

03-11-2018

Message: Disciples Leave Everything to Follow and “Fish” with Jesus

Text: Luke 5:1-16

Introduction

- A. This morning we have gathered together in the presence of Jesus Christ to be confronted with His divine person, His divine words, and His divine works. How will each of us respond this day?
- B. In Luke chapter 4 we have seen some inappropriate, hostile and self-serving responses to Jesus. Those in Jesus’s home town of Nazareth, filled with hate, wanted to murder him. The crowds in Capernaum tried to prevent Him from leaving, to keep Him for themselves, like a genie in a bottle, to make life pleasant.
- C. We did see Peter’s mother-in-law’s exemplary response to Jesus’s miraculously healing her - she immediately served Him. And now in the beginning of Luke chapter 5 our risen Lord inspires Luke to describe the response of Peter himself, and his companions, James and John, who models the God-pleasing response to Christ that He desires of all people, a response that is the mark of every true follower of Jesus. They left everything to follow Him.

I. 5:1-3 They heard Christ proclaim the Word of God.

- A. Jesus was teaching the crowds along the shore of the Sea of Galilee, also called the lake of Gennesaret after the fertile plain along the NW shore of the sea.

Luke 5:1 Now it happened that while the crowd was pressing around Him and **listening to the word of God**, He was standing by **the lake of Gennesaret**;

- 1. The Sea of Galilee is a fresh water sea 695 feet below sea level, fed and emptied by the Jordan River.
- 2. Show map, slides of north Jordan river, Sea of Galilee, plain of Gennesaret.

- B. Peter and his fishing companions, including James and John, were on the shore washing their next after profitless night of deep water fishing.

Luke 5:2 and He saw two boats lying at the edge of the lake; but the fishermen had gotten out of them and were washing their nets.³ And He got into one of the boats, which was Simon's, and asked him to put out a little way from the land. And He sat down and *began* teaching the people from the boat.

- 1. Sound waves carry farther over placid water than over land. So Jesus can be heard from the boat by a larger crowd. (Show slide of 1st century boat uncovered in the sea’s mud in 1986, 26.5 ft x 7.5 ft.)

2. Rabbis teaching in synagogues would typically sit facing the people and teach. Jesus sat down to teach in the synagogue in Nazareth (4:20,21ff), and again here in Peter's boat. Peter was a captive audience.

II. 5:4,5 They trusted the word of Christ, the word of God.

Luke 5:4 When He had finished speaking, He said to Simon, "Put out into the deep water and let down your nets for a catch."⁵ Simon answered and said, "Master, we worked hard all night and caught nothing, but I will do as You say *and* let down the nets."

- A. Jesus, the son of a carpenter, is telling professional fishermen when and where to fish. It made no sense since Peter and his crew had fished all night and caught nothing. If the nets were linen made for deep water fishing, they would have been more visible during the day (which would make the miraculous catch even more astonishing).
- B. Yet Peter's response was not one of disobedience, for he accepts Jesus's authority as "Master," and with his companions, lets down the nets. While the first command to Peter is a singular verb (put out), the second command ("let down") is a plural verb, indicating others were on the boat. Peter had seen what Christ had done for his mother-in-law. Christ can be trusted, even when we don't understand, even when obedience appears unprofitable if not foolish. Like Mary, who did not fully understand, yet submitted to the Lord as His bond-slave, Peter also submitted to Christ's command and purposes for him. Christ would use Peter and his companions to reveal His divine glory, His wisdom and power.
- C. In the Lord's sovereignty, there appears to be a purpose for the profitless night of fishing - to reveal the glory of God in Christ. How many of our fruitless, profitless, frustrated efforts might result in Christ's glory?

III. 5:6,7 They witnessed the glory of God in Christ's miracle.

Luke 5:6 When they had done this, they enclosed a great quantity of fish, and their nets *began* to break;⁷ so they signaled to their partners in the other boat for them to come and help them. And they came and filled both of the boats, so that they began to sink.

- A. The strained nets, the need for another boat, and both boats filled to nearly sinking highlights the miraculous nature of the catch.
- B. The partners would likely include James and John. (Luke 5:10 ... James and John, sons of Zebedee, who were partners with Simon.)
- C. Jesus knew their vocation better than they did. He knows our needs better than we do. As He, in His wisdom and power, has guided the fishermen to this catch, He will guide us in more important spiritual matters. He inspired Luke to record this miracle to feed our faith

so that we will trust Him.

IV. 5:8 They were awed with the person of Christ revealed by the miracle and not with the material wealth gained by the miracle.

Luke 5:8 But when Simon Peter saw *that*, **he fell down at Jesus' feet, saying, "Go away from me Lord, for I am a sinful man, O Lord!"**

- A. Peter reacted to the revelation of God's glory in Christ much in the same way as did Isaiah when beholding God in His glory on His throne. Peter, recognizing Christ's holiness which exposes Peter's sinfulness, is filled with fear and feeling that he did not belong in the presence of Jesus.

Isaiah 6:5 Then I said, "**Woe is me, for I am ruined! Because I am a man of unclean lips**, and I live among a people of unclean lips; for my eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts."

- B. Peter's focus was not on the economic blessing Christ just bestowed on him, but rather on Christ Himself, to Whom he confessed his sinfulness and Whom he called Jesus "Lord." The Capernaum crowds tried to prevent Jesus from leaving them, so they could continue to benefit from His miracles. Peter, seeing Jesus's miracle, asked Jesus to depart from him as one unworthy to be in His presence.

