

August 19, 2018

Sunday Morning Service

Series: Luke

Community Baptist Church

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To Ponder . . .

Questions to ponder as we prepare to hear from Luke 5:1-11.

1. Why were the crowds of people pressing around Jesus at the Sea of Galilee?
2. What is a disciple?
3. How do you feel when it seems like Scripture is asking you to do something you don't think is wise?
4. What do you think was the key that enabled Peter and the others to do what was contrary to common fishing knowledge?
5. What was Peter's worship and what motivated it?

### THEY LEFT ALL TO FOLLOW JESUS Luke 5:1-11

In light of the story Luke told in our text, I was thinking about some of the songs we Christians have sung over the years. In our hymn book are songs by which we publicly declare,

*All to Jesus I surrender, All to Him I freely give;  
I will ever love and trust Him,  
In His presence daily live. (Judson Van de Venter)*

Or,

*Jesus, I my cross have taken,  
All to leave and follow Thee;*

*Destitute, despised, forsaken,  
Thou, from hence, my all shall be.  
Perish ev'ry fond ambition,  
All I've sought or hoped or known;  
Yet how rich is my condition;  
God and heav'n are still my own! (Henry Lyte)*

Or,

*No man that seeketh after things of this life,  
Is a soldier who passes the test.  
Be faithful, be working, be running, be serving,  
Be searching His Word for His best. (Mac Lynch)*

You and I have sung these songs many times over the years of our pilgrimage. Do we mean what we declare? Do we seriously follow Christ or do we follow Him on Sunday or when it is convenient? Are we disciples of Jesus like Peter, James, and John were?

As we delve into this text, it is important for us to take a minute to consider what was involved when a man in the first century decided to become the disciple of a teacher. We might think that what Peter, James, and John did was an exclusively biblical thing or that only the twelve disciples ever did anything so radical. In reality, what they did was not all that radical. The idea had been around for centuries.

In the early 4<sup>th</sup> century B.C., Aristotle introduced the concept of the Peripatetic Teacher. The word *peripatetic* is a Greek word that means to walk around or to travel from place to place. Aristotle had to do that because he was not a citizen of Athens. Thereafter, many of his fellow philosopher/teachers did the same thing for other reasons. They collected around them various sizes of gatherings of students who desired to learn the particular teaching a philosopher espoused. Typically these were teachings about religion or philosophy. When a man (generally a young man) decided to become a follower, he forsook other pursuits of life and committed himself wholly to learning the wisdom of the teacher. His goal was to become like the teacher.

Though we use the word "disciple" to define anyone who follows a leader or teacher on virtually any level, in Peter's day a

disciple was fully committed. The songs I mentioned a moment ago are testimonies about our discipleship. Granted, we do not leave our places of employment, abandon our families, and forsake all preparation for the future in order to be Christ's disciples. However, in our hearts we need to be fully committed to Him. If we are fully committed in our hearts, that commitment is going to be obvious in our decisions and practices. That leads us to a very important question: "What habits of life can be used as evidence that you are a disciple of Christ?" Or as one popular question puts it: "If you were on trial for being a Christian, would there be enough evidence to convict you?"

### **Jesus Continued to Teach (vv.1-3).**

Jesus was either still in Capernaum or back in Capernaum teaching. And the people wanted to know what He had to say. Jesus was simply being busy fulfilling His purpose as He promised He would do. We ended our last study together hearing Jesus say, "*I must preach the good news of the kingdom of God to the other towns as well; for I was sent for this purpose*" (Luke 4:43).

Early on He established that He was on earth to tell the Good News. You will remember that in the synagogue at Nazareth Jesus applied Isaiah's promise to Himself. "*The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor*" (Luke 4:18-19). That is why He told the people in Capernaum who begged Him to stay that He needed to fulfill the Father's purpose for sending Him – to preach the good news of the kingdom.

