

# Luke Chapter 5 v 1 - 11

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Preacher: Peter Robinson

[ 0 : 00 ]     Good morning. Lovely to welcome you this morning. It's a beautiful day and of course it's ever so lovely to welcome Colin and Janet Bollimore to be with us as well as others of you visiting us.

But Colin and Janet have a special place in our hearts and we miss you but we love to see you and I know you love to see us too. But more than that we're here because of the Lord our God. What is he like this God that we come to worship? How can we explain him?

Well in 1 Timothy in chapter 6 he's called God the blessed. The blessed. That word means so much more. It means happy, content, full of delight and joy.

Anyway, this God that we come to worship is the blessed God, the good God, the delightful God as well as the God who delights. He's God the blessed and only ruler, the King of kings and Lord of lords. He is the sovereign. He is the one who is and always has been worthy of worship and praise and delight.

And when we worship him, we bless him. That doesn't mean that we give to him something that he hasn't got already because he's already blessed. But we praise him. We rejoice in him. We exalt him.

[ 1 : 20 ]     And our first hymn which is going to come up on the screen behind me is, Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me. Bless his holy name. So let's stand and sing together. Let's pray together.

And delighting in you when we stop for a moment from the busyness of our lives to think and to remember what you have done for us. We take just a moment in the quietness of our hearts to give you our thanks and praise for all that you've done for us in this past week and for your grace.

Amen. We have a million, billion, trillion, and whatever the next number is amount of blessings, Lord, because every second of every day you pour out into our lives goodness and blessing and grace.

You're the God who feeds us. You're the God who clothes us. You're the God who causes our hearts to beat and our lungs to take in air. You're the God who works in all the synapses of our brains.

You're the God who gives us sight and hearing and taste and touch and smell. You're the God who has given us every blessing in this world. But, O Lord, these things are little, tiny compared to the blessings we have in Christ.

[ 3 : 20 ]     For we have forgiveness of sins, peace with God, life everlasting. We have joy unspeakable. We have hope eternal. We are those, O Lord, our God, who have received from your hand the most wonderful grace.

Nothing that we've deserved. Nothing we've earned or worked for. Nothing that we've made promises about or IOUs. Lord, this is all of you. All of your giving.

All of your love. All on your unconditional mercy. And, O Lord, we thank you that today, whoever we are, we can know and enjoy and rejoice in that mercy for ourselves.

For you have said, whoever calls on the name of the Lord will be saved. Thank you that it is your great desire and longing that none should perish but all come to repentance. Thank you, O Lord, that the only reason we don't know these things is because of our own sin.

It's because of our own foolishness, because of our own blindness, because of our own stubbornness and pride. And, Lord, even as believers, how many blessings have we forfeited? How many blessings have we missed out?

[ 4 : 26 ] Simply because we've held on to our own selfishness, our own foolishness. Because we've continued to live those lives which are in accordance with the world instead of accordance with your word.

Lord, we come to you afresh for forgiveness. And we come to you afresh that we might know the renewing of your Holy Spirit, the outpouring of him into our hearts and lives again this day.

That we might be more holy and more godly and more Christ-like. That we might receive more of the blessings that are ours and enjoy them more. O Lord, come amongst us and upon us and work within us and through us, we pray.

Through your word and by your spirit. And speak, we ask, words of eternal life. That we might bless you more. Not just today or tomorrow, but all the days of our lives.

For we ask these things in and through. Jesus Christ, our Lord and King. Amen. Amen. Let's turn together now in our Bibles to Luke in chapter 5.

[ 5 : 30 ] Luke in chapter 5. And we're going to begin reading at verse 1 through to verse 11. If you have one of the red church Bibles, then that's page 1032.

Page 1032. We're going to read then God's word. Luke chapter 5, beginning at verse 1 to verse 11. One day, as Jesus was standing by the lake of Gennesaret, the people were crowding around him and listening to the word of God.

He saw at the water's edge two boats left there by the fishermen who were washing their nets. He got into one of the boats, the one belonging to Simon, and asked him to put out a little from the shore.

Then he sat down, taught the people from the boat. When he'd finished speaking, he said to Simon, Put out into deep water and let down the nets for a catch.

