

## Fifth Sunday after Epiphany

February 6, 2022



### Introduction

*The fifth Sunday after Epiphany continues to highlight unlikely instruments and circumstances appointed to reveal God's glory. "Who will go for us?" God asks. A person of unclean lips, a former persecutor of the church of God, and three fishermen who couldn't catch a thing. More surprising still, perhaps, is that we are also called.*

### Confession and Forgiveness

In the name of the Father, and of the ✙ Son,  
and of the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

God of all mercy and consolation, come to the help of your people,  
turning us from our sin to live for you alone.

Give us the power of your Holy Spirit that we may confess our sin,  
receive your forgiveness, and grow into the fullness  
of Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. **Amen.**

Let us confess our sin in the presence of God and of one another.

Most merciful God,

**we confess that we are captive to sin and cannot free ourselves.**

**We have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed,  
by what we have done and by what we have left undone.**

**We have not loved you with our whole heart;  
we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves.**

**For the sake of your Son, Jesus Christ, have mercy on us.**

**Forgive us, renew us, and lead us,  
so that we may delight in your will and walk in your ways,  
to the glory of your holy name. Amen.**

God, who is rich in mercy, loved us even when we were dead in sin,  
and made us alive together with Christ. By grace we have been saved.

In the name of ✙ Jesus Christ, our sins are forgiven.

Almighty God strengthen us with power through the Holy Spirit,  
that Christ may live in our hearts through faith. **Amen.**

### Opening Hymn ELW # 413 / LBW # 165

*Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God Almighty*

*Listen and sing along [here](#).*

## Prayer of the Day

Most holy God, the earth is filled with your glory, and before you angels and saints stand in awe. Enlarge our vision to see your power at work in the world, and by your grace make us heralds of your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. **Amen.**

## First Reading: Isaiah 6:1-8 [9-13]

*Through a vision in the temple, the eighth-century prophet Isaiah is called by God to announce judgment against Israel. Aware of his sinfulness and shortcomings, Isaiah is initially hesitant. But when God calls, Isaiah responds, "Here am I; send me!"*

*Read the complete text [here](#).*

## Psalm: Psalm 138

- <sup>1</sup>I will give thanks to you, O LORD, with my whole heart;  
before the gods I will sing your praise.
- <sup>2</sup>**I will bow down toward your holy temple and praise your name,  
because of your steadfast love and faithfulness;  
for you have glorified your name and your word above all things.**
- <sup>3</sup>When I called, you answered me;  
you increased my strength within me.
- <sup>4</sup>**All the rulers of the earth will praise you, O LORD,  
when they have heard the words of your mouth.**
- <sup>5</sup>They will sing of the ways of the LORD,  
that great is the glory of the LORD.
- <sup>6</sup>**The LORD is high, yet cares for the lowly,  
perceiving the haughty from afar.**
- <sup>7</sup>Though I walk in the midst of trouble, you keep me safe;  
you stretch forth your hand against the fury of my enemies;  
your right hand shall save me.
- <sup>8</sup>**You will make good your purpose for me;  
O LORD, your steadfast love endures forever;  
do not abandon the works of your hands.**

## Second Reading: 1 Corinthians 15:1-11

*Paul delivers in a nutshell the story of the gospel that was given to him. In the lineage of the Christian faith, we have received the good news of God's love from generations of believers before us, and we continue to tell this story to the world.*

*Read the complete text [here](#).*

## **Gospel: Luke 5:1-11**

*Jesus' teaching of God's word has begun to draw great crowds. For Simon, James, and John, Jesus' teaching inspires hospitality, then obedience, and then risk. After Jesus' creative power is revealed, fear and amazement leads these three fishermen to leave everything behind to become apostles.*

*Read the complete text [here](#).*

## **Reflection on the Text**

A month ago, on January 6, at the end of the twelve days of Christmas, the church celebrated Epiphany. On that day, we remembered that the wise men had travelled from far away, following a star, to worship Jesus, the newborn king. His birth had been revealed to them through the stars that they watched; and prophecy from holy scripture helped guide them. But travel in those days took a long time, and they may have journeyed for as long as two years to reach Bethlehem.

This entire season after the celebration of Epiphany is known as a season of light because of the star that guided the wise men. It is also a time when we hear stories of others experiencing their own epiphanies – their own moment of enlightenment and realization - as they discovered who Jesus was, and is.

Remember some of those moments? The presence of God revealed when John baptized Jesus. The first sign that Jesus worked at Cana, turning water into wine. And Jesus' first sermon in his hometown of Nazareth.

Now Simon Peter – and his friends James and John – have their own Epiphany moment on the waters of Lake Gennesaret, which we know from other sources as the Sea of Galilee.

You probably remember the familiar story. No one knows exactly what Peter and the others heard Jesus tell the crowds that day. But they had been through a long night of catching no fish; followed by Jesus telling them to lower their nets again. And then they had a huge, miraculous catch of fish.

Another feature of this Epiphany season is the stories of the call that God places on the lives of those who experience these miraculous Epiphany moments.

