



## Do you follow?

This week our focus is on Jesus beginning his public ministry. The scene opens with a walk along the lake side. I like to imagine a sunny morning, with a gentle breeze blowing off the sea of Galilee, sun reflecting off the water and small waves gently lapping on the shore.

It's a lovely contrast to the 40-days spent in the wilderness after being baptised by John, where Jesus had resisted temptations given by the devil and this day marked a huge contrast for four fishermen whose decision that day would change their lives for ever.

In Sunday's sermon I shared a creative version of Jesus calling those four fishermen to follow him:

Here we have Jesus taking a stroll along the lakeside and seeing 2-brothers, Simon & Andrew. The narrator, Matthew, tells us this is the Simon who later became known as Peter.

'Hi guys, how's it hanging?'

'Yeah, good thanks, nets hanging very nicely, and we'll soon have some fish – hang around and we'll do you a deal. We've even heard there's a fish in this lake with a coin in its mouth - if you get that one it'll be like you get free lunch!'

Jesus laughed at that one! But otherwise ignoring the bit of banter, Jesus said, 'come, follow me.'

Splash! And the net was dropped. Immediately they were back on shore, taking a stroll with Jesus.

Who does that? Jesus called and they responded immediately.

They hadn't walked very far when the scene is repeated, this time with James and John, another 2-brothers, this time working for their father's business, 'Zebedee & Sons'.

'Hi guys, how's it hanging?'

'Ah, not so good right now – the net's got a hole in it.'

'Oh, I thought it was supposed to be holey?' enquired Jesus.

'Very funny,' replied the brothers, 'but if you want fish for breakfast, you're going to have to wait until we've mended it.'

'That's ok' said Jesus, 'I've got my own fishermen right here. Hey, why don't you come and join me too?'

Boom! – the heavy side of the net clattered into the boat, Zebedee is left alone with a broken net and Jesus has 2-more disciples!

Who does that? Jesus called and they responded immediately.



Were these fishermen foolish to follow Jesus? Turns out they had ringside seats to several years of Jesus' amazing ministry; the telling of stories that gripped hearts and minds, wisdom in all the ways of people, healing of the sick and an outspoken care for the lowly of that society.

Do we would need time to weigh up the options?

At the time of their decision, they knew none of that. They didn't know what would happen to Jesus, or of the roller-coaster emotional journey they would experience from the low of crucifixion to the high of resurrection.

But that's true for us all isn't it? None of us can be sure of the future.

We wait, we weigh up the options, we struggle to believe Jesus can be who he said he was and who his followers maintained he was ever since.

We can say there is no future beyond this life – which is a hopeless and depressing philosophy, but one that persists. Our focus is short-lived, for we age faster than we like to admit but we make the best of what we have.

Or we can become religious in saying there is a God, or some other master of fate such as the universe. The highly religious place lots of weight in being moral beings, of earning God's favour or else, reducing the self-down to rid oneself of all those self-focussed desires that drive humanity every day.

And, with the passing of years Jesus' way is lost in time, he become an historical figure, a good man, a prophet but not the Son of God because we can't imagine that being true.

And yet these fishermen all saw something in Jesus that went beyond human logic and ignited both heart and soul. Their decision brought them into an experience of God's Kingdom in their own lifetime. It was not dependant on religious attitude or moral behaviour to earn God's favour. It was not an insurance policy to make sure we they would experience the fullness of heaven after their bodies died.

Like those first followers, none of us are perfect, we still live in an imperfect world, and we cannot be sure of the future. That in itself is a sign that humanity needs something beyond us, such as the godly wisdom, hope and healing that Jesus shared.

'Come' said Jesus, 'follow me.'

A decision to follow Jesus is to enter into an experience of God's Kingdom now, bringing new hope into tired hearts and minds. Will you make a decision to follow Jesus today?