Simon answered, Master, we've worked hard all night and haven't caught anything. But because you say so, I will let down the nets.

[ 6 : 49 ] When they'd done so, they caught such a large number of fish that their nets began to break. So they signaled to their partners in the other boat to come and help them.

And they came and filled both boats so full that they began to sink. When Simon Peter saw this, he fell at Jesus' knees and said, Go away from me, Lord.

I am a sinful man. For he and all his companions were astonished at the catch of fish they had taken. And so were James and John, the sons of Zebedee, Simon's partners.

Then Jesus said to Simon, Don't be afraid. From now on you will fish for people. So they pulled their boats up on the shore, left everything, and followed him.

And please turn with me to Luke chapter 5. That passage we read just a little while ago, those first 11 verses. If you've got your Bibles open, that will be a help to you as we go through this tremendous event in the life of our Lord Jesus, and particularly in the life of those who heard him.

[ 8 : 04 ] I wonder, would you call yourself a cautious person? Are you someone who takes your time before making a decision? I'm not talking about somebody who prevaricates.

Big word there. I can't spell it. But somebody who really sort of is slow. But just somebody who's cautious. When you've got a big decision, a decision that's going to affect your family, decisions that's going to affect your relationships, and situations, you take your time.

One that's going to have repercussions upon your life. I think, on the whole, most of us are like that. Most of us are cautious before we commit ourselves to a course of action. We may ask the opinion of others, seek counsel, and sort of float the idea with people that we trust, or people that we think are a bit wiser than ourselves.

Whether it's we're moving house, whether it's that we're changing our job, or whether it's the purchase, perhaps, of a big item, a car, or something like that. Perhaps we're cautious.

Some of us here, I'm sure, give a great deal of thought, even to the color of our lounge curtains. It's something serious, and you have to take your time. It seems to me, as we read through this passage in Luke in chapter 5, that we find that the first followers of Jesus were cautious.

[ 9 : 25 ] Although, as we read through the Gospel later on, we find some of them were far from cautious. There were occasions, there were anything but. Here, at the beginning, as they begin, as they come to begin to follow Christ, they do so cautiously.

They are people who have taken their time to consider and to think through the things of Christ. At the end of verse 11, we read there that each of these people, and we're given most of their names, is Simon Peter.

His brother Andrew isn't mentioned there, but we know in other places, he was working with his brother as a fisherman. We're told of these two others, the sons of Zebedee, James and John. Each of them, we're told, left everything and followed Jesus.

It wasn't a sort of off-the-cuff decision. It wasn't something of an emotional reaction to the catch of fish. They'd arrived at this turning point in their lives, this crux in their lives, after hearing and witnessing Jesus on more than one occasion.

If you turn back a page to Luke in chapter 4, you remember that Simon, that's Simon Peter, as we shall find out he's called, had known Jesus because Jesus had been to his house, verse 38, and Jesus has healed his mother-in-law when she had been very, very ill with a terrible fever.

[ 10 : 51 ] So he had heard Jesus and seen Jesus before. And we don't need to turn that, but in the beginning of the Gospel of John, we're told about how Jesus and Peter first meet through Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, who introduced him, saying, we found the Messiah, come and meet him.

It was there at that moment when Jesus first met with Jesus that he gave him that nickname, Peter, meaning rock. It's not now until what appears to be the very third exposure of Peter to Jesus that something happens in his life, that he's able to believe in him and commit his life to him.

And the way that Peter comes to faith in Christ is very important. There's a lot of similarities here to how anybody becomes a Christian, how anybody becomes a disciple or a follower of Jesus.

Now, we're all individuals. And God deals with us as individuals. He knows our particular strengths. He knows our weaknesses. He knows what makes us tick.

He knows what our doubts are. And he knows what the obstacles are to us coming to faith and trusting in him. And according to his wonderful knowledge of us and his love and care and wisdom, he meets us where we are and deals with us where we are.

[ 12 : 17 ] And so if you read the Bible, and we've been encouraged to do that already this morning, if you read the Bible, particularly in the New Testament, you find there's almost no situation where people come to faith in an identically the same way.

