

1 Cor. 15:1-11 – Paul stresses the reality of the resurrection of the Lord

Encountering Jesus turned him from persecutor, to proclaimer of Good News

1-2 Now, brothers and sisters, I want to remind you of the gospel I preached to you, which you received and on which you have taken your stand. By this gospel you are saved, if you hold firmly to the word I preached to you. Otherwise, you have believed in vain.

"Remind you of the gospel" – the letter begins by emphasising that the Cross and Christ crucified are primary, essentials of the Good News and assumes the Resurrection. It now develops this as another essential truth.

3-5 For what I received, I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that He was buried, that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, and that He appeared to Cephas, and then to the Twelve.

"What I received I passed on" – the words mean handing on, intact, information received from others, e.g. Luke 1:2, Mark 7:13. Paul is probably thinking of the substitutionary death of God's servant and then vindication, in Isaiah 53:3-12.

"Third day" – for Jews, part days count as days, e.g. late Friday, Saturday, and early Sunday make three days.

IN PRACTICE Paul, formerly known as Saul, was the chief prosecutor of those who were followers of 'The Way'. And then, on a journey to serve arrest warrants, he was blinded by heaven's glory appearing to him and heard Jesus speaking personally to him. The reality of Jesus – the reality of the Resurrection – hit him with full force and it comes out in his letter. Jesus is alive and we can ask Him into our hearts and know Him personally. Then everything changes... and whoever we are, rich or poor, influential or not, we are on a mission with Him. We glimpse His kingdom -- and we also begin to realise that we, too, have a call to make Him known.

QUESTION *The Pharisee-trained Saul was zealous for his religion and then encountered Jesus – a turnaround transformation. What has your journey been?*

PRAYER Lord, who am I and what can I do? But I place myself in Your hands. Show me how I am to serve – and help me in my human inability. Amen.

TLW05 The Bible version is the 2011 revision of the New International Version © Biblica, a completely new translation in 1978

"Cephas" – Aramaic form of Peter. Eyewitnesses still living could give first-hand testimony to the truth of the Resurrection.

6-8 After that, He appeared to more than five hundred of the brothers and sisters at the same time, most of whom are still living, though some have fallen asleep. Then He appeared to James, then to all the apostles, and last of all He appeared to me also, as to one abnormally born.

"Appeared to James" – brother of the Lord, who led the church in Jerusalem, Gal.1:19, Acts 12:17, Gal. 2:9.

9 For I am the least of the apostles and do not even deserve to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God.

"I persecuted the church" – or in Jesus' view, he persecuted Him, Acts 9:4. Paul was in no doubt about the extraordinary grace which was shown to him as the one who rounded up followers of the Way.

10-11 But by the grace of God I am what I am, and His grace to me was not without effect. No, I worked harder than all of them – yet not I, but the grace of God that was with me. Whether, then, it is I or they, this is what we preach, and this is what you believed.

The Living Word

www.thelivingword.uk PRINT EDITION

The Bible readings for Sunday, February 10, 2019 with commentary

Revised Common Lectionary readings for **February 10** in Bible order

Prepare for Sunday by reading the Bible passages beforehand – read again to reflect on Sunday's teaching

Theme: **How God calls people who think they are unworthy**

Isaiah 6:1-13 – Isaiah's call comes with a terrifying vision of God's holiness

Luke 5:1-11 – Jesus uses Peter and his fishing boat to show him who He is

1 Cor. 15:1-11 – Paul stresses the reality of the resurrection of the Lord

Also: Psalm 138

Isaiah 6:1-13 – Isaiah's prophetic call comes in a vision of heaven

His speaking God's message of grace and judgment will bring mixed responses

1 In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord, high and exalted, seated on a throne; and the train of His robe filled the temple.

"King Uzziah" – also called Amaziah, died after a peaceful reign of nearly 50 years in 740 BC, when Assyrian king, Tiglath-Pileser III, rose to power and threatened Israel.

2-3 Above Him were seraphim, each with six wings: With two wings they covered their faces, with two they covered their feet, and with two they were flying. And they were calling to one another: "Holy, holy, holy is the LORD Almighty; the whole earth is full of His glory."

"Seraphim" – suggestive of flames. Even as part of the heavenly host, they could not look at God directly.

"Holy, holy, holy" – absolutely, fearsomely holy.

"The whole earth...glory" – despite humanity's sinful independence from God and wicked regimes, God's kingdom purpose is to fill the whole earth with His presence and glory. First seen in the incarnation of the Son, John 12:41; 2 Cor 3:18; 4:4-7 and to come fully in His future rule and reign.

For further study: the cloud in the wilderness, moved into the tabernacle, Exod. 16:7; Exod. 40:34-35 and

then the temple, 1 Kings 8:11, Psalm 26:8, 63:2. Several passages look forward to the whole earth becoming a sanctuary filled with the Lord's glory, Num. 14:21; Ps. 72:19; Hab. 2:14; cf. Isa. 11:9

4 At the sound of their voices the doorposts and thresholds shook and the temple was filled with smoke.

"Thresholds shook" – as the sound of heavenly praise shook the temple, the glory cloud appeared. Isaiah's call came in the temple, which became the throne room of heaven in his vision.

For further study: Moses, Jeremiah and Ezekiel received their call in similar encounters, Exodus 3; Jeremiah 1:4-10; Ezekiel 1:4-3:27.

5 "Woe to me!" I cried. "I am ruined! For I am a man of unclean lips, and I live among a people of unclean lips, and my eyes have seen the King, the LORD Almighty."

"Woe to me" – the vision of God and His holiness shocked Isaiah who thought he would die from seeing God, Genesis 16:13; Gen. 32:30; Exodus 33:20.