In response to Jesus's teaching, the people desired to hear the word of God. Luke wrote, *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 (v.1)*. This was an atypical sight on the shore of Lake Gennesaret which was also known as the Sea of Galilee, Lake Tiberias, or in the Old Testament the Sea of Chinnereth. The typical scene would be what we read in verse two, where the shore was lined

with fishermen cleaning up after a night of fishing, repairing their nets and preparing for the next night of fishing.

Instead, we read that early in the morning a crowd was pressing in on Jesus. Early on in Jesus's ministry, this was a common sight. He did not teach like the official teachers of Israel who quoted each other and simply repeated and explained manmade laws for the most part. Jesus was teaching something new, something radical. He was teaching truth that came directly from God the Father in heaven. He was teaching what the Old Testament, the Law of Moses really meant, stripped of all the fleshly human ideas that had been attached to it over the intervening 1,200 years. And Jesus taught with absolute authority.

According to the four Gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke, John), the people longed to hear this new teaching – at least for awhile. They were attracted to Jesus's authoritative teaching of truth. They also were no doubt attracted to Jesus's authoritative works like commanding demons to come out of their victims and commanding sickness to depart.

There is something about truth (*the Word of God*) that is very appealing – until we reject it. The ministry of Jesus will reveal how masses of people descended on Jesus to hear Him teach the pure, unadulterated truth. That is until Jesus began to define requirements for His followers such as, And he said to all, "*If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me*" (Luke 9:23). "*Whoever loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me, and whoever loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me*" (Matthew 10:37). "*Follow me, and leave the dead to bury their own dead*" (Matthew 8:22). When the masses rejected Jesus's teaching because they deemed it too demanding, they were no longer impressed with its authority.

Jesus was teaching that morning and used whatever was available to facilitate the situation. It was an odd looking situation because the crowd was pressing in on Jesus and yet, also in the setting, was the common matter of fishermen cleaning their equipment. Here was a crowd of listeners and fishermen busy at their business. In that setting, Jesus *saw two boats by the lake, but the fishermen had gone out of them and were washing their nets (v.2)*.

The norm was for the fishermen to fish through the night and then repair and prepare their nets for the next night. They would have been doing what Paul said the pastor/teacher does for the saints. Matthew pointed out that Peter, James, and John were *mending their nets* (Matthew 4:21). Paul pointed out that the work of the pastor teacher is *to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ* (Ephesians 4:12). The same idea is found in both vocations. The nets were the most essential part of their work. They would need to be repaired after a night of fishing. The men would wash the nets, lay them out to dry, and then fold them up and put them in the boat.

Well things were about to get interrupted because Jesus needed to use one of the boats. He asked a guy named Simon for help. *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* (v.3). See how God the Son employed the very mundane and practical things like a boat. He could have simply walked out on the water and accomplished the same task with such fanfare that everyone would have become His followers! That is how humans think. Jesus maintained His human-ness in most ways while He preached and worked with divine authority.

Jesus getting into a boat was a practical response to a particular need. The people were crowding around Jesus and likely forcing Him to stand on the edge of the shore if not in the water. He needed to move away from the people, and the boat was the most logical solution. Also there is the law of physics that would make Jesus's voice carry over the water to the land almost like a P.A. system.

God still does His amazing work of regenerating sinners and making us like Himself through very practical means. That is the ministry of the church. We use buildings, chairs, rooms, electronics, to convey the good news of salvation. We use people meeting with people to help each other become more like Christ. We have a huge array of practical, mundane items, circumstances, and people that we ought to put to work for the Good News.

It is good for Christ's disciples to stop and take an inventory in order to assess what we can use to convey the truth of God. Can you use your voice? Can you use your house? Can you use your car? Can

you use your computer? Are you using these things to share the Good News about the Savior or to help others become more like Christ?

### **Jesus Recruited Disciples Who Would Learn to Teach (vv.4-11).**

Jesus put on an amazing display for recruitment (vv.4-7). Nevertheless, this miracle required trust on Peter's part before Jesus would do it. The "Teacher" made a recommendation to Peter that was not sensible at all. *And when he had finished speaking, he said to Simon, "Put out into the deep and let down your nets for a catch"* (v.4).

