

(Luke 5:1~11)

It was always the manner of Jesus that when he spoke to someone, he'd come down on their level, and communicate the message of His kingdom in terms they could easily understand. If he were talking to a farmer, He'd speak in agricultural terms, if He was speaking to a carpenter, He'd speak in carpenter's terms, and so on. This is something that Paul was keen to, and used it very effectively in his ministry. Paul would speak in terms of a soldier, an athlete, farming, and on and on to get his point across.

Here Jesus uses the *metaphor of fishing* in sharing the gospel of His kingdom...something we all can relate to, especially these men in this passage. Here in this passage He metaphorically speaks in terms of fishing, in attempts to "*catch*" these men with His message of the kingdom. I think it's important to remind us, that the real story here is not that of the miraculous catch of fish they caught in their net. Many times if we are not careful, we miss the whole point of a passage, by focusing on the miracle that he performed. The real story is not that they caught so many fish that the nets couldn't hold them, the real story is not that there were so many fish that both boats nearly sank under the weight of the fish, but the real story here is the 3~4 big fish that Jesus landed in his net! Speaking of Simon, James and John... (Very likely Andrew, Simon's brother)

Here we have the account of the calling of 3~4 of Jesus' earliest disciples... Passages like these fascinate me, and greatly encourage me. For once again, we are reminded of the power of the gospel to change lives! Passages like this one remind me of the "*hope*" of the gospel, in that no one is beyond hope, anyone at any given time can be radically changed by this message! These men in this story were not SAINT'S... by no stretch of the imagination. Simon gives us a little hint at the kind of life he was living when he tells Jesus, "*If you knew what kind of man I was, you wouldn't be here...*" But Jesus knew what kind of man he was, as a matter of fact, that's what drew him to Simon. Jesus came to Simon as he does to any sinner, to rescue them from that lifestyle!

I think about the fact that when these old boys pulled into the dock that morning, after a long night of fishing, cleaning up everything, getting ready to head home to get some sleep, they had no idea how much their life was about to change. Chances are, they had probably resolved in their minds that they would stay in the fishing industry until they retired. They were likely paying off their mortgage, putting a little back in a 401K, trying to get things in order so that they'd be alright when it came time to retire. There's no way they could have possibly conceived in their minds, how their encounter with this man walking up the shore towards them, would turn their world upside down and inside out.

Here we find Simon, with his fishing partners, cleaning up after a long night of work, getting ready to go home. By "*washing their nets,*" meant they were cleaning them, removing all foreign debris, sticks, trash, etc that had gotten tangled in the net, and then would fold them up in preparation for the next trip. While they were doing this, Jesus came up to Simon, and asked him if he could use his boat as a platform to preach from. Which Simon obliged.

"Every pulpit is a fishing boat, a place to cast out the Word of God in attempts to catch men."

After he was finished teaching the people, he asked Simon to pull up anchor and head out to the deep, and to cast his nets for a catch. Somewhat reluctantly Simon agreed. Given what Simone said, it's obvious that Simon thought it was pointless. but, to honor his request, he agrees.

(Vs 5~7) Luke records...⁵And Simon answering said unto him, Master, we have toiled all the night, and have taken nothing: nevertheless at thy word I will let down the net. ⁶And when they had this done, they enclosed a great multitude of fishes: and their net brake. ⁷And they beckoned unto their partners, which were in the other ship, that they should come and help them. And they came, and filled both the ships, so that they began to sink.

Luke declares that when they let down their net, they caught so many fish, that the nets could not hold them all. *“The net began to break”* is the better way to translate it, for the net did not *“break”* in the sense of breaking into, for if it had, they would have lost the fish. The point is, there were so many fish, the net couldn't hold them all, if they didn't act quickly, they would lose all the fish. Simon quickly beckoned for his partners James and John to come and help them.