6-7 Then one of the seraphim flew to me with a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with tongs from the altar. With it he touched my mouth and said, "See, this has touched your lips; your guilt is taken away and your sin atoned for."

"Touched my mouth" – Isaiah knew he was unfit to speak the pure word of God. He was symbolically prepared for this task by purifying fire, taken from the place of atonement for sin, touching his lips.

8 Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, "Whom shall I send? And who will go for us?" And I said, "Here am I. Send me!"

"Here am I" – overcome by God's grace, Isaiah (unlike Moses and Jeremiah) committed himself there and then to a life of unpopular ministry, Exodus 4:1-17, Jer. 1:6.

9-10 He said, "Go and tell this people:

" 'Be ever hearing, but never understanding; be ever seeing, but never perceiving.'

"Make the heart of people calloused; make their ears dull and close their eyes. Otherwise they might see with their eyes, hear with their ears, understand with their hearts, and turn and be healed."

"Make their ears dull" – meaning that he would show up how hard their hearts are (Isaiah 1-5) and closed to what God was showing and telling them.

IN PRACTICE God calls ordinary people for extraordinary assignments and usually the qualification is not feeling worthy and not having a spiritual CV that matches the task. It has to be that way, for God to be seen doing the work or speaking the message, with no glory going to any individual. Isaiah was keenly aware that he identified with people who didn't take God at His word, who were living lives of independence from His covenant. And so God was able to call him to speak His words. When we think we have earned some rights and achieved some attainments, we disqualify ourselves from His service. But when we recognise that before God, in ourselves, we score 'F' for fail – that opens us up to be shown His perspective. Our eligibility changes as we come to ask Jesus to be our Lord, and our old lives are hidden in Him.

QUESTION Why are some people's hearts hard and spiritual hearing dull? What strategy is given to us, to overcome this?

Luke 5:1-11 – Jesus shows Peter who He is through a fishing experience

A miraculous catch of fish reveals his call to bring salvation to others

1-3 One day as Jesus was standing by the Lake of Gennesaret, the people were crowding around him and

Goes with the prophetic call, then and now.

For further study: this text is quoted in the NT to explain why some people reject the good news of the gospel, and why Jesus taught in parables, John 12:39-40; Acts 28:25-27; Matt. 13:14-15; Mark 4:12; Luke 8:10.

11-12 Then I said, "For how long, Lord?" And He answered: "Until the cities lie ruined and without inhabitant, until the houses are left deserted and the fields ruined and ravaged, until the LORD has sent everyone far away and the land is utterly forsaken.

13 And though a tenth remains in the land, it will again be laid waste. But as the terebinth and oak leave stumps when they are cut down, so the holy seed will be the stump in the land."

"The holy seed" – like regrowth after a forest fire. Isaiah's message from God would proclaim salvation but also consequences of refusal. The trusting ones remaining would be set apart for God, receiving the same grace that Isaiah experienced.

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 shore. Then He sat

down and taught the people from the boat.

"The fishermen" – the four fishermen brothers, Simon and Andrew, James and John already have a sense of call from an earlier event, Matt. 4:18-22, Mark 1:16-20. This story focuses on Jesus' choice of Simon and his boat.

"Put out... from shore" – in one of many coves with good acoustics around Capernaum. "Gennesaret" is a local name for the Sea of Galilee.

4 When He had finished speaking, He said to Simon, "Put out into deep water, and let down the nets for a catch."

5 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."

"Put out... and let down the nets for a catch" – Simon answers respectfully, "Master..." but why would a former carpenter/rabbi know anything about fishing? They had caught nothing in the dark, daylight drove the fish deep, and the two-man drag nets were for shallow fishing. "Because You say so" – nevertheless, against all his experience, Simon obeys Jesus in faith.

6 When they had done so, they caught such a large number of fish that their nets began to break. So they signalled their partners in the other boat to come and help them, and they came and filled both

IN PRACTICE Peter also knew that he was just an ordinary person with failings and misgivings, just a regular fisherman, no one special. And then he finds himself part of a miraculous demonstration of who Jesus really is, and how following Him will transform him from a Galilee fisherman to a leading and translocal 'fisher of men'.

The Lord shows us things in life, and speaks to us through His word and in other ways, which points to our particular area of mission. Do we believe him, and go?

QUESTION Those first disciples "left everything" to go wherever Jesus went. What is He asking you to let go of, to be more available for Him?

boats so full that they began to sink.

"Partners" – the four (together with Zebedee) ran their fishing business together.

"Filled...so full" – this astounding miracle showed Peter God working through Jesus. It would take a couple more years and the Resurrection for them to fully understand, Luke 24:28-29.

8-10 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."

"Go away from me" – 'I'm too much of a sinner to be around you'. At the same time, Jesus points to the catch and tells Peter he will 'fish' for people to be saved with results like that, Acts 2:41.

11 So they pulled their boats up on shore, left everything and followed Him. "Left everything" – most Galileans lived a peasant existence, but fishermen in an organised business were better off. Letting go of their business was sacrificial.

"Followed Him" – their association with Jesus, John 1:40-42, 2:1-2, now becomes the close fellowship of following the Master.

The Living Word is available online, with clickable links to references, to read on your PC, phone or tablet.

www.thelivingword.uk

A nation in spiritual darkness receive a peace-bringing mighty king of David's lineage but heavenly origin

2 The people walking in darkness have seen a great light; on those living in the land of deep darkness a light has dawned.

3 You have enlarged the nation and increased their joy; they rejoice before You as people rejoice at the harvest, as warriors rejoice when dividing the plunder.

June 2018
May 2018
April 2018
March 2018
February 2018
January 2018
December 2017
November 2017
October 2017
Pages