Try to empathize with Peter. He had probably been in the fishing business since he was a child. He knew how and when to fish. Furthermore, it seems plain that this was not Peter's first meeting with Jesus. Shortly after Jesus's baptism, Peter, Andrew, Nathaniel, and Philip were near Bethany where John was baptizing and they met Jesus for the first time (John 1:40-47). Most obviously, Jesus had recently healed Peter's mother-in-law.

We can speculate about what Peter knew about Jesus. He knew that Jesus was from Nazareth. He knew based on what John had said that Jesus was the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world (John 1:36) – whatever that meant. Peter knew that Jesus was a carpenter. He knew that Jesus was a teacher who taught with amazing authority. He knew that He did miraculous things like healing sick people and casting out demons. And at this point Peter knew that Jesus was NOT a fisherman!

So what did Peter think when Jesus told him to go out at mid-morning and try casting the net again? Peter could have offered any numbers of reasons why it was not sensible to try again in broad daylight. By all human wisdom and experience, this was truly a dumb idea. It did not fit the parameters of principles of effective fishing that had been developed over hundreds of years.

Jesus the carpenter/teacher made the recommendation and the fisherman had to swallow his pride in order to obey. *And Simon answered, "Master, we toiled all night and took nothing! But at your word I will let down the nets"* (v.5). Peter kindly explained the normal procedure. The fishermen used large nets that they would lay out in a semi-circle about 100 feet across. Then they would pull in the

sides of the net hand over hand, hopefully encircling fish which they would put in the boat. Then throw out the net and try again. Over and over the process went. When morning came, the fishermen would take their catch to the shore.

Peter also kindly explained the futility of the previous night's work. This time there was nothing to bring to shore. In spite of their exhausting work, they had nothing to show for it. He explained that they had done everything by the book and failed. Fishermen have nights like that. Commonsense dictated that by now, because the sun was warming the lake, the fish were settling down near the bottom where it would be cool and where the nets would not reach.

But look at Peter's response. Nevertheless *at your word I will let down the nets*. This decision cut across the grain of everything Peter knew and felt. This decision also meant that Peter would need to convince at least one other guy to get the net back out and participate with this hair-brained venture. Why did Peter do it? Consider what Peter's decision revealed. It certainly revealed that he had great respect for Jesus. It probably also revealed that Peter had a certain amount of faith that Jesus was going to do something.

Jesus did something. It was miracle. The miracle was physical in nature. *And when they had done this, they enclosed a large number of fish, and their nets were breaking. 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* (vv.6-7). Contrary to laws of nature and all experience, the nets were suddenly so full of fish that the boats began to sink.

Why did Jesus do this particular miracle? We humans tend to respond well to unexpected, unexplainable events in the real world. Jesus healed people, raised the dead, walked on water, cast out demons, controlled the weather, and multiplied loaves and fish because events like that are obvious and arrest our attention. The disruption of predictable nature, predictable life demands that we respond.

But miracles in the spiritual realm are no less spectacular, but humans seldom respond to such works of God. What is more miraculous than God the Holy Spirit changing a person who is born in sin into a child of God? What is more miraculous than God opening the spiritual understanding of a person who is spiritually

blind so that he or she is able to comprehend spiritual truth? What is more miraculous than God the Spirit growing and maturing a person so that he or she is becoming more and more like Christ?

We who have experienced the new birth and are experiencing spiritual maturity should never cease to be amazed at God's miracle within us. If you have every shared the good news of salvation with a person who is devoid of God's miracle in the spiritual realm, you can understand how remarkable His work is. Tell a sinner who is dead in sins that God has provided the payment for their sins through Jesus Christ's blood and just watch their incredulous reaction. People respond like you must be from another world or that you are as ignorant as a Neanderthal. Praise God if you are able to experience the wonder of His works in the spiritual world.

The only fitting response for Peter and his friends was worship (vv.8-11). Worship requires honest self-assessment. *But when Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord"* (v.8). Peter's response to Jesus's "sign" of power and authority, was to fall at Jesus's knees. This is the perfect picture of worship. Worship is the subordinate falling before the Superior as a demonstration of heart-felt humility. Worship of a human king or potentate might be tantamount to groveling if you fear for your life or well being at the king's hand.

