

# Called, Made, Sent

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Preacher: Ken Perry

[ 0 : 00 ] This is the morning service at Holy Trinity on the 25th of March 2001. The preacher is Ken Perry.

His sermon is entitled Called, Made, Sent and is from Luke chapter 5 verses 1 to 11. First may I say what a joy it is to be back here at Holy Trinity. My wife and I have very fond memories of our time here before and particularly so far as family occasions are concerned. It's good to catch up with many old friends. Let's just have a word of prayer. May the words of my mouth and the thoughts and the meditations of all our hearts be now and always pleasing to you, our Lord, our strength and our Redeemer.

Amen. As you see from the new seat, the title of this sermon is Called, Made and Sent.

[ 1 : 19 ] And as you heard in that reading just a moment ago, the heading was The Calling of the First Disciples.

There is a parallel passage similar to it in Mark. And Jesus said to these first disciples, Come, follow me and I will make you fishers of men.

I want to leave with you a key thought as well. And the key thought I found in the devotional that I was reading the other day.

And it said, You provide the willingness and God will provide the power. You provide the willingness and God will provide the power.

And in a sense, that's what the disciples did. Our Bible passage from Luke begins with a simple statement, one day.

[ 2 : 42 ] Now there's nothing very startling about that. But as we explore the following text, the words that follow those words, and also follow the parallel text as I've just mentioned in Mark chapter 1 verses 9 to 20, we find that before that day was over, the most profound event was to happen.

This was to be no ordinary day so far as a small group of men was concerned. Their lives would be turned around completely.

They were a very ordinary group of men. We might call them professional fishermen. But that was not the important thing on this particular day.

The important factor in this day was that they were going to be chosen.

They were going to be called by the Son of God, Jesus Christ, to be his close companion and to be made by him into fishes of men and then to be sent out to make others into fishes of men.

[ 4 : 30 ] And Jesus did all this calling the disciples, making them and sending them out.

He did all this over a brief period of three years. So let's just imagine this thing.

Jesus went out on this morning for a walk by the lake. Many people go out for a walk early in the morning.

If you see down by the seaside, you'll probably walk along the beach. But he soon found, Jesus soon found himself surrounded by a crowd of people who we are told were listening to the word of God.

What Jesus preached we don't know in particular. What would they be hearing from the word of God? Well, Mark gives us a clue.

[ 5 : 47 ] For he says that Jesus was proclaiming these things. He said, the time has come, the kingdom of God is near, repent and believe the good news.

One might say that this was just about the first sermon that Jesus preached. very short, very simple.

But this was a very profound and challenging message for the people who were listening. For it contained first and foremost a wonderful promise.

The promise was this, that the time has come. after thousands of years of expectancy and hope that a Messiah would come to the children of Israel.

They are now told by this man standing on the shore of the lake of Gennesaret. Gennesaret. He said, the time has come.

[ 7 : 06 ] It was only later that they were to understand something more of what this meant. But there was a glimmer of hope that the time had come, that the Messiah was there.

this time, as I say, which they had waited for for so long. But not only that, but the kingdom of God is near.

God's kingdom was now about to be established. It was probably not in the way that they hoped and that he would overthrow their Roman masters.

It was going to be a kingdom where he would rule in the hearts and lives of people. not only that, but the time has come, the kingdom of God is near, but there was a challenge.

If this is the case, Jesus said, repent and believe the good news. If they were going to receive this kingdom, if they were going to indeed enter in to this wonderful new time, it was necessary for them to repent and believe.

[ 8 : 41 ] They couldn't take all the benefits of the new kingdom and the new time without coming before God with repentance and faith.

Now, in a sense, this was not a new message because many of these people, I'm sure, would have heard some of this message from John the Baptist who we know prepared the way for Jesus.

The people went out to him in the wilderness and he preached, we are told, a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. So sin has got to be dealt with first of all and foremost before we can enter in to this new time and this new kingdom and no forgiveness.