Like Isaiah, who responded to God's call by declaring his unworthiness, Peter first begs Jesus to leave him alone because he knows he is unworthy of the miracle that Jesus' power has caused. In response to those concerns, God sends angels with burning coals to cleanse Isaiah's sin; and Jesus simply tells Peter not to worry. Both are told what they will now be doing for God. Isaiah is given the word of God for the people; and Peter is told that it is time to catch people.

Notice that there is no conversation about Peter, James, and John selling that incredible catch. Or even of them cleaning the nets again. Instead, they apparently walk away from everything: their boats, their livelihood, and even their families immediately to follow Jesus because his call upon their lives - to come fish for people - was so compelling.

Those epiphanies – the miraculous moments revealing of God at work in the world – still happen. So do call stories. And not just for those who are called to be pastors. God is still calling people out of their everyday lives to provide faithful witness to others around them. And God is still telling us that we don't have to be perfect first. That our willingness to answer God's call is all that matters, because God has already declared us beloved.

My reading this week led me to this word of instruction and encouragement for us today:

*“Our vocation [our calling] too comes to us in the midst of our everyday life and work—not apart from it or before we even get started doing things with our lives. That is not to say that we do not sometimes need to take quiet time apart to reflect and discern, as Jesus himself did in the previous chapter in Luke. However, God does not wait for the times when life is settled and still to call us....*

*We have to practice paying attention to the strange and the surprising, because strange and surprising messages really do come to us, virtually every day, and they may bear an unlikely holy word for us in answer to our weary questions.”* (Pamela Cooper-White, **Feasting on the Gospels--Luke, Volume 1: A Feasting on the Word Commentary**. Westminster John Knox Press.

Like Isaiah, some of us hear God's call most clearly in the sanctuary, or at least in the midst of church and faith-based events, or times of quiet. Others may hear the voice of God calling them while they are on the water in their fishing boat or at work some other place. Either way, the call is likely a surprise.

We expect to be told that we are too old or too young; too foolish or unprepared or sinful to do God's work. And yet, we – and people like us – are EXACTLY who God calls to share God's message, to invite people to worship, to plan a special event, or to serve others in a new way in God's name.

As we read more in both Isaiah, in the gospels, in other books of scripture, and the history of the church, we learn more about how God's call changed their lives – and the lives of many, many more. They all had difficult times along the way, but just imagine the moments of joy, faith, hope, and love that they must have experienced as a result of those vocations they were called to!

May we, like Isaiah and Peter and others through the years, watch and listen closely for the miracles that still happen around us; and answer God's call to live our out faith in new ways, to share God's word and fish for people who still need to experience the presence of God. Amen

**Hymn of the Day ELW # 676 / LBW # 403**

*Lord, Speak to Us, that We May Speak*

*Listen and sing along [here](#).*

**Apostles' Creed**

*We profess our faith with the whole church in all times and places:*

**I believe in God, the Father almighty,  
creator of heaven and earth.**

**I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord,  
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,  
born of the virgin Mary,  
suffered under Pontius Pilate,  
was crucified, died, and was buried;  
he descended to the dead.  
On the third day he rose again;  
he ascended into heaven,  
he is seated at the right hand of the Father,  
and he will come to judge the living and the dead.**

**I believe in the Holy Spirit,  
the holy catholic church,  
the communion of saints,  
the forgiveness of sins,  
the resurrection of the body,  
and the life everlasting. Amen.**

**Prayers of Intercession**

The Spirit of the Lord is poured out upon us in abundance; so we are bold to pray for the church, the world, and all that God has made.

*A brief silence.*

Equip your church to proclaim the good news that we have first received: the forgiveness and grace shown to us through Jesus Christ. Send us out as apostles, sharing the hope of your salvation with a waiting world. God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

Holy are you, O God of hosts. Heaven and earth are filled with your glory. Reveal your splendor in fiery sunsets and in deep blue twilights. Teach us to recognize you in the beauty of our natural world. God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

Soften the hearts of rulers and governments that they perceive and tend to the needs of their people. Remove corruption and the impulse toward violence. Protect first responders and military personnel who risk their lives in service of others.

God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

Your steadfast love endures forever; do not abandon those who look to you for hope and healing. Bless doctors, nurses, social workers, therapists, and all caregivers. Draw near to those who are scared, sick, or in pain, especially those we name now.

God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

The disciples received help from partners as they brought in an abundant catch of fish. So strengthen this congregation's partnerships with community organizations and ministries. Multiply our shared efforts and bring joy to our relationships.

God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

*Here other intercessions may be offered.*

We give thanks for our ancestors in faith who boldly answered your call. By their example give us courage to live in faith and to proclaim your mercy until the day that you gather us into your glory. God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

Since we have such great hope in your promises, O God, we lift these and all of our prayers to you in confidence and faith; through Jesus Christ our Savior. **Amen.**

### **Lord's Prayer**

Lord, remember us in your kingdom and teach us to pray:

**Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come,  
thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.**

**Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses,  
as we forgive those who trespass against us;**

**and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.**

**For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever and ever. Amen.**

**Closing Hymn ELW # 696/ LBW # 494     *Jesus Calls Us; o'er the Tumult***

*Listen and sing along [here](#).*

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Today's reflection was written by Pastor Ruth Ann Sipe.