

Calling the Disciples

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Luke 5:1-11 ESV

On one occasion, while the crowd was pressing in on him to hear the word of God, he was standing by the lake of Gennesaret, ² and he saw two boats by the lake, but the fishermen had gone out of them and were washing their nets. ³ Getting into one of the boats, which was Simon's, he asked him to put out a little from the land. And he sat down and taught the people from the boat. ⁴ And when he had finished speaking, he said to Simon, "Put out into the deep and let down your nets for a catch." ⁵ And Simon answered, "Master, we toiled all night and took nothing! But at your word I will let down the nets." ⁶ And when they had done this, they enclosed a large number of fish, and their nets were breaking. ⁷ They signaled to their partners in the other boat to come and help them. And they came and filled both the boats, so that they began to sink. ⁸ But when Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord." ⁹ For he and all who were with him were astonished at the catch of fish that they had taken, ¹⁰ and so also were James and John, sons of Zebedee, who were partners with Simon. And Jesus said to Simon, "Do not be afraid; from now on you will be catching men." ¹¹ And when they had brought their boats to land, they left everything and followed him.

JESUS HAS DIVINELY EMPOWERED KNOWLEDGE, AUTHORITY, AND POWER WHICH ENABLES HIM TO LEAD HUMANS IN UNPARALLELED FASHION. THEREFORE, EVEN AS THE FIRST DISCIPLES DID, WE SHOULD HEED HIS CALL AND FOLLOW HIS LEAD.

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1) INTRODUCTION

- SITUATION WHERE MANY PEOPLE ARE CHOOSING THEIR LEADER NOT FOR SOME COMPELLING QUALITY, ATTRIBUTE OR VISION OF THAT LEADER BUT RATHER BECAUSE THEY ARE NOT THE OTHER PERSON
- THIS IS AN UNFORTUNATE SITUATION
- WHERE IS THE INSPIRING, COMPELLING, COMPETENT LEADER? WHERE CAN WE FIND THEM?

Jesus Teaches (v1-4)

JESUS TEACHES THE CROWDS ABOUT THE KINGDOM AND THE DISCIPLES HOW TO FISH.

- Crowds are present to hear the “Word of God” = a message that comes from God and bears the authority of God
- They are gathered at Lake Gennesaret which was another name for the Sea of Galilee, Gennesaret being a fertile region on the edge of the Sea of Galilee
- The crowds were “pressing in on [Jesus] to hear the word of God” so Jesus looked for a safer or more effective location from which to teach the people about the kingdom of God
- There is clearly a rising quality to the popularity of Jesus
- Jesus saw two boats and figured one of those boats could work as a floating pulpit; boats were likely 20’-30’ long and could hold a group of men
- Zondervan’s Exegetical Commentary on The New Testament commentary notes that a boat that was discovered buried in the silt of the Sea of Galilee after a prolonged dry season in modern-day Israel. When the sea level had receded, the boat was carbon-dated from 120 BC to AD 40. Many think it is typical of the boats in the time of Jesus. It measured 25.5 feet long, 7.5 feet wide, and 4.5 feet in depth. It had a deck in the bow and the stern and could be powered by sails or by four oars. It normally had a crew of five with a capacity for ten passengers or an excess of a ton of cargo.
- Jesus asks Simon to take him out a bit for a more advantageous spot to teach from; an early indication that Simon, later called Peter, would play a primary role in Jesus’s inner circle
- Jesus doesn’t miss an opportunity to teach; “On one occasion” suggests this was a regular practice of Jesus

⇒ Jesus doesn't just want to teach the people about the kingdom, he wants to teach some fisherman about fishing

- When he finished teaching the crowd, he figures he’ll teach the fishermen how to fish: ““Put out into the deep and let down your nets for a catch.”

- Who does Jesus think he is? It's one thing for him to teach about the kingdom of God, but quite another to try and tell fisherman how to fish!
 - Don't you hate it when people do that?
 - Football coaches who never played!
- The nets that the fishermen were cleaning were trammel nets; made of linen, visible to fish during the day hence their use at night and their inappropriateness to use during the day – again, who did Jesus think he was?

Two important considerations:

1. Do we question Jesus? Yes. But we have the gall to question him about his expertise let alone ours!
2. Jesus begins to form smaller, intimate groups, away from the crowds: illustrative of another form of discipleship.
 - a. Do you avoid smaller groups?
 - b. Pastor Mike: "Are you in a small group?"
 - c. **Ephesians 4:11-12 ESV** And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ,

Peter Responds (v5)

SIMON RESPONDS TO JESUS'S ADVICE.

- Simon fares much better than I would in responding to Jesus
- But perhaps what encouraged Simon was his experiences with Jesus preceding this miraculous haul of fish
- David Garland (Zondervan Exegetical Commentary on The New Testament): Luke notes that Jesus' fame has spread far and wide and he is already known to Simon. He has cast out a demon in the synagogue in Capernaum, amazing the crowd, and followed that up by healing Simon's mother-in-law. Jesus is not simply passing by, as in Mark, but teaching a huge crowd by the

shore that forces him to commandeer Simon's boat and to teach them from a better vantage point on the lake. Simon, therefore, has already witnessed Jesus' power, heard his teaching, and joined the enthusiasm of the crowds pressing around him.

- That is, Simon is already aware that Jesus has authority—he casts out demons—and knowledge—he teaches the people—and power—he heals the sick. We know with Simon it was just as likely he would put his foot in his mouth as respond graciously. Maybe he was helped by the recent events.
- Even with the help of recent events, remember:
 - Simon was the one in charge
 - They had worked but caught nothing:
 - They were exhausted from the night's labour
 - Discouraged by failure
 - Aware that the timing was less than ideal further diminishing the chance of success
 - They would get the nets that they had just cleaned immediately dirty again
 - Those nets would need to be cleaned again before they got rest
- But Peter responds with respect and faith: "Master, we toiled all night and took nothing! But at your word I will let down the nets."

