In our reading today taking from John we find some of the disciples out on a boat fishing. It states that they have been out all night long and have not caught anything.

I once went on a fishing trip with my son. I bought a new rod from the shop and was told by the man it was the best rod for a novice like me. I flicked out the fishing line from the rod like I was told to do by the man in the shop, but to my horror it was stuck to the tree above me and I spent most of the experience trying to get the fishing line unattached from the tree and the bull rushes.

Unlike me these men are professionals; before they even met Jesus that was their main job - fishing. So we are pretty safe saying that they knew exactly what they are doing.

Then Jesus (although at this point the disciples did not know it was him) shouts out ‘have you caught anything??’

They reply ‘no.’

Jesus says ‘throw your net out on the right hand side’, and then you know the rest. They pull in a massive haul of fish and at that point they realise it’s Jesus calling out. The hard slog of fishing, catching nothing, trying their best to do what they always do and, to be honest, what they thought they were good at. Jesus calls out ‘try something else’ and a massive haul of fish happens. The disciples had to make a change to what they were doing, before they could have the miraculous catch.

Change - love it or hate it we all face it.

Like the fishermen, we can get so caught up with what we are doing because it’s the way we have always done it. We have tried and tested methods and ways of doing things, so that change does not even come into our minds.

This can creep in to all parts of our life - home, work, church.

The voice of Jesus came to the disciples, and they listened and changed the way they fished and a miracle happened.

I faced a massive change in 2013 when I moved down here to Leigh-on-Sea from Leeds. Life was not great even though my job was fantastic and things were growing. Scared about moving, unsure and feeling loss and fear, but the voice of Jesus was there. I got a job here, met Michele and Hayden, we just moved, and the boys are happy in school.

The old youth group at Wesley also changed. Synergy became a reality, and we have seen 150 young people since starting, with 20-30 come every week and an older group starting in May. With our schools work, we have had over two thousand children hear the gospel, and I have started a chaplaincy in North Street school. We have started synergy and family services, like Easter when we saw 10-15 new families come to church for the first time. We have film mornings with over 40 kids and their parents attending.

Change is in our midst, and with that change comes the voice of Jesus willing us on and directing us in what we do. We are facing ultimate change and I’m sure it will come up later in conversation at the ACM.

The building project.

What is the voice of Jesus saying to us?

There will be practices and ways of doing things that will have to change as we meet the demands of an ever changing world.

It does not mean that we water down who we are and that our fundamental beliefs change, but it does mean that if we want to see growth and life we need to hear what God has to say and maybe change the way we do things. It does not mean that we lose our identity - we just grow and progress and find new ways of doing things, such as the way we reach people, and find new ways to worship, and bring new people into the space that we are creating.

There is nothing wrong with tradition as long as that tradition speaks in a voice that is understood and relevant to an ever changing society.

The fish we are trying to catch (i.e. people) are constantly changing their lives, their patterns of doing things. To be able to catch them, to bring them in with our nets, might mean different tactics or methods.

We need to Dare to Fish on the other side of the boat.

Jesus is calling us and willing us on. It’s up to us; you and me, all of us