Three things that come out in this message, these messages. The need for repentance, the need for faith and the subsequent forgiveness and the awareness of it and assurance of it.

These are key truths. We also learnt in that passage from Acts that after that sermon had been preached by Peter.

[ 10 : 21 ] The people were cut in their hearts. They realised that something had to be done and they were told to repent. They had to repent and confess.

So you see the priority of repentance. It has saddened me down through the years to hear so many Christians say that they have heard little from the pulpit about repentance or really don't know exactly what it means.

But it is a foundation truth for the kingdom of God. And these truths of repentance and faith and forgiveness were all summed up as it were in the purpose and the meaning of the cross.

The cross was the place where God's love met man's sin. But man's response must be to repent of his sin and to believe in that one who hung on the cross and to receive new life and eternal life and forgiveness of his sins.

Let's move on in this day, the day that was going to be so significant in the lives of these men. So the day is also really providing not only some amazing revelations in the message proclaimed, but it's also a revelation that it's revealing the character of the one who's bringing the message.

[ 12 : 25 ] Because we don't really know how much the disciples had seen or heard Jesus before this. But Mark tells us in his passage that when Jesus spoke the people were amazed at his teaching.

For he taught them with authority and power, not like the scribes and the Pharisees. He taught with authority and power.

And this is the Jesus whom we love and worship and follow. He has this authority. He has this power. But the day was not only to produce this revelation of the character of the messenger and the nature of the message, the day was to produce some even more amazing results.

For the story goes on that Jesus saw at the water's edge two boats left there by the fishermen who were washing their nets. nets. Let's picture the scene.

Here were these fishermen just ordinary everyday people and they were doing an ordinary everyday task.

[ 13 : 48 ] Nothing was unusual, a day like any other day. that was certainly the case so far as these men were concerned.

In their mind it was just something that they did every day. But what about to God as he looked down on this scene?

God looked down on this scene and saw these men, these ordinary men and he was about to work in their hearts, a work in which their lives would be changed forever.

And God looks down upon each one of us and he sees our hearts. We may feel that we're very ordinary. We have no special task.

task. But God looks down and he sees you and he knows you and he has something for you to be and to do.

[ 15 : 03 ] The circumstances of this situation were nothing special. The men were called while they were at their everyday tasks.

And God calls busy people. He doesn't call lazy people. And it seems from scripture that this is the way that God works.

He chooses ordinary people just like each one of us living out our ordinary everyday lives. But people who are open and willing to what God may call them to be and to do.

I thank God that when he brought me to know Jesus as my Lord and Saviour, the person who counselled me said to me, Ken, don't ever forget when you pray each day to God to ask him what his will is for you for that day.

For it may just seem an ordinary day, but if we walk with God who knows what may happen and what he may say to us.

[ 16 : 29 ] I go back to the key thought, you provide the willingness to do what God tells you to do and to be, and God will provide the power.

Consider for a moment God's call to some other people of Scripture. What about Moses? Do you think Moses wanted to be the leader of those people?

But God laid his hand upon Moses, trained him in the court of Pharaoh and Moses when he was told by God that he had to lead the people of Israel out of Egypt, he became the master of all excuses.

He gave every excuse he could to God why he shouldn't do it. And that's the first thing that happens sometimes when God calls us to do a task.

We will say, I can't do it. Or anything else. What about David? David was the insignificant young shepherd boy.

[ 17 : 47 ] Nobody thought that he would be in a place for a good, you know, particular position or to be a king. But we learn that this shepherd boy had been called by God to be a king.

He's not the kind of person who you would think would attain to that position. What about Samuel? Samuel was in the temple and God called him.

But what about Samuel? He, the first time God called, he thought it was Eli calling him. The trouble with Samuel was that he was not attuned to God.

He wasn't listening for God. He wasn't expecting God to speak to him. But Eli was wise and said to him, you listen, this may be God.

