

“A Fish Story”
Luke 5:1-11
February 10, 2019
Holiday Island Presbyterian Church

Luke 5:1-11

5:1 Once while Jesus was standing beside the lake of Gennesaret, and the crowd was pressing in on him to hear the word of God,

5:2 he saw two boats there at the shore of the lake; the fishermen had gone out of them and were washing their nets.

5:3 He got into one of the boats, the one belonging to Simon, and asked him to put out a little way from the shore. Then he sat down and taught the crowds from the boat.

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."

5:5 Simon answered, "Master, we have worked all night long but have caught nothing. Yet if you say so, I will let down the nets."

5:6 When they had done this, they caught so many fish that their nets were beginning to break. **5:7** So they signaled their partners in the other boat to come and help them. And they came and filled both boats, so that they began to sink.

5:8 But when Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, "Go away from me, Lord, for I am a sinful man!" **5:9** For he and all who were with him were amazed at the catch of fish that they had taken; **5:10** and so also were James and John, sons of Zebedee, who are partners with Simon. Then Jesus said to Simon, "Do not be afraid; from now on you will be catching people."

5:11 When they had brought their boats to shore, they left everything and followed him.

INTRODUCTION:

**Luke has recorded this event as happening
along the shore of the lake of Gennesaret.**

That is another name for Sea of Galilee.

Which is more like a big lake than a sea.

**Acoustically, it is aa great place to preach;
much like an amphitheater.**

Sound carries over water extremely well.

**At my father's lake house,
I would often be fishing off our pier
when a boat would wander by
and I could clearly hear what the folks were saying.**

**So, it was no accident that Jesus chose
to preach/teach from the boat.**

This is where it gets interesting.

**Notice it is after Jesus has finished teaching
that he turns to help Simon Peter.**

FISHING:

**Somehow Jesus knew
that Peter had not had a successful day at fishing.**

**Maybe Jesus had overheard Simon Peter and his crew
complaining about a day of lost wages and profit.**

**Maybe Jesus saw empty nets in the boat
when He climbed aboard to preach.**

**Whatever the reason,
Jesus seized an opportunity to do some personal instruction.**

**Jesus asked the professional fishermen to try one more time.
Having tried all night without success,
it must have been hard to agree.**

Surely Simon Peter must have asked himself:

“What does a carpenter know about fishing?”

Maybe he was thinking:

**“You may be a great preacher,
but I doubt you have ever fished for a living.**

**“Besides, I live here; you don’t.
I know these waters and the habits of the fish.”**

So, Simon Peter balks:

**"Master, we have worked all night long
but have caught nothing. Yet if you say so, I will let down the
nets."**

I don’t think there was an ounce of faith in Simon Peter’s action.

On the contrary, I think Simon Peter was just being kind.

Let this preacher have his way.

Let him find out about fishing the hard way.

**Simon Peter lets down the nets
and three things happen.**

GATHERING OF THE FISH

**First, there are more fish in those nets
than Simon can imagine!**

Enough that their nets couldn’t hold them!

The nets were at the breaking point.

**Not only were they blessed with a catch of fish;
they were blessed beyond what they could have expected.**

**Enough to fill both boats with fish
to the point the boats began to sink.**

**Sometimes when God calls,
it is for no other reason than to richly reward us.
If we say “No,” look at what we might miss.**

Let me pause here and apply this to our lives.

**How many times in our lives
have we been called by God to do something
and we balked?
We doubted?**

There have been too many times in my own life.

**Oh, I always had good reasons.
I wasn't qualified, I thought.
It cost too much.
I was too tired.
I put myself first.
On and on.**

**The question that sometimes haunts me: “What did I miss?”
I got a phone call one day
from a man who wanted to know if I would bury his wife.
He was from a town 98 miles away.**

**She had passed away and her funeral service was to be in his town
but he was looking for someone to do the internment service.
Apparently the pastor who did the funeral
was unwilling to drive down to do the internment.**

He wanted to do it on Saturday.

**My first reaction was to beg off –
- find some righteous excuse to not do the service.**

**I said I would do it
and we planned to meet at the cemetery on Saturday.**

It was summer; it was Oklahoma, and boy! It was hot!

**Shortly after the service,
I headed for my truck and was just about to shed my coat
when I noticed the husband just standing –
- deep in thought about something.**

So, I kept my coat on out of respect and got into my truck.

**The man approached my truck and asked:
“Does it matter *where* you are when you want to repent?”
I told him you can repent anytime, anywhere.**

**He asked if we could kneel at the graveside and ask forgiveness.
That, we did.
It was very moving and meaningful for both of us.**

**He began attending our Church –
- driving 98 miles each way every Sunday.
I offered to help him find a church close to home.**

**Then one day his son –
- a really big guy, a tattooed biker kind of a guy –
- asked to see me after church.**

The son wanted to become a Christian and be baptized.

**Do you see what I would have missed?
Do you see what the husband might have missed?
Do you see what the son might have missed?**

Do you see what Simon Peter and his crew

would have missed by not answering the call?

GATHERING OF THE FISHERMEN:

Second, Simon Peter realizes he is in the presence of the Lord.
That leads him to realize his sinfulness.

None of us can stand before the Lord as sinless people.
But by the grace and love of God
and the sacrificial death of Jesus,
we can be cleansed of our sin.

This is another great example for us all.
When we are in the presence of Jesus,
we must take that opportunity to repent
and ask forgiveness.

GATHERING OF HUMANITY:

The blessings don't end there, either.

The third point is that once Jesus has been recognized,
He asks the fishermen to leave their chosen professions
and devote their efforts to gathering the lost.

It is the love of God – the grace of God –
that is to be shared with all humanity.

The miracle is not so much the amount of fish they caught;
nor is it that Simon Peter and his men recognized Jesus.

The miracle is they left everything and followed Jesus.

LEAVING EVERYTHING:

What does it mean to leave *everything* to follow Jesus?

Well, for the fishermen,

it pretty much meant leaving their profession,
their nets and their boats and their gear behind.

But, because God called us to be good stewards of all we have,
I don't think it means *abandoning* everything.
That would be foolish and unwise.

I'm sure there were people who depended on Simon Peter
and his fishing business
for their livelihood.
Perhaps there were family members, too.

I think that leaving *everything* to follow Jesus
means so much more.

When I left the business world
in order to enter ministry
I couldn't stop providing for my family.

It's true we had to sell our house and move into a tiny apartment,
but we had some of our furniture,
we had a small amount of savings,
we had transportation.

Most of all,
we had the promise that God would provide.

What we all are called to leave behind
when we are called to follow Jesus
- and perhaps the *hardest* thing to leave behind -
is a worldly attitude.

When we leave *everything* to follow Jesus
means we leave behind our old life
and embark on a new life.

**That means leaving behind a secular approach to things,
that means to rely more upon God than experience,
that means taking steps in faith that can be daunting.**

**That means turning loose of old grudges
to make room for new love.**

**That means turning away from attitudes of entitlement
and adopting attitudes of sacrificial giving;
giving time, talent and treasure for Godly reasons.**

**Not all of that happens right away;
just like the old saying:
“A journey of a thousand miles begins with one step.”**

**Jesus can't take that first step for us –
- we must decide to follow Him and take that first step.**

**Then we begin following Jesus,
trusting that He will not throw us into the deep end of the pool.**

This is a good place to end this sermon.

**Let me leave you with a question:
Have you taken that first step to follow Jesus?**

If not, let's make plans for that to happen for you.

**If you have,
what are you willing to leave behind?**