An exemplary response:

"I will trust in your word."

Throw your nets for a "catch" – this is a promise ... I will trust in your promise "

We need to trust in his promises!

Simon says

Jesus Fishes (v6-7)

JESUS'S INSTRUCTIONS AND SIMON'S FOLLOWING THOSE INSTRUCTIONS RESULTS IN GREAT SUCCESS

- I have learned to listen to fishing advice: listening to Ray = success in fishing
- David Garland: "They may be master fishermen, but Jesus is the Master of every situation."
- The success was so good it almost ended in disaster
 - The nets begin to break they have caught so many fish
 - Simon signals for help to the other boat, presumably James and John
 - They caught so many fish that both boats were filled and both boats began to sink
- Jesus proves himself to be a reliable and worthy fishing guide; and he would show himself in the coming days to be a reliable and worthy spiritual guide as well
- Would we not do well to heed the guidance of this carpenter's Son? Even as it pertains to areas outside his expertise...but those don't exist
- What was this miracle? A demonstration of power over nature-Jesus beckoned the fish? A demonstration of superior knowledge—Jesus knew the fish would be there? A demonstration of authority—obeying Jesus results in many blessings? → *commentators disagree on this*
- Why not all three? It was a miracle demonstrating Jesus's knowledge (he can fish better than fisherman) and it was a miracle demonstrating his authority (he is God's agent and should be listened to), it was a miracle demonstrating his power (the fish were caught with night-nets in broad daylight).

Interesting challenge:

David Garland: "The experience with the fishing nets and their success anticipates the church's experience in mission. But it also suggests that the church can have as much, if not more, trouble handling its successes as it does failures."

Jared Wilson at Corporis as per "success" → *first encouragement to listen to what success of a church is*

How would the fisherman respond to this demonstration of fishing prowess?

The Disciples Respond (v8-10a)

SIMON AND THE OTHER FISHERMAN RESPOND TO THE MIRACULOUS CATCH

Simon

- “...when Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, “Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord.””
- Simon responds by recognizing Jesus was a superior: he fell to his knees
- Peter recognizes Jesus, as God's agent, has authority
- In the midst of the chaos of boatloads of fish and breaking nets and sinking boats, Simon recognizes that his relationship to Jesus is the most important thing going on
 - GOSPEL: where you stand with Jesus is more important than the chaos in your life, good or bad!

3-part confession:

1. In kneeling I believe Peter recognizes his sin in light of the company
 2. In asking Jesus to depart he indicates his own knowledge of his unworthiness
 3. In calling Jesus “Lord” he attributes this teacher and the fishing results to be from God – Jesus is from God and God is working through him
- When it comes to Jesus, humility = clarity
 - This confession is not, I believe, a confession resulting in true faith and yet Simon clearly is getting clarity on this Jesus fellow; a true encounter with Jesus changes our perspective.
 - How many people stop here? Something good happens; they have a baby. They start coming to church. Something bad happens; a marriage is disintegrating or a child gets sick. They start coming to church. They see Jesus. They recognize who he is and what he has done. But they never repent of their sin and put their faith in Christ. Is that you?
 - When it comes to Jesus, humility = clarity

James, John and the rest

3-part response:

1. Awe at the visitation of God
 2. Amazement at the kindness of God (fish = favor to a fisherman)
 3. Recognition of Jesus's knowledge and authority
- Simon, James, John, and some other fisherman recognize the knowledge, authority, and power of this one called Jesus. Their response makes it clear they understand what is happening.

What would happen next? What follows this exciting miracle?

Jesus Calls (v10b)

JESUS USES THIS OPPORTUNITY TO GRACIOUSLY CALL SIMON AND THE REST OF THE DISCIPLES

- “Do not be afraid; from now on you will be catching men.”
- Grace:
 - Peter is not chastised or belittled or “I-told-you-so-ed” ... he is comforted and promised something
 - When we reach our end, Jesus promises us something; in moments of chaos and revelation, let's look for a promise
- The verb tense indicates that the promise is one of being continually engaged in evangelism
- Catch = rescue from danger, to let live, to save alive
- This is our promise (and expectation) as well ... maybe not the promise we want – Jared at Corporis on mission – not come in to hear the experts but go out and share the gospel

The Disciples Respond (v11)

THE DISCIPLES “BROUGHT THEIR BOATS TO LAND, THEY LEFT EVERYTHING AND FOLLOWED HIM.”

- This is why I believe this episode in Luke’s gospel explains **Mark 1:16-20 ESV**: ¹⁶ Passing alongside the Sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and Andrew the brother of Simon casting a net into the sea, for they were fishermen.¹⁷ And Jesus said to them, “Follow me, and I will make you become fishers of men.” ¹⁸ And immediately they left their nets and followed him.¹⁹ And going on a little farther, he saw James the son of Zebedee and John his brother, who were in their boat mending the nets. ²⁰ And immediately he called them, and they left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired servants and followed him.
- The key is to see God’s power, authority, and knowledge at work behind the miracle. *Simon*
- David Garland: “He demonstrates the right response to a miracle: God has sent Jesus to do his mighty work and he is worthy of being followed at all costs.”

Will we follow Jesus?

Will we follow Jesus as disciples?

Will we follow Jesus as disciples who make disciples?

This depends on seeing Jesus for who he is: The powerful, knowledgeable, authoritative Son of God and Saviour of the world. The sovereign Lord who worthy to be followed and deserves to be obeyed.