

Of Fish, Fishers and Fishing

A Sermon for Annual Meeting Sunday, Feb 10, 2019

St. Paul's Cathedral, Kamloops BC

The Very Rev. Ken Gray NOTES ONLY

In June of 1990 I commenced my first ordained ministry at Holy Trinity Church in Sooke BC

- A once proud connection with forestry and fishing
- The image on today's bulletin cover is a trawler at ease at the Sooke Government wharf
- I was not ideally suited for this Westcoast ministry – my successor threw axes
- The fleets were rapidly diminishing in those days, but twenty-five-pound chunks of fresh Halibut, seasoned with parmesan cheese, figure prominently in my memory
- Fishing is a dangerous, alluring, wet and cold, risky, but potentially massive money-making activity, often handed down through many generations
- This summer in Newfoundland, as a couple of years ago in Nova Scotia, I have heard stories of the east coast cod fishery, now long gone and not ever to return – romance in the best sense of the word
- Modern and ancient cultures have fished the seas for food, and for wealth, no less so in the large Galilean fishery Jesus knew, and from which he extracted his first disciples

The story

- Has a miraculous feel and a great outcome, or does it?
- Is distinctively human – eating – working – helping and hoping
- Indicates Jesus' ministry life-style – not a one-man band
- Connects closely with the maritime industry of its day - no temple in sight (shades of JTB)

Expositors favourite lines:

- Put out into the deep water – just do it – and do it again – or in a new place – embrace risk
- they caught so many fish that their nets were beginning to break – unexpected abundance
- Do not be afraid
- they left everything and followed him.

A distinction between humanism and Christ-centred God connected spirituality

- The humanist does things which feel good and delight the body and spirit, and possibly others as well
- The follower of Jesus does what is asked, even when uncomfortable or seemingly ludicrous
 - Life is more than a performance (I am a trained musician/performer)
 - Life is at times a challenging and dangerous journey – remember the Bengal Tiger, Richard Parker
 - A message for us and for all faith communities – Wednesday night, and the ability, or not of religions to help us navigate uncertain and chaotic times

One commentator notes that this story can:

. . . (E)ncourage the church to drop its nets into **the chaos of life today**, that is, to witness to the Realm of God and to invite people into the movement towards the Realm. The threat of chaos is self-evident in early 2019 in national politics, relationships among races and ethnic communities, international relationships, (amidst global climate change realities) and many other places. According to Luke, the church continues the apostolic tradition when it offers individuals, households, and communities the values and practices of the Realm of God as an alternative way of life.