But that I mean this. If you look at the life of Paul, or Saul as he was called, he came to faith as he was riding on his way to Damascus through a blinding light that knocked him to the ground.

But if you meet Timothy, Timothy was a young man who came to faith because he grew up in a home with a Christian mother and grandmother. And then if you turn to the Philippian prison guard, he becomes a Christian when he's experienced an earthquake.

Different people dealt with in different ways by God. And so in bringing you and I to faith, those of us who are Christians here this morning, each of us could recount our testimony, our story about how we became a Christian.

And it will be different for each one of us, but there will be still principles that are the same. There will still be things about how we became a Christian that are unchanging for every believer.

[ 13 : 24 ] So I want us to look just this morning briefly at Simon's journey, his last steps, as it were, from being away from Christ to being a follower of Christ.

The first thing we see here, which is so important for us and is true of every single Christian, is this. Jesus comes to where we are. Jesus comes to where we are.

Now we know that Jesus spent a lot of time preaching in the synagogue. Just look a verse earlier from chapter 5, verse 1. He kept on preaching in the synagogues of Judea. That's where he went, around the countryside, going to those synagogues.

They were something like the church buildings of the day, where on every Sabbath, the Jewish men and women would gather. Now Simon was a Jewish man, and no doubt he regularly attended his own synagogue, as was expected of him.

It's very likely, in fact, that he was there in Capernaum, earlier in chapter 4, because when Jesus there delivered a man who had an impure spirit, Simon was there, it seems, because verse 38 tells us, Jesus left the synagogue and went to the home of Simon.

[ 14 : 38 ] So it may well have been even then that Simon says, why don't you come back to my house? Or Jesus said, I'm coming to your house. But it's here, in chapter 5, we find that Jesus comes again to Simon when he's in his workplace.

He'd been fishing all night with James and John and with Andrea's brother and perhaps others as well, and now he's on the shore, the boats are pulled up, and he's cleaning his nets along with his workmates.

And while he's doing this, his daily routine, his regular routine, suddenly there's Jesus again. Jesus has come to where he is. Why is Jesus there? He's come for Simon Peter and for the others.

See, at the very heart of the gospel, at the very heart of the Christian message is this, God comes to us. Read the Christmas story and there's that wonderful phrase in which we're told that the Son of God, Jesus, will be called Emmanuel, which means God with us.

Many people think that being a Christian or being religious is about men and women seeking God, finding God, going to God. It's quite the opposite. The wonderful truth is this, that you do not need to go and find God.

[ 15 : 57 ] God has come to you. The message of the gospel is God seeking and saving the lost. God coming from heaven to earth. God moving to us.

So Jesus meets us wherever we are. For some of us, Jesus met us when we were young. Perhaps, yes, in church because we were brought up in a Christian family but Jesus came to us and met with us and spoke to us there.

For some of us, he's come to us in our homes. It was when we were by our bedside that we met with him or even at school, in the park, in the office, wherever we are, Jesus will come to us first.

You say, how is that possible? How can Jesus come to me? I've never physically seen him. No, I'm not talking about that. He comes to us through his people.

He comes to us in the guise of many others. Yes, sometimes he may come to us and speak to us through an evangelist on the street or even through a pastor or a minister. But more often than that, he comes to meet us through somebody that we meet with, a Christian.

[ 17 : 08 ] It may be our parents who spoke with us and taught with us and told us of the things of Jesus while we were young. It may have been a friend that we were at school with or at work with that we met and they're a Christian.

They start to speak to us. It may even be a stranger. But Christ has come to you. He has come to you where you are and he has made himself known to you through this other person, this Christian, this little Christ, this bearer of Jesus' words.

Paul says this about us as Christians, that we are, therefore, Christ's ambassadors as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf be reconciled to God.

Dear friends, Christ has come to you and spoken to you. You didn't come seeking him. You were just happily going your own way through life and then suddenly they meet this person.

You meet this Christian. So he comes to us. He came to Simon where he was, right there in the workplace, right there on the side of the shore. But then, secondly, he does something else.