But worship of Jesus is never groveling. It is the expression of full confidence that Jesus is God our Creator and Savior. He deserves the greatest respect we can possibly show. This problem of sports heroes and other man-made gods and icons not showing respect for symbols of our great nation just will not go away. I am always a bit agitated when people who have been made heroes, idols, and multi-millionaires because of the freedoms and opportunities this great nation affords them, in turn reject and mock the very venue which has made them great. Those people are either very arrogant and ungrateful or they are just plain stupid. The whole thing is probably just a symptom of a proud and arrogant culture that believes that life is about the individual.

Sadly, this same attitude has filtered into the church, where worship is not about regenerated saints bowing their hearts before their mighty Creator and Savior. Rather worship, in modern church-

goers' opinions is all about how they feel. Peter never would have fallen down before Jesus if he had that attitude.

Why did Peter show such humble contrition? Peter recognized his deep sinful nature when he was exposed to Christ's perfect righteousness. People who are ignorant of the depths of their rebellion toward their Creator don't know how to worship their Creator. If I don't really know who and what Christ is, I don't bow my heart before Him. If I don't really know who and what I am, I don't bow my heart before Christ.

Worship is also the result of astonishment. *For he and all who were with him were astonished at the catch of fish that they had taken, and so also were James and John, sons of Zebedee, who were partners with Simon.* (vv.9-10a). Everyone was dumbfounded by Jesus's display of authority. This is the first step in coming to Christ for salvation. This is the necessary step in order to follow Christ and serve Him. This is the attitude of the sinner who finally gets a vision of Almighty God, his Creator, holding the sinner between His divine finger and thumb over the eternal lake of fire and wondering why God has not let him fall because of His ceaseless rebellion and breaking of God's law. This is "Amazing grace how sweet the sound that saved a wretch like me."

Worship of Jesus led to following Jesus. Notice how the story illustrates that the Lord determines our purpose. *And Jesus said to Simon, "Do not be afraid; from now on you will be catching men"* (v.10b). Apparently the response of "**astonished**" doesn't describe the person as happily amused. To be astonished is to be scared out of your wits at the power and authority of Christ. Religious people who are happily amused at Jesus don't make very faithful, consistent followers.

Jesus revealed the Divine Plan for those astonished, frightened fishermen when He said, *"From now on you will be catching men"* (v.10b). Notice that Jesus didn't open the conversation for negotiations. He didn't ask Peter, James, and John where they saw themselves a couple years from now. If I could see where I will be and what I will be doing two years from now, that would be 2020 vision! Jesus didn't ask the fishermen if they ever thought about following Him and learning to be like Him. The Lord simply explained His will. That is the same invitation Jesus gives to all of us

who follow Him. If we are disciples, we expect the Teacher to show us His will, His plan for our lives.

If we are determined to follow Jesus, we are also determined to obey. *And when they had brought their boats to land, they left everything and followed him* (v.11). When the Teacher makes His will plain, we obey. Obedience to His will is the only real way to show that we trust Him. At another time Jesus will invite would-be disciples to follow Him, but they respond with excuses like "I need to check out some oxen I bought" or "I need to go home and wait for dear, old dad to die."

We often appeal to Abraham as the example of faith because "*He believed God and it was counted to Him as righteousness*" (*Romans 4:3, Galatians 3:6*). But how do we know that Abraham believed God? In response to Abraham following God obediently to the point of sacrificing Isaac, the Lord said, "*And in your offspring shall all the nations of the earth be blessed, because you have obeyed my voice*" (*Genesis 22:18*). Obedience to God is the only way to show faith in God.

Do you really trust Jesus Christ? Your obedient worship of Him is the greatest proof. It seems that many people who claim to love and trust Jesus actually love and trust themselves and simply like how Jesus makes them feel. Today it is good for us to honestly, fairly assess who we think Jesus is, what we think He is, and how we have responded to that conclusion.