

SUNDAY, February 9, 2025 EPIPHANY5 Out of the deep water

Isaiah 6:1-11 | Corinthians 15: 1-11 Luke 5:1-11

Last October (2024) team of divers searched an inlet off the Detroit River in an area around Mill Street and Russell Street in Old Sandwich Town. What was discovered were cars on top of cars even after those recovered were brought ashore. Over time, a car sat there and eventually was pushed right into the mud. There was potential that there's a lot more just below the surface of the bottom of the river that we're going to find in time. But pulling cars out of Detroit River is nothing new. From Amherstburg to East Windsor, cars have been pulled out for years. Most of them back were stolen and after a joy ride, they were driven or thrown into the river. The reason for this discovery was because the owner of the private property close by wanted the area cleaned up. Out of the water-- one would not expect cars! But this is not something new for what has been found in the waters of the Detroit river- for if you know of local history especially during the prohibition of alcohol- there were many bottles on the bottom of the river and they still remain.

But what is significant about the water and cars and water and bottles is that the water is what covers these sights and no one seems to notice what is underneath. People did not go fishing to find something but when something was found, it made the news as a discovery of something new coming out of the depths of the water.

Our scriptures today focus on faith, trust and believing. NO one believed that there were that many cars buried in this private area in Old Sandwich Town. Yet when clean up started no one thought there would be that many old cars.

The prophet Isaiah had a vision during the time when King Uzziah died. This was significant because the nation remembered Uzziah as their best and ablest ruler since King Solomon. During his reign, there was peace and prosperity and so when the king died, Isaiah experienced a deep sense of loss and fear for his nation's future. Yet what also occurred was that this king who did what was right in the eyes of God did become conceited and proud. He over emphasized his power and he thought that he could do everything he wanted to do. He assumed that he could be a king and a priest at the same time by burning incense in the temple, which was the job of the priest and not the job of the king. God was displeased with what he did and because he went against temple standards, Uzziah became sick and later on he died.

It is in this time of mourning that Isaiah experiences God through a vision-- with seraphs flying around him, and they called out in praise 'holy, holy, holy..'. This is when Isaiah learned

that God was more powerful and that he had a special purpose. For he also heard God's voice, "Whom shall I send?" who will go for us? Isaiah responded, "Here am I, send me." Isaiah answered God's call. And we continue to read Isaiah's prophecies today- for it is his words that Jesus quoted in the temple when he was asked to read. "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me..." Jesus then stated "today the prophecy is fulfilled in your hearing."

Jesus begins his ministry and he knows he needs help from people on earth to do so. He is searching for people of faith, integrity and of course those who are willing to serve him into the unknown. Jesus knew whom he would call that day by the Sea of Galilee. Some fishermen had returned from their duties in the morning when Jesus asks Simon to go out from shore so that he could teach the crowd on the beach from the boat. After he was done, Jesus he told Simon to out again but a little further where the water was deep and let down their nets again. Simon didn't want to because they had been fishing all night and caught nothing. But he relents and does what Jesus asks. As they are out in deeper water now an amazing thing happens. Their nets are filled causing them to break. They signal to others on the lake to help them bring in the fish.

Upon reaching the shore Simon confesses at Jesus' feet. Jesus says to Simon, Don't be afraid from now on you will be catching people. Once all was ashore, they left everything and followed him.

Would it have made a difference if they had gone out to deeper water still? Would it have made a difference if they turned around in the boat and cast their nets to the other side? This story is also told in the other gospels with minor changes; but the end result is the same. A lot of fish; broken nets, and Simon, James and John following Jesus. But out of the deep water something amazing occurs- faith grows, and the wonder of following Jesus right away.

When was the last time you made a commitment to someone/ something/ or a cause you believe in? We make promises when we baptize children or confirm our faith; we hear the vows of those who marry as their promises to each other are shared and witnessed appropriately. And we hear promises when we commit ourselves as we renew our faith in Jesus. But how often do we commit ourselves to understanding who Jesus is in our lives?

With Simon, James and John because of what occurred with the fish that came out of the deep water, they immediately left everything and followed Jesus. Would we be willing to do this today?

Why is this question important for us as we seek our place in the Christian church? Because our faith tells us that we believe in the resurrection of Jesus Christ.; that Jesus died for our sins and was buried and that he was raised on the third day. He appeared to the disciples and more than 500 people at one time. And it is by God's grace that he comes to you again in this moment.

But the key thing right now is that you need not go out into deep water to find things that are hidden. You don't have to wonder about whether Jesus still calls people to him nor do you need to know whether he loves you. By God's grace you have been forgiven set free and it is possible to love again in His name.

Isaiah experienced God's Spirit in a vision with seraphs and hot coals. Simon, James and John had given up fishing for the day but Jesus said try again in deeper water. They saw what Jesus had done and believed. Paul writes to the church of Corinth his testimony his story of witnessing Jesus' actions and proclaims God's grace as being more than we deserve and greater than one could ever imagine. Though Jesus' death and resurrection we can trust him to show us what eternal life may include. Through grace, God gave us himself to save us all.

Out of the depths of His love, Christ died for us and rose to new life so that we may live eternally. Jesus says, Follow me. They immediately stopped what they were doing. Dropped the nets and followed. They were in the presence of the Messiah. We who live over 2000 years later can experience God's grace because of the Spirit which is now in our midst.

The Spirit asks, whom shall I send? Who will go for us? Are you answering this call in faith? Do you trust God to lead the way?

Let us pray.

God of grace we praise you and thank you for your deep love. Show us your way as we feel renewed in faith and hope for this new day. Remind us how Simon James and John stopped what they were doing and immediately followed in faith, trusting in you to show the way. Hear now the prayers of our hearts SILENCE Amen.