[ 18 : 27 ] Notice, Jesus takes Simon captive. He captures him. He makes him a captive audience, doesn't he? No doubt, Simon, after he'd finished washing the nets was going to go home.

That would be what he'd done. He'd been up working all night, fishing, and he was ready to go home to bed. So he's washing the nets and thinks, that's it, once that's done, we can get home to bed, have a good kip, get up again to fish tomorrow night.

But before he could do that, Jesus says to Simon, picks him out particularly, notice there, put out, let me get in your boat, put out a little from the shore.

Clearly there was a great crowd of people all thronging around Jesus. You can imagine what it's like. And of course, Jesus can't be heard because those are too close. So he goes into the boat and from the boat, it acts like his pulpit, as it were, and he speaks to the crowd on the shore.

He can be heard by more people and he picks on Simon's boat. So there's poor Simon, after all his work at night, wanting to go home to bed, but he can't escape the voice of Jesus.

[ 19 : 34 ] Jesus has got him as a captive audience. Let me say this to you, dear friends, you can't get away from the voice of God. You can't run away from God.

You cannot hide from God. Because if he has purposed and planned to save you, he's going to come for you and he's going to put you in the corner so that you will have to listen to his voice, whether you like it or not.

Such is his love, such is his care for us, that in spite of ourselves, he will capture us. He won't let us go until we've been brought face to face with his grace.

That's exactly what happens to everybody who becomes a Christian. They find themselves in a position or a relationship or a workplace or wherever it is or in a church and they would like to get out, but they can't.

They have to sit and listen. Not to the voice of man, but as we're told here, listen to the voice of God, the Word of God. Listen to what happened to the apostle Paul.

[ 20 : 42 ] This is how he became a Christian. And you tell me that this was not the work of God. Acts chapter 26, you don't need to turn necessarily. This is him speaking and talking about how he became a believer in Jesus.

He said, first of all, I was convinced that I ought to do all that was possible to oppose the name of Jesus of Nazareth. That's just what I did in Jerusalem. On the authority of the chief priests, I put many of the Lord's people in prison.

When they were put to death, I cast my vote against them. Many a time, I went from one synagogue to another to have them punished. I tried to force them to blaspheme. I was so obsessed with persecuting them that I even hunted them down in foreign cities.

Here's a man who is utterly opposed to and will have nothing at all to do with believing in Jesus Christ. He hates Jesus Christ. He hates the people who believe in him.

But he says this, On one day, one of these journeys, I was going to Damascus with the authority and commission of the chief priests. About noon, as I was on the road, I saw a light from heaven brighter than the sun blazing around me and my companions.

[ 21 : 50 ] We all fell to the ground and I heard a voice saying to me in Aramaic, that was the everyday language of the day. Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me? I asked, Who are you, Lord?

I am Jesus. He's doing all that he can. He's fighting against Jesus. He's resisting you in every way, but Jesus comes to him and he captures him and he saves him.

What's the point of running away? What's the point of trying to escape? what's the point of putting our fingers in our ears? Jesus will have you hear his gospel.

Such is his love. He takes us captive. But then we see as well what happens after that because in verse 4, when he'd finished speaking, he said to Simon, Put it out into deep water and let down the nets for a catch.

He challenges our self-belief. He challenges our belief in ourselves, in our ability to save ourselves, in our knowledge, in our understanding.

[ 22 : 58 ] He gives to Simon a command he does not want to hear because Simon thinks he knows better, doesn't he? You can tell that, don't you, by the way he responds.

Master, we've worked all night. Look, we've been toiling and fishing all night. We're experienced fishermen. We know very well that we haven't caught anything.

It's been a disappointing and discouraging evening. We're washing our nets and we're going to put them away. We don't want to get our nets out again. We don't want to go out in the boat again. We just want to go to bed. The last thing we want to do is dirty them for no point.

There's no point fishing in the daytime. Every experienced fisherman on this lake knows if you're using nets, you need to do it at night when the fish come to the surface to feed. That's what he's saying.

He, but, begrudgingly, and I think it is generally begrudgingly, he says, I will let down the net since you say so.