It's obvious by what Luke states in verse 9, they had never in all their years of fishing, seen such a catch. Think about it, *they literally couldn't hold anymore!* Any more fish and they would have sunk! There's a good truth we see here in this picture...*that being the blessing of obedience...* It is the *“blessings of God”* on Simon, for his obedience to the Lord's command.

Reminds me of Malachi 3...¹⁰*Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the LORD of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, **that there shall not be room enough to receive it.***

The Lord says, *“If you'll simply DO what I ask you to do, I will bless you beyond your wildest imagination.”* Listen, that's not a teaching, give God 10% and He'll give you a 100% return on your investment. To look at it like that prohibits the blessing, because it's done out of greed! The point there is, faithfulness, obedience to the Lord's commands opens the way for God's blessing to flow in your life! That promise in Malachi was given to Israel, declaring that if they would do what the Lord asked them to, by bringing the grain and stuff to the Temple storehouse, to minister to the needs of the poor, the widows, the orphans, the priest, etc... If they would do this *“little”* thing, God would greatly bless them.

Listen to what he adds to that promise...¹¹*And I will rebuke the devourer for your sakes, and he shall not destroy the fruits of your ground; neither shall your vine cast her fruit before the time in the field, saith the LORD of hosts.* ¹²*And all nations shall call you blessed: **for ye shall be a delightsome land,** saith the LORD of hosts.*

“If you would just do what I ask you to do...I will bless you so much, that everyone around you would be envious of you!”

But we all know the story, as a result of covetousness, as a result of their love for money, greed, they did not give to God what He asked them to give. And as a result, they forfeited the *“abundant blessings”* of God on their land.

(Luke 5) ⁴*Launch out into the deep, and let down your nets for a draught.* ⁵*And Simon answering said unto him, Master, we have toiled all the night, and have taken nothing: **nevertheless at thy word I will let down the net.*** ⁶*And when they had this done, they enclosed a great multitude of fishes: and their net brake.* ⁷*And they beckoned unto their partners, which were in the other ship, that they should come and help them. And they came, and filled both the ships, so that they began to sink.*

Simon's simple act of faith, by his obedience to the Lord's command...it opened the way for blessings...

(Vs 8) Simon's response...⁸*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 was astonished, and all that were with him, at the draught of the fishes, which they had taken:*

Upon seeing the number of fish, Simon fell at Jesus' knees and stated that Jesus ought to leave. The reason he gives, is that he himself is a sinful man. Now I don't know about you, but when I first read that, it struck me as odd. Rather than being amazed and bewildered at what just happened, by the miracle that had obviously taken place...*Simon becomes convicted of his sin,* and humbly falls to his knees before Christ, *and confesses his sinfulness.* At first, I found it very odd, given that Jesus mentioned nothing about

God, he never confronted Simon with something he was guilty of, he just told him to let down the nets, and that was it. When Simon saw the enormous amount of fish, he simply falls to his knees and confesses his sinfulness to Christ.

What do you think brought this on?

Listen, the answer is quiet simple... **He knew he was *in the presence of God*...**

Listen, he was a seasoned fisherman; he knew this was not “*luck*.” No doubt Simon had had some pretty good days before, catching a lot of fish. But this was different; he knew that what he had just witnessed was from the hand of God. Looking at all the fish, looking at how the boats were nearly sinking from the weight, then glancing up at Jesus... he knew that this was no ordinary man, but knew that he was standing in the presence of God. Finding himself standing in the presence of God, he was *humbled by his sin*.

(Is. 6) We see a similar event in the life of Isaiah...finding himself standing in the presence of God, Isaiah said... Then said I, Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts.

Isaiah’s sinfulness was magnified in the light of God’s glory... In the same way, when Simon realizes he is standing in the presence of god, his sins were magnified, so much so that he falls to his knees and declares his unworthiness of being in the presence of someone of the like’s of Jesus.