God. And so he heard the word Samuel, Samuel, and the call of God to his task. And we all know, don't we, that the disciples were nothing special.

[ 19 : 11 ] In fact, some of them were hated. Tax collectors, zealots, all sorts of people. But God saw fit to choose them to be the vehicle of his love.

When I was secretary of the church missionary society, I had young and old come to me constantly, telling me of their call to the mission field, and wanting to go out as missionaries.

But the thing that had to be done by myself and other members of the committee, candidates committee, was to test their call. Because the reasons and the motives behind these young people and older people coming, wanting to be missionaries, was often quite wrong.

Like the young lad who came in one day and said to me, oh, he said I can't get a job anywhere, so I thought I'd try here. and so on.

You get all sorts of things that come out. The young man who was an engineer, who desperately wanted to go to India, to share his know-how with the people there.

[ 20 : 39 ] And I said to him, how well do you know God? How well do you know the Bible? Oh, I don't need all that, I can go without that. I want to just teach these people.

And I said to him, look, what if you have a Hindu coming up to you and saying, look, please tell me about your Jesus. Please tell me about the Holy Spirit.

What are you going to be able to say to him? I said, if you can't tell him, he'll say, I don't want that religion. This chap says that he's a Christian but he doesn't know anything about it.

So the call, particularly to missionary work and overseas work, but call to work at home needs to be certain and sure.

And there are many temptations to turn away from the call. When the call of God comes, things may happen which you feel will prevent you responding to that call.

[ 21 : 50 ] Let me give you a couple of examples. In my own case, I received the call to the missionary work of the church while I was at my ordinary task.

I was a draftsman. One day at the office, God seemed to speak to me and call me. the very next day I received a letter to say that I had been given the position on three times the amount of salary that I was having already.

Was I going to respond to the call and give up that opportunity? And that's what's happened with so many. I was preaching at a church here one time in Melbourne and I was talking something similar along this line and an old man who was over 80 came to me with tears in his eyes and he said, when I was a young man of 16, God called me to a particular work for his kingdom and I gave excuses and I didn't respond to it and say yes and he said I've lived a miserable life ever since. He turned down what God had prepared for him and who knows what God has prepared for you. Are we ready and willing and expectant for God's call?

For the work that he has got for you and for me? For you to be and to do? People had said to me when I was a young man that I would be a minister or a missionary, I laughed at them and I said it's not possible, it couldn't be.

[ 24 : 11 ] But God had other ideas and the call came. But when the call comes, whatever he has for you to do, there are things as I've mentioned already that could be obstacles.

For instance, some of you would say to me here, look I'm too old, I couldn't possibly do any particular work for God. That's not the case, age is no barrier to what God has for you to do and to be, none whatsoever.

I know people who are well into their 80s, who have a ministry in one way or another to friends or neighbours or others, who have this call.

One of the ministries that I had a lady in the parish doing one time is that she was an inveterate telephone caller. She used to call up many of the people in the parish and ask them how they were. It was her call and she fulfilled it and did a marvellous ministry. Difficulties are no barrier. I remember one of our missionaries who had a clear and definite call to the mission field, but she had an aged mother who she had been caring for.

[ 25 : 49 ] And she had this terrible tension between the call of God which was so clear and this matter of looking after her mother. And she testified to the fact that up to the last moment of her going overseas she was about to walk up the gangplank of the boat in which she was travelling.

she still didn't know what was going to happen so far as her mother was concerned. And somebody came up to her and took her hand as she stood on that gangplank and said, you have no need to concern about your mother.

We will look after you. So difficulties are no barrier to what God may call you to do. No excuse will be valid before God.

Think of Peter in this particular incident. He felt utterly unworthy of God's call. He fell down at Jesus' feet and forgive me he said, I'm a sinful man and yet God called him to be his disciple.