[ 23 : 57 ] Every one of us begins from a place of doubt when it comes to God. Every one of us comes from a place of self-belief rather than Christ-belief. No one has a natural faith in God.

No one is born with faith. In fact, the Bible is very clear that we're all born sinful. Our nature, our heart is prone to go against God, not to go towards God.

Let alone the Lord Jesus and his commandments. And so, when Jesus comes to Simon, in one sense, he's challenging him in his own unbelief.

He's challenging him to put his faith in someone other than himself. He's always trusted in his own ability to feed his family. He's trusted in his own skill to be able to catch the fish.

He's trusted in his own religious observance to make him right with God. He's trusted just in what he can do. And now Jesus is saying, I'm challenging your self-belief to believe in me and to trust me.

[ 24 : 57 ] And that's the hardest thing for us. We've been let down again and again and again by the people that we've trusted. disappointed. We've been disappointed not just because we haven't caught the fish that we should have caught but in the efforts of our own lives we've just been disappointed.

We've never got that satisfaction, that contentment, that sense that this is good, that life is good. And Jesus comes along and says to us, Lord, I want you to trust me.

Other people have let you down. Other people have failed you. You yourself know that you have failed yourself. I want you to trust me. And within us there's a natural begrudging of trusting Jesus.

Within us there's a natural sense of I don't really want to trust in him. Why should I set myself up for somebody else to let me down? Why should I be bothered to do what God is telling me to do and put my faith in Christ when in my heart of hearts I don't believe anything's going to change, anything's going to happen, anything's going to work.

But begrudgingly Peter does it. Jesus offers us hope in a hopeless world.

[ 26 : 16 ] He offers us joy, fulfillment in a disappointing world. And so can you imagine what's happening? Can you cast your mind back to the side of the lake?

There's Peter and Andrew and perhaps a couple others that get in the boat. they're already exhausted and they start to row. Not fast, rather slowly out into the lake.

How far must we go to get the deep water? Well, let's not go too far. Let's just go as far as we have to go. And we'll let down the nets just once, just to please him.

Perhaps he'll leave us alone. If I just do this once, he'll leave me alone and then we can just go home. And he's lowering the nets down into the water and bang! Suddenly. It's not a rock he's hit.

There's no rocks here. Suddenly the net has gone tight and it's straining. It's straining not because it's snagged on a rock, it's straining because there's dozens of fish that are flowing into this net. So much so that this net is straining and it's beginning to tear at the edges.

[ 27 : 18 ] And so they start waving over to James and John. Come, come, come, help us. Between them, somehow they drag nearly all the fish into the boat, as many as they possibly can.

There's still more besides that the boat is full and if they take any more fish it's going to sink. And then the most important miracle takes place.

Then the greatest miracle takes place. A greater miracle than a catch of fish. Then Jesus convicts Simon of his sin.

When Simon Peter saw this he fell at Jesus' knees and said, go away from me Lord, I am a sinful man. It wasn't simply that Simon felt bad because he hadn't trusted Jesus wholeheartedly.

It wasn't simply because he was amazed at the miraculous catch of fish and somehow he's like, wow, this is great. because the way he responds shows there's an absolute transformation in his heart from self-belief to self-recognition of sin.

[ 28 : 33 ]    Something miraculous has happened to Simon. He was aware for the first time in his life that he was a sinful man in the presence of God. that all his confidence in himself, all his trust in himself, all his belief in himself had been thoroughly misplaced.

That actually in his heart there was a sinfulness, a pride, an arrogance, a self-trust, a rejection of God's goodness. And in one sense what he's saying is this, Lord Jesus, I don't deserve to be anywhere near you.

I don't deserve any of your goodness and love. I don't deserve any of your care. I don't deserve to be blessed by you because I know that in my heart I've never loved you and I've never trusted you and I've gone my own way.

Even if he doesn't fully comprehend at that moment all that Jesus is, even if he doesn't fully comprehend that Jesus is God made man and all that Jesus would do on the cross and everything, but in that moment there's a conviction, a realization that here is God.

somehow near him and here is he so very far away from God. Jesus did something in Simon's life that he'd never experienced before because he took that small step, because he acted upon the word of Jesus even though it was begrudgingly, even though it was a sense of doubt and he did what Jesus asked him to do and went out and put down his nets.