⁸*When Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus’ knees, saying, Depart from me; for I am a sinful man, O Lord. **Depart from me***—is an expression of Peter’s humility, and of his consciousness of his unworthiness. “**Depart from me**” was simply a response from being convinced that Jesus was a messenger from God—a high and holy being; and he felt that HE was unworthy to be in his presence. We are “**not**” worthy to be with him, we are “**not**” worthy to be reckoned among his friends, we are “**not**” worthy to dwell in heaven with him; but he came to seek the lost and to save the impure. He graciously condescends to dwell with those who are humble and contrite, those conscious they’re not worthy of his presence.

Seeing Simon trembling before him in reverential fear... Jesus comforts Simon, *Fear not; from henceforth thou shalt catch men*. Don’t be afraid Simon, I mean you no harm, I come to you in peace... Simon, you need to understand something, “**the thing**” that you see that separates us, “**the thing**” that you feel prohibits you and I from having a relationship... Simon, “**the SIN**” that you makes you feel so utterly unworthy of me... is what attracted me to you. Simon, you don’t have to tell me who you are, or what kind of man you are, I knew all about you before I got in your boat.

Simon, *you think* that you’re way to sinful for God, you can’t imagine a Holy God wanting anything to do with you. But Simon, I want you to know, that that is what attracted me to you! Far from being disgusted with you, far from being angry with you, I want you to know, I love you, and I’ve come to invite you to come and walk with me.

Listen, we need to understand that Simon’s sense of *unworthiness* of God, is the very thing that made him “*worthy*.” It was Peter’s *sinfulness* that attracted God, not his “*righteousness*.” Listen to me, it is that “*frame of mind*,” it is those kinds of people that Jesus seeks to be his disciples!

Here we find Christ choosing three of the twelve that would make up the inner circle, and when you consider who he chose, it boggles the mind, or at least it does to me. For certain, four of the disciples were fisherman. (It’s thought to be more like 6~7) One was a tax collector, also called a Publican (Matthew). We’re not sure of the others prior occupation, but one thing we do know, is that none of them were men

of notoriety. But the point is, they were common folk, nobodies, men with seemingly no real religious leadership experience or qualifications.

Natural thinking suggest, he'd go to Jerusalem and seek out those with a lot of religious experience, the theologians and scholars, there were thousands that Jesus could have picked from that were much more qualified but he didn't. But rather, he chooses simple, common folks, like these three fishermen.

Jesus offered Simeon and the other men, the "*opportunity of a lifetime...*" To *come work* for him... *Fear not; from henceforth thou shalt catch men.* In Mark's account, Jesus said he'd make them, "*fishers of men.*" There's no way they could have fully understood all the implications of his statement, what all that entailed. But even so, they took him up on it... I'm convinced the great multitude of fish they had caught was representative of the countless number of men he would use them to reach for the kingdom of God.

¹¹*And when they had brought their ships to land, they forsook all, and followed him.*

They "*left everything,*" and set out to follow him... They just didn't leave their boats, *they left their lives!* They left the ship, the nets, the crew, their only source of income...everything "*their life*" consisted of up to that day, they walked away from it... No longer would they cast their nets on the lake of Gennesaret to catch fish...but now they'd cast the gospel net out into the "*Sea of Sinners,*" in hopes of *catching men!*

Fishing is one of the best ways to illustrate Jesus' purpose and mission in this world... According to Galatians 1, Christ came to deliver us from this present evil world...

(Ga. 1) ⁴*Who gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father:*

Metaphorically speaking, during his time on this earth, Jesus delivered men from this world by casting out the gospel net...into the "*Sea of Sin,*" catching sinners... And all those caught by Christ, are transformed by Christ and have become fishers of men. Though there are some, not everyone is called to leave their jobs and homes to serve Christ, but all are called to serve. Think about it this way, where you work or go to school, is the lake, and it's full of fish. And it's vital that we do our best to catch them, because all that remain in the "*Sea of Sin*" will perish!