

## FBC Service Sunday April 14, 2024, Luke 5:1-11, John 21:1-14

In our text this morning we have the disciples doing what comes so natural to them – fishing. And as they're making that journey back to the shore with empty nets. What can be more discouraging to any fisherman than to arrive back home with empty nets.

For most fisherman that's usually the first thing they hear when they come back, "Did you catch anything?" And they had to report with glum faces, the answer that no fisherman likes to give. "Nope, didn't catch a thing." And I love the humour that we get in these Scriptures.

Some have thought the two fishing accounts were the same story, but they are clearly different.

In the Gospel of Luke, the first miraculous catch of fish takes place early in the ministry of Jesus and results in Peter as well as James and John, the sons of Zebedee, joining Jesus disciples.

The second miraculous catch of fish is also called the "miraculous catch of 153 fish," and seems to recall the first catch. **This takes place after the Resurrection of Jesus.**

We'll spend time this morning in Luke 5.

The account from Luke was evidently the Lord's second call to these disciples. Jesus had previously called the four fishermen (**Andrew, Peter, James and John**) to follow Him, and they had travelled with Him in Capernaum and Galilee, but then they had returned to their fishing business.

The time had now come for them for a deeper level of commitment and involvement.

*"One day as Jesus was preaching on the shore of the Sea of Galilee, great crowds pressed in on him to listen to the word of God. He noticed two empty boats at the water's edge, for the fishermen had left them and were washing their nets. Stepping into one of the boats, Jesus asked Simon, its owner, to push it out into the water. So he sat in the boat and taught the crowds from there. **Mark 1:21-39***

The preaching and teaching of Jesus has already attracted great crowds of people, and on this particular day the crowd had become so large that they were pressing Him against the shoreline. So Jesus decides to address them from a boat and use the shoreline as a natural amphitheater.

He got into one of the boats and asked the owner to go out in the water a bit so that the people could see and hear him. After He finishes teaching the crowd, He issues instructions to put out the fishing nets for a catch of fish.

*"When he had finished speaking, he said to Simon, "go out where it's deeper, and let down your nets to catch some fish."*

Simon had been washing and mending his nets, while keeping one ear listening to what Jesus was teaching. After all, he had other responsibilities and duties to perform.

He had to fish to make a living for his family. Jesus' call for Simon to launch out into deeper water is a resemblance of what He wants to do in Simon's life.

## **Jesus is going to take Simon Peter, to a deeper, more personal, commitment to Himself.**

When we hear God's call to launch out to a deeper commitment, we're tempted to compromise our obedience in several ways.

**We're tempted to be guided by our friends instead of what God says.** Undoubtedly the advice of his friends, the other veteran fishermen who overheard what Jesus said, would be, **“Peter, are you crazy, don't do it.**

You have your nets all cleaned and stored. If you go back out you'll have to do it all over again - **for nothing.**” Don't waste your time! Go home and rest up!

If you listen to some of your friends they would say, **“Sure, be involved with your local church if you want to, but don't get too caught up?** We're tempted to be guided by our experiences instead of what God says.

**The Lord asks Peter to do something contrary to his own expertise in fishing.** According to everything that Peter knows about fishing, and remember he is a professional fisherman, he can't see anyway at all that what Jesus asks is going to work.

The best fishing on the Sea of Galilee was at night close to shore, and the worst time was in the morning with the glistening rays of the sun on the water.

This is one of those moments that would have been priceless. To see the reaction on the disciples faces as they do cast that net over and they can't even haul it in there's so many fish. **All night long, nothing, and then Jesus says, “Over here.”**

Up until Jesus arrived, this was a fishing expedition no one wanted to remember, but once Jesus arrived, it was a fishing expedition no one would ever forget. And it's that reminder when Jesus arrives on the scene it changes everything.

**Here Jesus asks Peter to launch out into the deep in the middle of the day.** This was asking a great deal of Peter. He was asking him to trust His Word. He was in effect asking Simon to try again, even though his last attempt was an abject failure.

This of course would be an important lesson for Peter in the future, **not to allow past failures to keep him from serving the Lord.**

**God may ask us to try again even if we've failed in the past.** Will we allow past failures to keep us from following the Lord? **Will past mistakes have forged shackles on us so heavy that they have weakened us spiritually?**

Do we hear the enemy's voice always whispering in our ears, “You're a failure? God will never use you because of your sin.

Let me tell you this morning folks, one of the greatest truths in all of Scripture, **is that our God is a God of the second chance.**

**What power He has to forgive!** The most crimson sins are removed by the crimson of His blood.

Whatever your sinfulness, Christ has power to pardon; all the atoning work is done.

He can re-make a broken and scarred life that may have been lost in the far country like the Prodigal son. And He can make it far better than it was before. **Jeremiah 18:1-6. Potter EG.**

**The enemy triumphs when we're rendered helpless by memories of past mistakes** and cannot forgive ourselves even when God has forgiven.