[ 30 : 15 ]    This is the key, dear friends, to somebody becoming a Christian. It's impossible, impossible for anyone to become a Christian unless they have a conviction of sin and a sense of repentance turning away from it.

This is something that God gives by his Holy Spirit. This is a miracle that he works within us. when we see ourselves for who we are and we see God for who he is. Simon is at one time both attracted to Jesus and repulsed by Jesus.

He's attracted to Jesus because he sees that he is good and lovely and mighty and holy. But at the same time, he's repulsed by Jesus because he knows that Jesus sees deep down into his heart the blackness and the rottenness that's there and he wants him to go.

I'd rather you didn't see me. I know that your eyes are piercing my soul. Do you notice something that happens? At this moment, Simon becomes Simon Peter.

Do you notice that? That's the only place where he's called Simon Peter. Before and even after, he's just Simon. But in that moment, he's become a new man. In that moment, he's become a follower of Jesus.

[ 31 : 35 ]    In that moment, he's had a new beginning. You see, many of us would love to have all the blessings of heaven and eternal life, of the love of God guiding and providing and meeting us and being good for us and on our side and all those things.

But we aren't willing to take that first step. We aren't willing to say, Lord, I'm a sinful man. Until we recognize who we are before God, then we can never receive the blessing God has for us.

It's a bit like the sort of illustration of a full bottle. The only way that bottle can be filled with good wine or whatever you want to put into it is when that bottle is emptied of the filth that's already there, the dirty, muddy water that's there.

You've got to empty something before you can fill it. You and I, dear friends, have to be emptied, that is, emptied of our self-confidence and self-belief and self-faith before we can be filled with the Spirit of God, the life of God, the blessings of God.

Simon Peter has been changed and his life will never be the same again. And so finally, dear friends, what we see here is this, that Simon and the others now receive a commission from Jesus.

[ 32 : 53 ]    What does it mean to follow Christ? What does it mean to live for him day by day? What does it mean to be a disciple of Jesus as Simon and the others were? Well, this is what Jesus says to Simon, don't be afraid.



There's an assurance to him of forgiveness, of acceptance because of his repentance. But from now on, you will fish for people. What does he mean by that?

From now on, in other words, you will seek out those who need to know this message of good news. From now on, you will go looking for, not for fish to feed your belly, not for fish to pay the bills, not for fish but for people to rescue and to save them as you've been rescued and saved.

We talk about being a follower of Jesus, a disciple of Jesus. What does that mean? A Christian, it means this, that we are like Christ, that we do the things that he does.

We are imitators of him. Where he goes, we go. What he does, we do. What did he do? He came into the world to seek and save the lost, to rescue and to capture, as it were, men and women for God.

[ 34 : 07 ] That's exactly what you and I have been commissioned with. That's the purpose, the *raison d'être*, that's the meaning of our lives as Christians. Why is it, dear friends, that when you became a Christian, when you put your faith and trust in Jesus and you were given eternal life and the sure and certainty of being in heaven, why is it that Jesus didn't take you to heaven there and then?

Why has he allowed you to continue in this life with all its toils and difficulties and struggles for this one reason, that you might be a fisher of people, that you might be one who takes this message, this wonderful good news, this gospel, to those who are still in danger, those who are still in a place of great fear.

When we fish people, then we take them from danger to safety, we take them from isolation into the family of God, we lift them up, as it were, from hell to heaven.

Do you see, dear friends, how vital this is, how, what an incredible responsibility has been laid upon you and I by Jesus himself. It's our mission, it's our duty, it's our responsibility, it's our joy, it's our purpose.

Jesus said to the disciples on the day that he rose to heaven, go and make disciples. So what about you?

[ 35 : 40 ] As I've been talking and speaking about Simon and what's happened in his life and how Jesus came to him and then captured him and brought him under his word, so he spoke with him in a very real way, as he challenged his self-belief and his own doubts and as he worked in his heart to show him his sin and gave him repentance and faith to trust and follow Jesus, what about you?

