

### **A Prayer of Approach**

As we draw near to you, Lord God, we remember how you approached your first disciples by the lake: we follow you as they did, captivated and in awe at being caught up in your story. **Amen**

### **Hymn 495 Singing The Faith**

*John Greenleaf Whittier (1807-1892)* <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Bk7SX3r59sc>

Dear Lord and Father of mankind  
forgive our foolish ways;  
re clothe us in a rightful mind;  
in purer lives thy service find,  
in deeper reverence praise.

With that deep hush subduing all  
our words and works that drown  
the tender whisper of thy call,  
as noiseless let thy blessing fall  
as fell thy manna down.

In simple trust like theirs who heard  
beside the Syrian sea  
the gracious calling of the Lord,  
let us like them, without a word  
rise up and follow thee.

Drop thy still dews of quietness,  
till all our strivings cease;  
take from our souls the strain and stress,  
and let our ordered lives confess  
the beauty of thy peace.

O Sabbath rest by Galilee!  
O calm of hills above,  
where Jesus knelt to share with thee  
the silence of eternity,  
interpreted by love!

Breathe through the heats of our desire  
thy coolness and thy balm;  
let sense by dumb, let flesh retire;  
speak through the earthquake, wind, and fire,  
O still small voice of calm!

### **A prayer of Praise and Thanksgiving.**

Father we praise you for allowing your kingdom to break through into our lives; for the things that to you are ordinary, but to us extraordinary; and we thank you that you have called us to be part of your story, ordinary people caught up in the extraordinary tale of your plan for salvation. **Amen**

**Reading:** Luke 5 v 1 – 11

### **Reflection**

*The call to follow Christ is a call to adventure – inconvenient, imperious and irresistible.*

Although born and living by the river and sea I have never been interested in fishing. How disappointed I was as a youngster when, at a children's Christmas party for my father's work place, I received the gift of a fishing rod (albeit a small child's rod). How I coveted the plastic money wallet that the boy next to me received as his present and would have loved to swap mine with his!

'Of course what you need from the word go is strategy. Work that out first of all. Then, having established what your objectives are, choose your team with great care. Then you can begin to think about the tactics,' the voice of a very famous and highly successful captain of industry broadcasting on the radio. He had been talking about his experience in building up a company from nothing to a multinational corporation.

Peter and his brother, Andrew, were cleaning their nets after a long night of fishing. As luck would have it they came back empty handed. They were anxious to finish up and get home when along comes Jesus telling people about the kingdom of God. Many people had crowded around him and Jesus got into Peter's boat and spoke to them from the water. The crowds hung onto his every word. When he had finished Jesus said to Peter 'Put out into the deep and let your nets down for a catch.' Peter shook his head and said 'We've been out all night and didn't catch a thing. What's the use of going again?' Jesus just sat there. 'Oh all right,' Peter said. 'If you insist, but I tell you, it's going to be a

waste of time. With that, he and Andrew loaded up the nets and pushed off. In no time they were hauling in more fish than they knew what to do with. When Peter saw all the fish, he fell to his knees and said 'depart from me, for I am a sinful man, Lord.'

From reading this story we may get the impression that Peter knew better than Jesus. He may have said to himself, 'anyone knows we fish by night. You stick to carpentry and leave fishing matters to me' Now Peter feels his unworthiness, but Jesus ignored his request to 'depart from me', lifted Peter from his knees and commissioned him for his own service.

Simon Peter and James and John were ordinary men, fishermen. It was, it is, hard work, out every night, throwing nets by hand. It required patience, persistence and stamina. Perhaps these were the skills that Jesus was looking for – hard working, ordinary people. None of them that day would have expected Jesus to single them out for a special task 'Who, me?' says Peter. So Jesus shows them, using ordinary things they could understand – fish, nets, boats.

Every adventure has a beginning. Unfortunately, that beginning might be in the nature of a rude awakening. A prod, a sting, a shove. The thing you least expect to happen. The words you never wanted to hear. That's how it is, more often than not, with those who find themselves on the adventure of following Christ.

We know the end of the story – ordinary folk, who got caught up in God's story, who went on to do extraordinary things.

How is God transforming your everyday into something extraordinary?

### Prayers

Faithful God, you know us better than ourselves. As we worship you we give thanks that we are precious in your sight. God of creation, we pray for your world and its people, especially those living in areas affected by the climate crisis or places of conflict. May we play our part in bringing in the values of your kingdom of love and joy and peace. Gracious God, we pray for our local communities, our families and friends. We pray for those who live in fear or in sorrow, sickness, bereavement or any other adversity. Give to them strength and shine light into their darkness. By the power of your Spirit give us the strength we need to answer your call. Enable us to pass through the shallow waters of safety and push out into the deep waters of risk and uncertainty. There may we find your richest blessings.

**Amen**

### Hymn 674 Singing the Faith

*Herman G. Stuempfle, Jr. (1923-2007)* <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dqxQVzqODAU>

Would I have answered when you called  
'Come follow, follow me!'  
Would I at once have left behind  
both work and family?  
Or would the old familiar round  
have held me by its claim  
and kept the spark within my heart  
from bursting into flame?

Would I have followed where you led  
through ancient Galilee,  
on roads unknown, by ways untried  
beyond security?  
Or would I soon have hurried back  
where home and comfort drew,  
where truth you taught would not disturb  
the ordered world I knew?

Would I have matched my step with yours  
when crowds cried, 'Crucify!',  
when on a rocky hill I saw a cross  
against the sky?  
Or would I too have slipped away  
and left you there alone,  
a dying king with crown of thorns  
upon a terrible throne?

O Christ, I cannot search my heart  
through all its tangled ways,  
nor can I with a certain mind  
my steadfastness appraise.  
I only pray that when you call  
'Come follow, follow me!',  
you'll give me strength beyond my own  
to follow faithfully.

**The Blessing:** May God fill you with joy as you follow him. May you have perfect peace as you trust in him. May the power of the Holy Spirit fill you with hope. **Amen.**