Let's move on quickly. And so Jesus stepped into Peter's boat. Could I ask this question, has he stepped on board your boat, the boat of your life as captain and master?

[ 27 : 20 ] Jesus was to use Peter's boat as a platform to proclaim his message. One may ask, does Jesus Christ, the Son of God, long to use your life as a platform to introduce others to him.

What happens next in this story, after Jesus has finished speaking, is something that Peter will never forget. It was probably his first personal encounter with Jesus, which consisted of through things.

It consisted of a command, a questioning and obedience. Peter was told by Jesus to put out his boat into the deep.

None of us like to go out there and Peter must have wondered what was going to happen. But here was the command, put your boat out into the deep. The second was a questioning.

He questioned this call. Master, we've tried, we've worked all night, slayed. So the second thing was a questioning.

[ 28 : 36 ] And the third was obedience. Something in Jesus and what he said made Peter obey and say, because you say so, we will do it.

And so a relationship is beginning to develop and it produces some real surprises, not less, least of which was indeed the huge catch of fish which they caught.

The lesson I believe for us to learn in this particular incident is this between self-effort and God effort, God-directed effort.

Remember what Jesus said to the disciples? I will make you fishers of men. My Bible study leader when I was a teenager said to me, Ken, don't ever try to make yourself into a Christian.

You'll never be able to do it. But put your life into the hands of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, and he will make you, because that's what he promised.

[ 29 : 51 ] I will make you. No matter how inadequate, how ordinary, he will transform and he will make. It is Jesus who makes, not ourselves.

There is no such thing as a self-made Christian. Christian. And this is expressed in Peter's response to this extraordinary result of all these fish, is the awareness of his own unworthiness.

And friends, we need to abide in Christ and his word in order to be fruitful for Jesus. For Jesus said, without me, you can do nothing.

This result was also produced in Peter's companions a sense of awe and amazement and led them to leave everything and follow Jesus.

Now, a lot of people have trouble with this particular passage, but it's a question of leaving our own self-directed life and handing it over to Jesus for a Jesus-directed life.

[ 31 : 19 ] Leaving everything of our own way and following him. So began the process of making these men into worthy disciples, able to go out into the world in the power of the Spirit to make disciples of all nations.

things. And so the day has ended, a day they will never forget, and perhaps something they remembered later on at Pentecost.

In that lesson in the Acts of the Apostles we learn that there were thousands upon thousands who responded to the message and sought guidance as to what they were to do and they were to repent and believe.

But they must have remembered back to the great catch of fish which they had when Jesus said, you will go out and catch men. And here they were, thousands upon thousands of them on that day of Pentecost.

There are three elements that are basic to our being fruitful for the kingdom of God. First of all, we are called. In the scripture, from beginning to end, we find that those who are God's servants have been called of God.

[ 32 : 39 ] And I believe that that call goes out to every Christian to do and to be what God wants us to do. We are called by God the Father by his love.

The love of God compels us to go out and share his message with others. We are called to share Jesus. Secondly, we are made by Jesus the Son, by his power and his authority.

And thirdly, we are sent by the Holy Spirit to the place and people of his appointment. And so I ask the questions as I come to the close. Have you been called to spread his love wherever he puts you?

In the office? In the school? In the home? Amongst your children and your family and relations? Has he called you?

Nothing spectacular? Has he called you? Are you being made into the person God means you to be? Is he working in your life daily to make you?

[ 33 : 52 ] And thirdly, are you willing to be sent where he wants you to go? All of these things that I've indicated, we all have been commanded to do.

Remember that Jesus said at the beginning to these disciples, go and I will make you into fishes of men. At the end of his ministry, Jesus said these words, All authority has been given unto me in heaven and on earth.

Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit.

And lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. God will provide the willingness. God will provide the power.

There is a common expression around that you hear used so often. What a difference a day can make.

[ 35 : 09 ] Will it make a difference in your life, even today, as you submit to God's call? to his making and his sending.

Amen.