

Chat with the Children

- Something about how many ways we could get a message from somewhere to another
 - Phone, letter, talk... keep a running tally?
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New Year's Resolutions

- OK, every minister does this on the first Sunday of every New Year, but...
...what New Year's resolutions did you make?
 - have you kept them?
 - can you even remember what they were!?
- Maybe a more interesting question is what New Year's resolutions **should** you have made?
 - ask your husband/wife/children/parents/friends!!
- However we feel about resolutions, and whether we ever keep them or not, there is something of a human need for a fresh start.
- *Summary whole gospel - need for a fresh start (sin) and offer of that fresh start in relationship to Jesus - why he came!*

Turn

- Politicians very, very rarely admit they were wrong, that it was their fault and that they made a mistake!!
- There is something in us that hates admitting we are wrong, that we can't do something.
- But that repentance - turning - is starting point of our relationship with God.
 - turning away from sin and towards God;
 - setting a direction for life - not a newly found perfection...

Follow

- A few years ago on the TV I remember seeing some of a Kenneth Branagh drama about Ernest Shackleton, the polar explorer
- At heart of the drama of the story is Shackleton's leadership:
 - how did he hold together that group of explorers and adventurers and lead them to safety after their ship was crushed in the ice, and they had to make do on the ice, and then sail in a small, semi-open boat to South Georgia across the Antarctic Ocean?
 - whatever it was, people followed, trusted, and he came through without losing a single man.
- Turn - and follow me is what Jesus said.
- Relationship with him:
 - time reading Scripture;
 - time praying;
 - time talking about him with others;
 - time putting into practise his call on our lives - following him.
- Its about discipleship, not just conversion.

Fish

- Difference school made up projects, or things at College - make work, even if to learn - and real life, where what you are doing actually matters.
 - I remember being involved in organising a summer programme for students at the place where I worked, linking a student who would come and work for us for the summer, with someone who had something he or she was interested in doing but didn't have the time to tackle;
 - the fact that what this student was doing made a real difference to the person they were working with, made a tangible difference, transformed the attitude of the students...
- We are not just called to turn and follow - we are also given a purpose, a task, and one that makes a real difference:
 - we are called to be fishers of men;
 - to draw men and women to God, to introduce them to the same Saviour we have come to know as we have repented, come to follow in response to His call.
- Not just make work, not just keeping the institution of the church alive for another decade or century...
 - rather bringing life to souls who would otherwise face a lost eternity!
- Notice:
 - fishers - went and got fish;
 - the great commission: "Go and make disciples..." - GO and DISCIPLES
- Not "come to us" but "go to them":
 - in every relationship we have with those around us;
 - in every aspect of our congregational life...

Conclusion

- **turn** - repent, at heart of our faith;
- **follow** - follow Jesus, not our own masters anymore; on-going, not only as become a Christian;
- **fish** - for others, not ourselves; go to them, not them come to us...