

## **Worship at Home Sheet 22<sup>nd</sup> January 2023 from ROOTS material**

### **Call to worship**

To all God's people present here: everyone is welcome!

Unprepared or ready; uncertain or sure,

Remember God loves you: listen to God's voice, because

Now is the time to follow God's call.

Lord, you invite us to turn, to make a new start and to follow you.

You call us beyond ourselves.

You call us to welcome friend and stranger until the whole world has turned and worships you. **Amen.**

### **iSing Come as you are**

#### **Prayer of Adoration**

Forgiving God, Father of all, almighty and powerful one, whose kingdom has come near:

**we come to sit at your feet today.**

Jesus, light of the world, you stepped down into darkness and came and lived among us:

**we come to sit at your feet today.**

Holy Spirit, you breathe life into our calling, your wisdom and guidance helps us to follow you:

**we come to sit at your feet today. Amen.**

#### **A prayer of praise and thanksgiving**

Father God, thank you that you sent Jesus who came to give us freedom through the cross.

You have called us to put down our 'nets' and follow you.

You have offered us new life in you – a new path to follow, as a new light has dawned.

Thank you that you walk beside us on the journey, from darkness into your marvellous light.

Thank you that you offer us life full of adventure, life in all its fullness. **Amen.**

#### **A prayer of confession**

Forgiving God, we are sorry when we say one thing and do another;

we are sorry when we say yes and then say no;

we are sorry when you call us and we choose not to follow.

Lord, you have called us to follow you:

we are sorry when we choose to ignore you; we are sorry when we choose to do what we want;

we are sorry and respond to your call.

As you called the fishermen to leave their nets and follow you,

help us to follow you too, to go in a new direction with you.

Transform us and make us whole, and help us to enjoy the journey with you. **Amen.**

#### **Assurance of forgiveness**

Loving and merciful God, who has called us to repentance: we are truly forgiven by you.

We are washed clean by your blood and can respond to your call to follow you, knowing we are healed and restored. **Amen.**

#### **Bible Reading: Matthew 4.12-23**

Now when Jesus heard that John the Baptist had been arrested, he moved to Galilee. He left Nazareth and made his home in Capernaum, by the lake. This was a place once called the land of Zebulun and Naphtali, so that what the prophet Isaiah had foretold might be fulfilled: 'Land of Zebulun, land of Naphtali, on the road by the sea of Galilee – you are a special place because the people who felt helpless, as if they were sitting in the dark, and were afraid that they would die, have seen a great light, and a new dawn has come to them.' From that time on, Jesus began to tell the people, 'Repent and begin a new life, for the kingdom of heaven is near you.' As Jesus walked by Lake Galilee, he saw two brothers, Simon, who is called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the lake – for they were fishermen. And he said to them, 'Follow me, and I will make you fish for people.' Immediately they left their nets and followed him. He

went on from there, and saw two other brothers, James son of Zebedee and his brother John. They were in the boat with their father Zebedee, mending their nets. Jesus called them. Immediately they left the boat and their father, and followed him. Jesus went throughout Galilee, teaching in the synagogues and sharing the good news of the kingdom and curing people of every disease and sickness.

## **iSing Broken Vessels**

### **Reflection**

If you asked for a definition of 'repentance', it's likely that many would include in their answer something about 'saying sorry'. And many a 'prayer of repentance' in our worship will reinforce that definition. But the Gospel reading suggests a broader definition. Jesus proclaims, 'Repent for the kingdom of heaven (or God) is near.' If repentance is just saying sorry, what has that got to do with the kingdom being close by?

When Jesus called the fishermen to follow, he didn't ask them to say sorry first; but he did call them to a life of repentance. And what happened? They 'immediately' left their boats and followed Jesus. And that suggests repentance is about realignment rather than simply saying sorry. To be a part of the kingdom adventure they needed to realign themselves, their lives, towards Jesus.

And the same is just as true now as it was then. To see the kingdom of God we need to turn, to re-orientate ourselves, our lives. And this isn't a one-off. We need to do it daily. We need to ask ourselves 'What's stopping me from seeing God's kingdom today?' and to realign ourselves accordingly. That might, of course, involve saying sorry – but it's not the be all and end all of it. So, repent and let the adventure begin! We're on a journey and who knows where it might take us. If the example of the disciples is anything to go by, it might be a bumpy ride and we're in for a few surprises along the way.

This prospect might lead some of us to balk. Maybe we're too old for adventure now; maybe we prefer the comfort and security of where and who we are. After all, there are few guarantees with this adventure –certainly not promises of health or prosperity; indeed, sometimes the opposite. Following Jesus has a cost.

But this didn't stop the disciples, and it shouldn't stop us. The kingdom was good news then and it's good news for us now. Peter, Andrew, James and John seemed to recognise this immediately. We don't know what was in their minds, we don't know what their motives might have been. But we know they didn't look back. They leapt at the opportunity, wherever it would take them. Could there be anything better?

And for us? Jesus calls us to repent and follow him. About turn! Could there be anything better?

### **Prayer of Intercession**

God of healing, we entrust to you in Jesus' name those places where there is great division and hostility; places where religious intolerance has encouraged violence and persecution; places where power struggles have made war zones of cities and graveyards of villages. We entrust to you communities where mistrust has brought isolation and fear has brought loss; families where misunderstanding has brought brokenness and bitterness has brought grief. Shine your light into all places where the darkness of division has settled, and bring us all your peace in Jesus' name. **Amen.**

## **iSing My Lighthouse**

### **Blessing**

Lord, send us out as renewed people. Help us to turn away from what is wrong and turn to what is right. Help us to turn towards our neighbours and to all who are lost. Help us to turn away from distractions and towards more adventuring with you. Help us now and always. **Amen.**