Has that happened to you? Or is it just, I've been talking over your head? And if it hasn't happened to you, let me ask you, do you long for something like that to happen with you?

Do you long to meet with this Lord Jesus Christ? Do you long to know the experience of him? Do you long for him to speak to you those words of truth? Do you long for him to work in your life such a miracle of grace so that you might know?

Are you willing to bring your doubts and let them be challenged by him? Are you willing to put to one side your self-trust, your self-belief and to take him at his word, to put him to the test?

That's in one sense what Simon does. Puts Jesus to the test. You said to put my nets out. I don't think anything's going to happen but I'm going to do it anyway. I wonder if you're willing to take the challenge that I want to put before you.

[ 37 : 05 ] If you're not a Christian this morning, are you willing to pray? Perhaps for the first time ever. I mean really pray, sincerely pray. To really say to God if this is true and you really are there I want to know you.

I want to know you. I know so many things and I've got so many questions and so many doubts and so many puzzles but at this moment in time I'm willing to put them to one side and I'm willing to be put to the test and put you to the test.

Lord Jesus, if you're real, if you'd really loved me and died for me on the cross and rose again, if you are the one who longs to save me then come into my life and save me. I want to know.

Let me urge you, let me encourage you, let me say to you, do not pass by the opportunity. Frederick's word to the children was very good, wasn't it?

We cannot just think that we can cruise through summer and cruise through life and somehow at the end everything is going to be okay. We must take the most of the opportunity we have and that means getting right with God.

[ 38 : 23 ] I'm going to pray and then I'm going to pray a prayer. I'm going to pray a prayer that if you want to pray that prayer, if it's something that you want to say in your own heart, then you pray it too in your own hearts before God sincerely.

Not to me, it's not for me to hear, not even for anybody next door to hear, it's for you to pray before God. And I trust and I want to say to you with absolute confidence God will hear that prayer.

Absolute certainty that he will answer that prayer. So let's pray. Oh Lord our God, you are the one who is the initiative taker.

Thank you that you are the God who comes to us. You're the God who acts and moves. You're the God who deliberately, purposefully comes to us where we are in our lives.

You do not come to us and say change yourself or make yourself better or do this and then I'll come to you. You come to us like you did to Simon in the workplace, on the beach. You come to us where we are.

[ 39 : 33 ] Thank you that you're here and by your Holy Spirit you've been speaking to us in your word. And oh Lord, we ask that just as you've been challenging us in our faith, so we pray that you would cause us and give us that faith to respond.

I do want to pray for those who are Christians particularly this morning. Lord, you know that when we hear that challenge, that command to be a fisher of people, to go and seek and to rescue and to save and to tell the good news, Lord, there's a fear that wells up in our minds and hearts.

What if people reject us? What if people laugh at us? What if people mock us? Oh Lord, but when we think about what state we were in before you saved us, when we were lost and blind and helpless?

Aren't we so grateful that somebody came and spoke to us the words of Jesus? Somebody came to be Jesus for us? Lord, give us that passion, that burden, that longing to be Jesus for others in the sense of being his messenger, his ambassador.

For those of us this morning here who are not Christians and we've heard about Jesus more than once like Simon of old, we're cautious, we haven't jumped, we haven't left, but we keep hearing the same message and we keep feeling that same pull on the heart strings and we still keep putting up those same old barriers and doubts.

[ 40 : 59 ] Lord, we want to pray this prayer sincerely. Oh Lord, my God, thank you that you love me just as I am.

thank you that you know me completely. Thank you that you see my sin which I can hide from others but not from you.

Please forgive me. Please forgive me not because I'm good or even because I'm praying this prayer but please forgive me because Jesus died for me.

make me new, a follower of you, a disciple of you. I still have doubts, I still have fears, I still have questions but Lord, I am putting you to the test and praying this prayer sincerely that you will meet with me and make yourself known to me that I might live your way.

and follow Jesus. I ask oh Lord that you would do this because you are good and all of us bring our prayers to you now in that name of Jesus.

[ 42 : 22 ] Amen. All those the Father gives me will come to me and whoever comes to me I will never drive away.

Amen. Amen. Amen.