

“Why your current role in life is where you should be serving God”

Lossiemouth Church of Scotland Sermon – 09 February 2025

Frequently Asked Questions

1. **Why is the image of a boat at sea so prominent in the context of Christian faith, according to the sermon?**

The boat at sea serves as a powerful metaphor for the journey of life and faith. It represents the Christian community, the Church (often called the nave in traditional buildings), as a gathering of imperfect people united in their willingness to follow Christ. Like a boat navigating the sea, life is not always smooth; there are calm spells, choppy waters, and storms. However, through it all, the community stays together in the boat, relying on their faith, much as Jesus' early followers did on the Sea of Galilee. The architecture of churches, with features like upturned boat ceilings and stained glass windows depicting fishing nets, reflects and reinforces this image.

2. **What does the sermon suggest about the way Jesus initially gathered his disciples?**

Jesus actively sought out his first disciples, who were fishermen, rather than waiting for them to come to him. He met them where they were, in their working environment, demonstrating a proactive approach to sharing his message. He even adapted their resources, such as using Simon's boat as a platform to teach, showing an innovative approach to ministry and mission.

3. **The sermon mentions an "epiphany" followed by specific responses. What is this process and how does it relate to faith?**

The sermon describes a pattern: an encounter with God (an epiphany), followed by a feeling of unworthiness, reassurance, then a commission and obedience. This process is evidenced in the lives of Isaiah, Paul, and the first disciples. While epiphanies can be dramatic, like Paul's blinding vision, they can also be subtle and ongoing. The key is that the believer accepts the commission, no matter how small it may seem, and strives to live in obedience and to do what they are called to do. It's not a one-off event but a recurring process throughout one's life of faith.

4. **How does the sermon address the feeling of unworthiness often experienced when encountering the divine?**

The sermon acknowledges that feelings of unworthiness and self-doubt are a common reaction to experiencing the presence of God. This response is not seen as a negative, but rather a natural part of the process of faith that comes after an epiphany. However, this feeling is followed by divine reassurance and commissioning, allowing believers to move beyond their doubts and embrace their



God-given purpose. It is not a feeling to dwell on, but something to recognise and move through.

5. According to the sermon, is the Christian journey a consistently smooth one?

No, the Christian journey is not depicted as straightforward or always easy. Just as a boat encounters varied conditions at sea, the journey of life is full of ups and downs. There will be calm times when all is well, as well as choppy days and even storms where we feel overwhelmed. The importance is to remain in the "boat" together, drawing strength and support from the church community while navigating these challenges. This highlights the importance of being with like-minded individuals.

6. What does the sermon suggest about the role of the Church community in this journey?

The Church, symbolised by the boat, is portrayed as a gathering of imperfect individuals drawn together by a shared desire to embark on Christ's journey. It is a space for mutual support, comfort, and faith building. The sermon stresses that the Church is not a gathering of the spiritually proud, but a place where individuals can honestly acknowledge their weaknesses and receive grace. It also suggests that all are welcome and valued in the church.

7. How does the sermon use the example of King Henry III to illustrate the concept of faithfulness?

King Henry III's story illustrates the concept of faithfulness within one's given calling. Despite desiring a different path of monastic solitude, he was advised to serve God where he was, as a king. This emphasises that God often calls us to be faithful and obedient in our current roles and responsibilities, regardless of how mundane or challenging they may seem. It highlights that all work can be for God's glory.

8. What is the sermon's view on the importance of celebrating diversity and individual differences within the Church?

The sermon underscores that all are different, and celebrating these differences allows believers to serve more freely. The sermon calls for acceptance and appreciation of diversity within the community, as this enables individuals to find their unique place in the body of Christ and contribute to the broader mission. Everyone has a different gift that should be valued and celebrated.

