

**(Your name) Come on Up!**

Isaiah 49<sup>1-7</sup>; Psalm 40<sup>1-12</sup>; 1 Corinthians 1<sup>1-9</sup>; John 1<sup>29-42</sup>

*The Holy One of Israel has chosen you. (Isaiah 49<sup>7</sup>)*

Choosing names for first-born males in our family is easy: we are all called Robert! I am Robert; my father was Robert; my grandfather was Robert; my great grandfather was Robert; my great great grandfather was Robert; my son is Robert; my grandson is Robert (I have attributed this to the simple fact that my great great grandfather had to leave the sea following an accident and he set up a grocery and ship chandlery business and the sign was painted - Robert Stephen & Son - and, as canny Scots, we never wanted the expense of repainting the sign!).

From the readings this morning there is very positive and exciting news for the people of faith - God knew you and he knew your name before you were born.

- ✦ Isaiah tells us **The Lord called me before I was born, while I was in my mothers' womb he named me** and goes on to say **the Lord, who is faithful, the Holy One of Israel [who] has chosen you.**
- ✦ The Psalmist hints at the same thing - **in the scroll of the book it is written of me that I should do your will, O my God.**
- ✦ Paul picks up the same theme: **God is faithful; by him you were called into the fellowship of his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.**
- ✦ John records the first encounter between Jesus and the first leader of the Church. Andrew has heard John the Baptist affirm Jesus as the Messiah (**I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove and it remained on him**) and takes Simon to meet Jesus. **He brought Simon to Jesus, who looked at him and said, 'You are Simon son of John. You are to be called Cephas (which is translated Peter).**

God hasn't just accepted your application to be a Christian - he chose you before you existed: your name (the name he gave you when the stars were just a twinkle in his eye) was on the list. God consciously, deliberately, purposefully and hopefully took hold of you and has never let you go.

One of the pressures that my Grandma (a formidable woman) always put on me was the fact that I had to live up to the family name!

- ✦ We do know that Peter wasn't always the most reliable disciple, even if he was the most enthusiastic. At the end of the Gospel Jesus again addresses Peter directly (interestingly, using his previous name): **Simon son of John do you love me?** After a positive answer Peter is commissioned - **Feed my sheep.** And then, after being told he will die for his faith, is simply invited to **Follow me!**
- ✦ Yet, we should take note of Paul's introduction to his letter to the Corinthian Church. He reminds the Church that they were **called to be saints** and that he **give[s] thanks to my God always for you because of the grace of God that has been given to you in Christ Jesus.** The result is that we **are not lacking in any spiritual gift.** He then says that we should be **blameless on the day of our Lord Jesus Christ.** Mercifully, that does not depend on us: **God is faithful: by him you were called into the fellowship of his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.**

All we have to do is allow God, through his Spirit, to live up to the name we are given at to the name of Jesus Christ into which we have been baptised.

Our faith isn't about what we do - it is about what God does in us!