

All of us here have responded and found ourselves at Immanuel. Some have been here many years and some are very new ~ but

1. what are we here for?
2. What are we expecting and
3. what are we experiencing?

We are forming the body of Christ here but does it feel dislocated to you and as if God wants to do something new but, that like Eli, we have almost forgotten how to listen. Our PCC has realised this and we have the opportunity to listen and respond but we have to work together so for a few moments this morning we are going to form groups and after a prayer we are going to share ~

1. why do we come here week by week,
2. what do we feel we get out of coming and
3. What do we think we would like to get.

We might even get as far as thinking how we might change and what will be needed to change?

So move into groups (all I ask is that all the PCC members don't end up in the same group) and our sharing will be really valuable as we move forward and respond to God's 'Calling' to be the faithful here.



Ministry Musings

14th January 2018 ~ 2nd Sunday of Epiphany

What on earth is 'Calling' all about and what is its place in our faith? Calling is all about **'Knowing Jesus ~ Making Him known'**. In every aspect.

Calling begins in our lives before we even recognise it for ourselves. It may start as infants brought to Baptism to 'set us on the right path' or to sow seeds of something that is important but not really understood and which needs exploring. Those seeds can flourish, remain dormant or even be thought irrelevant depending on how they are treated by those already called! It may be that something in our life brings us into contact with faith and we find we are attracted to it for some practical reason ~ support of some sort ~ in our everyday life through which we receive an invite to join in church life regularly.

However we first come into contact with faith it will have the Holy Spirit at work using God's people to draw us in and share with us igniting in us the desire to remain. Something that we cannot explain but cannot ignore either! Often something that we didn't even realise we were looking for!

Calling then works in our hearts and thinking. We can spend years ignoring it; be stopped in our tracks and change our lives because of it; gently find ourselves motivated to meet needs of others through acts of justice or service or be transfixed instantly by an understanding of God's Love for us and want to build a relationship with Him! For each of us it is different and yet for each of us there is a common, if unexpressed, understanding which brings us to recognise God's Love for us in Jesus Christ and accept the gift of Salvation offered through Him.

Eli had been called and served faithfully training others; Samuel did not understand but was encouraged to respond; Philip was learning and was enthusiastic to share and for peer support: Nathanael was a sceptic but had to see for himself! All were "Called" by the Spirit because of the Revelation of God.

What about you?

1 Samuel 3: 1-20 OT page 254
Rev. 5:1-10 NT page 245
John 1:43-end NT page 89

Look at the Collect we prayed together this morning

Collect

Almighty God,
in Christ you make all things new:
transform the poverty of our nature by the riches
of your grace,
and in the renewal of our lives
make known your heavenly glory;
through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord,
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever. Amen.

All that we recognise and ask for in that prayer can only come about through Jesus Christ.

So what have we acknowledged!

We acknowledge that our

Almighty God makes all things new in Christ.

How do we know that ?

In our New Testament reading this morning we heard part of the Revelation of St. John the Divine ~ a graphic picture image of Christ's role in heaven after the Ascension ~ the Lamb, looking as if it had been slain, taking the scroll from the right hand of the Father showing He, Jesus, now had Authority to 'purchase' people of every tribe and language to be a kingdom to serve God. Representing Good, (God's love) on earth.

But as the people purchased to serve God we need help ~the Collect asks that the help ~

transforms the poverty of our nature by the riches
of God's grace.

How do we recognise God's grace?

We recognise grace through the experiences that we name 'Calling' and for each one of us that can take a different shape and changes over time. But ~ 'Calling' only thrives when we are open to the Spirit working in and with us so that by the riches of God's grace we will see

the renewal of our lives which will enable us to
make known God's heavenly glory.

Both our Old Testament and Gospel readings give us glimpses of a few people who have been 'Called' to be faithful. Each of them experienced 'Calling' differently, just as we do!

Eli had been called many years earlier ~ he had served as a priest ~ probably getting stuck in the rut of routine and believing he was doing what God wanted even when it upset God and when he had almost forgotten how to listen and check with God that he was still being obedient. So when Samuel was 'Called' by God and did not recognise what was happening, Eli almost missed what was going on too! Samuel did not understand but with Eli's realisation and guidance was able to say "Speak Lord, for your servant is listening"

Samuel was afraid to tell Eli what happened as it wasn't going to be good for the House of Eli, but Eli knew in his heart that his time was ending and did not stand in the way of change.

Our Gospel tells us of Philip and Nathanael. Philip was learning and was enthusiastic to share, looking for confirmation of what he was experiencing and seeking peer support: Nathanael was a sceptic ~ but responded to Philip's inviting "Come and see" even though he did not expect to find anything worthwhile!

Throughout Scripture there are many other examples of people 'Called' by God to be faithful. Today you and I are 'Called' to be faithful ~ to make the response and to come and see.

Questions on 'Calling'

Set 1

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2. What are we expecting and
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Set 2

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