday or Wednesday afternoons between the 1st March and 17th April.

This year (as in previous years) I'm following the Church of England's Live Lent series which in 2022 is entitled 'Embracing Justice'. It's a 40 day challenge that you can follow online, through an app or with an individual study guide (adult and kids versions are available). Join me in person, online or through your own study and let's fellowship together, support and pray for one another and listen to what God has to say to us and our world about Justice.

For more information see <https://youtu.be/yLA5Tt8E8x8>.

