

For as long as I can remember I know Jesus loves me. His transforming grace in my life evident in so many ways. Evident as he reveals the wickedness of my heart. The fulness of his forgiveness. The sufficiency of his grace in countless crises. His patience with a slow learner. His assurance of eternal salvation. His gracious provision of gifts, enabling me to serve him. The transforming grace of Jesus. How have you experienced his transforming grace in your life? What is your story of grace? In today's reading, Dr Luke records a story of transforming grace. As he continues to reveal the ministry of Jesus. The Messiah who is 100% God 100% man. Proclaiming the good news of God's kingdom as the first Christian gospel preacher. Transforming grace offered to all willing to listen. Today's reading begins, *'One day as Jesus was standing by the Lake of Gennesaret, the people were crowding around him and listening to the word of God.'* **v1** When Jesus speaks God speaks. Jesus speaks to a large crowd. Jesus enters Simon Peter's personal domain and speaks; offering transforming grace. Not for the first time. In **4:38-39**, *'Jesus left the synagogue and went to the home of Simon. Now Simon's mother-in-law was suffering from a high fever, and they asked Jesus to help her. So he bent over her and rebuked the fever, and it left her. She got up at once and began to wait on them.'* Speaking with God's authority. Miraculous healing. Showing compassion. Hopefully Simon regarded the healing of his mother in law as a blessing. This explains Simon's willingness to hand over his fishing boat as a floating pulpit. To go fishing again after an exhausting, fruitless night on the lake. Not an act of blind confidence in a complete stranger. Flowing from previous experience of transforming grace. Transforming grace poured into Simon's life when a carpenter tells an experienced fisherman where to catch fish. **v4-7** Fishing nets overflowing to breaking point. A miraculous sign of Jesus' power over nature. Simon is standing before the all-knowing, all powerful, all giving, Lord. Graciously revealing himself to Simon Peter and his fishing partners. Brothers and sisters, remember, it is an act of grace, for the Lord of the universe to reveal himself personally to you. Revealing himself to you in his Word. Don't trample on that grace by ignoring the revelation. Instead praise God he has chosen to reveal himself to you. Transforming grace evident in Simon's recognition of his sinful heart. *'When Simon Peter saw this, he fell at Jesus' knees and said, "Go away from me, Lord; I am a sinful man!"* **v8** Brought face to face with the glory of Jesus, Simon understands the depth of his own sin. His unworthiness to be in the presence

of God. His response the only proper response. The response of Isaiah, *In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord, high and exalted, seated on a throne; and the train of his robe filled the temple.... "Woe to me!" I cried. "I am ruined! For I am a man of unclean lips, and I live among a people of unclean lips, and my eyes have seen the King, the LORD Almighty."* **Isaiah 6:1,5** The response of Job, *My ears had heard of you but now my eyes have seen you. Therefore I despise myself and repent in dust and ashes.* **Job 42:5-6** Sisters and brothers what is your response to the Lord Jesus? Are you running to him? Acknowledging your rebellion. Falling down before him in worship. Transforming grace evident in Jesus' gracious gift to Simon. The gift of meaning and purpose. *Then Jesus said to Simon, "Don't be afraid; from now on you will fish for people."* **v10b** The gift of partnership in the greatest enterprise of all. Calling people into God's kingdom. A gift only for those who realise their unworthiness. Who know what it is to be captured by God's grace. Literally Jesus calls Simon to catch alive people. To catch people for true life. Exactly what Simon Peter did on the day of Pentecost when 3000 people entered the Kingdom of God after he spoke of Jesus' transforming grace. No hint in Simon's encounter with Jesus, Simon will say no. Jesus' call is irresistible. When Jesus reveals himself and changes hearts, obedience follows. Remember Jesus bible reading and message in his home town synagogue. Reading from Isaiah, of the Messiah who will set captives free. Declaring Isaiah's words fulfilled in his ministry. Jesus' transforming grace to Simon an example of that fulfilment. Spiritually poor, oppressed captive Simon set free in the year of the Lord's favour. Simon loves Jesus because Jesus first loved him. This story of transforming grace grows as Simon and his fishing partners, James and John respond. *'So they pulled their boats up on shore, left everything and followed him.'* **v11** Not just tagging along like the large crowds following Jesus around. The word used here for 'follow' means deep, inward attachment. These men signing up for a life of moving people to the right. Recipients of transforming grace now instruments of transforming grace. Brothers and sisters, are you an instrument of grace? For that is what Jesus calls you to be. Instruments of transforming grace vital in moving people to the right. Toward living faith, growing maturity in Christ. I praise God for the instruments of grace in my life. One man in particular for nearly 45 years pouring the transforming grace of Jesus into me. Encouraging, correcting, teaching. Modelling godly, courageous leadership. Loving me and my family. Praying for me. Reminding me of God's promises. Recently I read these words of dedication in

a new book. *'In memory of Glenda Weldon (died 30.3.2017) who put up with this godless sixteen year old and his scoundrel mates every Friday afternoon after school as we ate her hamburgers and scones, debated her God (and lost), listened to her read and explain the four Gospels, took advantage of her generosity, caused her frequent headaches, before eventually finding ourselves captivated by the story she told about the man from Nazareth'* The transforming grace of Jesus shared by an instrument of that grace. Moving those teenagers to the right. Each of them currently serving in Christian ministry. Instruments of transforming grace. The transforming grace of Jesus motivates our CMS mission partner to live in a dangerous part of the world. Motivates members of our parish family to personally extend the transforming grace of Jesus in countless ways. Sisters and brothers, are you an instrument of grace? Captured by the transforming grace of Jesus. Like Jeremiah unable to keep the good news of grace to yourself. Jeremiah said, *But if I say, "I will not mention his word or speak anymore in his name," his word is in my heart like a fire, a fire shut up in my bones. I am weary of holding it in; indeed, I cannot.*

Jeremiah 20:9 Our harvest field of family, neighbours, networks and nations is crying out for instruments of transforming grace. Ask God today to renew in you an awareness of Jesus' transforming grace. If there is no awareness of that transformation, come before him in repentance. Confessing your unworthiness. Call on Jesus to take up residence in your heart. Ask God to grow your desire to see others experience the transforming grace of Jesus. Identify those God is laying on your heart. That you can assist to move to the right. Pray for them, for opportunities to love, to share the good news of the kingdom. Recommit to devoting your life to fishing for people. There is no more fulfilling, exciting, daunting way to live.