

Lee Abbey Retreat

Crossing an unknown sea

Reflection 5: Just after daybreak – faith restored



*Daily prayer of turning and away and towards
– to help us settle and focus.*

.... I turn to Christ. (see Reflection 1)

This final reflection is a story of faith restored, Jesus recognised, and empty lives found fruitful. It anticipates Easter and resurrection.

May Jesus - stranger and friend to us -
who stopped the wind and stilled the waves
grant us calm in the storm times;
Jesus victor over death and destruction
bring us safely on your voyage;
Jesus of the purest love,
perfect companion
bring guarding ones around us;
Jesus of the miraculous catching of fish
and the perfect lakeside meal
guide us finally ashore.

Adapted from Ray Simpson Celtic Daily Light

Meditation

Oh the deep, deep love of Jesus
Vast, unmeasured, boundless, free
Rolling as a mighty ocean
In its fullness over me
Underneath me, all around me
Is the current of your love
Leading onward, leading homeward
To your glorious rest above
Oh, the deep, deep love of Jesus
'Tis heaven of heavens to me
And it lifts me up to glory
For it lifts me up to thee
Oh, the deep, deep love of Jesus
Spread his praise from shore to shore
How he loves us, ever loves us,
Changes never, nevermore

Oh the deep, deep love of Jesus
Set my sail from harbour bar
All in time and space sustaining,
Nearest shore to farthest star
Storms and fears calm at his bidding,
wind and waves will cease their roar.
All is held in love's re-making,
guided safe to farthest shore.
by Trevor Francis. vs 3 David Runcorn.

Reading: 'After these things Jesus showed himself again to the disciples by the Sea of Tiberias; and he showed himself in this way. Gathered there together were Simon Peter, Thomas called the Twin, Nathanael of Cana in Galilee, the sons of Zebedee, and two others of his disciples. Simon Peter said to them, 'I am going fishing.' They said to him, 'We will go with you.' They went out and got into the boat, but that night they caught nothing.'

Just after daybreak, Jesus stood on the beach; but the disciples did not know that it was Jesus. Jesus said to them, 'Children, you have no fish, have you?' They answered him, 'No.' He said to them, 'Cast the net to the right side of the boat, and you will find some.' So they cast it, and now they were not able to haul it in because there were so many fish.' Jn 21.1 - 13

Notes

'After these things' – what things exactly?

- the empty tomb, Mary, message of resurrection, appearances of Jesus

'I'm going fishing'

From the Upper Room to the sea of Galilee.

Is this faith or lost faith?

'The scene is one of complete apostacy' ... *or practical obedience*

They need to eat. Galilee? - because that is where Jesus told them to go.

A story of obedience beyond knowing.

Which version fits them - *you* and your faith right now?

They fish all night and catch nothing.

The old way of life is closed to them.

Caught between death and life, old and new and at home in neither.

Reflection

Church and faith today – there can be a script in life (or church) that says 'there was a time when all this was better' – we are now 'after those things'.

And now we may be working harder than ever – but our nets are empty.

'After these things' ... what would it include for you?

Strategies, stories, initiatives, hopes, the way it used to be ?

Is guidance something that points the way *forward*?

Or is it sometimes a door closing *behind* us - no way back.

Stranger at daybreak

Jesus as an unrecognised stranger

'Throw your nets on the other side'. – what kind of advice? Professional? Prophetic?

The foolishness of faith?

Responding to Jesus can mean turning away from the familiar way of doing things

- even from our experience and training?

Willing to be guided, to take a risk and trust. To experiment.

Where is the 'other side' for you in your discipleship, ministry and the communities you are part of?

Result: The huge catch of fish. Jesus recognised

Memories of abundance

Where did we last come food far is excess of what was 'needed'?

Did you notice the mention of Cana?

Theme of gospel stories and miracles - extravagance, overwhelming, life-giving.

The generosity of God

The other side

A story about people caught between death and resurrection
A story about people with nowhere to go ... the world has changed.
There is no way back to any old life - but they cannot recognise the new.
A story of faithful waiting and obedience in the unknown.

A story of Jesus – the stranger who guides.
Whose whole ministry is to find us in this place and lead us from death to life, to a place where we recognise him ...

Where we learn to trust and obey – turn and cast our lives into a new direction ... and find it fruitful beyond imagining.

He will do this for you
Take the Easter risk and turn to him.

Reviewing the five stories ...

It might be good to take some time and review this time.
Have there been some recurring themes?
Some particular encouragements?
Some challenges and responses to make?
Some questions to explore further?

Where have you recognised yourself in the stories?

Are there prayers you want to pray as this retreat draws to a close?

Would it help to share and explore any of this with trusted and wise friends?

Prayer as the retreat concludes

Saviour Christ,
in whose way of love lies the secret
of all life and the hope of all people,
we pray for quiet courage
to match this hour.

We did not choose to be born
or to live in such an age:
but let its problems challenge us,
its discoveries exhilarate us,
its injustices anger us,
its possibilities inspire us
and its vigour renew us
for your kingdom's sake.
Amen

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* The picture on the handouts are Jake Lever's from his project 'Do the little things' - www.leverarts.org/do-the-little-things. The picture is used with his kind permission.