V. 5:9,10 They received forgiveness from Christ and the privilege of serving Christ.

Luke 5:9 For amazement had seized him and all his companions because of the catch of fish which 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 fear, from now on you will be catching men."**

- A. In response to Peter's faith, Christ granted Him forgiveness with no cause for fear. Seeing the Lord's power is not a cause to draw back from Him, but to draw close to Him.
- B. Christ called Peter and his partners, James and John, to serve Christ's purposes in bringing people to Christ.

VI. 5:11 They obediently received Christ's calling on their lives, leaving everything to follow Him.

Luke 5:11 When they had brought their boats to land, **they left everything and followed Him.**

- A. The priority of their lives is no longer fishing, but following Jesus.
- B. Everyone who is a Christian is called to "follow Jesus," whether an apostle or non-apostle.

The ministry and vocational path in life to which Christ calls us will vary, but all of us are called to the same level of commitment to Christ - "leaving all" for His sake.

1. E.g., Levi/Matthew.

Luke 5:27 After that He went out and noticed a tax collector named Levi sitting in the tax booth, and He said to him, "Follow Me."²⁸ **And he left everything behind, and got up and began to follow Him.**

2. If we keep/save our lives for ourselves, our possessions for ourselves, we cannot be the Lord's disciples. All that we are and have we put at the Lord's disposal for His purposes and glory. This is the disposition of justifying faith in Christ. Jesus inspires Luke to record this incident to teach us what it means to be a Christian, a follower of Jesus.

Luke 9:23 And He was saying to *them* all, "If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross daily and follow Me."²⁴ "For **whoever wishes to save his life will lose it**, but whoever loses his life for My sake, he is the one who will save it.

Luke 14:26 "If anyone comes to Me, and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, **yes, and even his own life, he cannot be My disciple.**

Luke 14:33 "So then, **none of you can be My disciple who does not give up all his own possessions.**

VII. 5:12-14 Those for whom Christ is "fishing."

Luke 5:12 While He was in one of the cities, behold, *there was a man covered with leprosy*; and when he saw Jesus, **he fell on his face and implored Him, saying, "Lord, if You are willing, You can make me clean."**¹³ And He stretched out His hand and touched him, saying, "I am willing; be cleansed." And immediately the leprosy left him.¹⁴ And He ordered him to tell no one, "But go and show yourself to the priest and make an offering for your cleansing, just as Moses commanded, as a testimony to them."

- A. God's law in Leviticus 13 regarded lepers as ritually unclean. Victims of leprosy in Jesus's day were ostracized from cities and towns and from interacting with other people.
- B. Yet this man, covered with leprosy, like Peter, fell on his face before Jesus and called Him "Lord." He expressed faith in Christ's power to heal, yet submitted to Christ's will in the matter.
- C. Jesus did what other would not do - He touched the man, who became immediately clean. This is the grace of our exalted and humble Lord. This is the grace of Christ we are to show the lowly, the outcast. This is where we are to "fish" for people.

Isaiah 57:15 For thus says **the high and exalted One** Who lives forever, whose name is Holy, "**I dwell on a high and holy place, and also with the contrite and lowly of spirit** in order to revive the spirit of the lowly and to revive the heart of the contrite.

Psalms 138:6 For though the LORD is exalted, Yet He regards the lowly, But the haughty He knows from afar.

Romans 12:16 Be of the same mind toward one another; do not be haughty in mind, but **associate with the lowly**. Do not be wise in your own estimation.

VIII. 5:15,16 The power to fish comes from God.

Luke 5:15 But the news about Him was spreading even farther, and **large crowds were gathering to hear Him and to be healed** of their sicknesses.¹⁶ But **Jesus Himself would often slip away to the wilderness and pray**.

- A. If Christ Himself needed to pray to draw on God's strength and power for ministry, how much more do we.
- B. Evangelist Charles Finney, influential in the second phase of America's Second Great Awakening, unfortunately **taught that awakening was not a miraculous act of God, but a simple use of human choice**. He saw revivals very differently from Stoddard, Edwards, Whitefield, or Wesley, who understood that Christians could do nothing about periods of sin and backsliding until the Holy Spirit brought about renewal. **Finney put the initiative in the hands of Christians: if they did the right things, revival would come. There was nothing at all miraculous about the coming of revival**. Many said then—and have since—that Finney changed American religion from God-centered to man-centered. Contrary to Finney, God inspired the 80th psalmist to teach us to pray ...

Psalms 80:3 **O God, restore us** and cause Your face to shine *upon us*, **and we will be saved**.

Psalms 80:7 **O God of hosts, restore us** and cause Your face to shine *upon us*, **and we will be saved**.

Psalms 80:18 ... **Revive us, and we will call upon Your name**.¹⁹ **O LORD God of hosts, restore us**; Cause Your face to shine *upon us*, **and we will be saved**.

- C. Christ transforms sinners into servants who leave everything to follow Him and share in His work of fishing for people by casting the net of the gospel. Such transformation does not come from human wisdom, power, persuasion, but only by the power and persuasion of His Word and Spirit. So pray, pray that Christ would ever be transforming us into His image. Pray also that He would transform many with whom we share the good news that God made His Son Jesus, once crucified for our sins, now our risen, reigning, returning King of Kings and Lord of Lords.