When we hear God's call to launch out to a deeper commitment, we're tempted **to be guided by our circumstances** instead of what God says. Verse five reveals Simon's answer "**we worked hard all last night and didn't catch a thing. But if you say so, I'll let the nets down again.**"

By his reply he communicates that he and his partners are dog tired. They had not slept all night and they had worked hard all night. The circumstances of the past evening have indicated that further fishing will be fruitless.

But here Jesus was asking them to take their freshly cleaned nets and row out to the deep water and go through the strenuous process of letting out and taking in their nets all over again.

**But they needed to learn that obedience to Jesus should not hinge upon favourable circumstances. What a truth this is!** Will we allow circumstances to dictate our obedience?

When we hear God's call to launch out to a deeper commitment, we're tempted **to be guided by our fears** instead of what God says.

One of the greatest obstacles that we face in life is our own fear. **The fear of being inadequate, the fear of failure, the fear of what people will think about us, the fear of what people will say about us.**

It's a tremendous loss, if you don't overcome the fear of following Christ.

In Peter's reply he reveals his respect when he calls Jesus, "**Master.**"

How does Jesus take us from where we are, to where He wants us to be? **By pushing us, by stretching us, that's how.**

**Perhaps doing things our own way has left us empty, and it's time to give God's way a try.** Maybe our own knowledge and skills have failed us and we need God's power, God's knowledge and God's skill.

**We need to do things God's way.**

Maybe its time for us today to obey God and try things His way, even it we don't understand **where, why, or how** it's all going to work out.

I realize that launching out into the deeper water is scary and it's less familiar, **but it's where God's blessings are to be found.**

The results of obedience are recorded in verses six and seven, **“And this time their nets were so full of fish they began to tear!**

A shout for help brought their partners in the other boat, and soon both boats were filled with fish and on the verge of sinking.

As they harvested their catch, the two boats, each seven and a half feet wide and over twenty-seven feet long, were filled to overflowing and began sinking. Several tons of fish were hauled ashore that day in the midst of the roar of a delighted crowd.

The New Call to the disciples not only demanded a greater commitment but also,

### **The New Call Was an Invitation to Greater Intimacy**

We see the effect on Peter in verse eight, **“When Simon Peter realized what had happened, he fell to his knees before Jesus and said, “Oh, Lord, please leave me - I'm such a sinful man!”** At first his request seems strange, if we take it at face value, that he would ask Jesus to leave.

**But we have to understand the scene in the light of what has happened.** This new revelation of the power and glory of Jesus has given Peter an acute sense of his own sinfulness. Peter was not really trying to get rid of Jesus; **he was simply overcome with a sense of his own unworthiness.**

Peter's reaction is what we often see in the Bible as man's reaction to a face-to-face confrontation with God. When the prophet Isaiah “... saw the Lord sitting on a throne, high and exalted” he declared, **“Woe is me, for I am ruined!”** (Isaiah 6:1, 5).

Job had much the same experience; **“My ears had heard of you but now my eyes have seen you. Therefore I despise myself, and repent in dust and ashes.”** (Job 42:5-6).

And John would write of his experience in Revelation 1:17, **“And when I saw Him, I fell at His feet as dead....”**

When first introduced to the awesome power and majesty of the Lord, we're immensely aware of our own sin, and don't know what to do but try to escape from His presence.

Peter asked Jesus to leave him, not because he doesn't want to be in His presence, **but because he feels unworthy of being there.**

As a believer's experience of Christ deepens, and we gain the knowledge that only in Him can we experience the forgiveness of our sins, then a consciousness of our sin drives us to him.

The New Call not only was an invitation to greater intimacy but, **The New Call Was a Call to a New Way of Life. 9-11.**

*“For he was awestruck by the number of fish they had caught, as were the others with him. 10 His partners, James and John, the sons of Zebedee, were also amazed. Jesus replied to Simon, “Don’t be afraid! From now on you’ll be fishing for people!”*

Jesus told Peter that his future business would not be catching fish, **bringing them from life to death, but catching men, bringing them from death to life.** The word translated “catch” in verse ten is literally “to catch alive”.

Sometimes it seems that we think that there are two kinds of Christians: **those who do the catching and those who come to look at the catch.**

**But this is not the way it’s supposed to be.** The church is not a spectator society in which we go to see what is happening. We’re all supposed to be involved in the process.

Clearly the Lord’s words in verse 10 “**From now on you’ll be fishing for people**” defines the church’s role in evangelism - to cast out the net of the Gospel!

In spite of all the failures of the past, the church has to continue an energetic attempt under His guidance to gather souls into the kingdom of God, and they must do this not only in “**shallow waters**” **but also in the deep water.**

*“Launch out into the deep and let down your nets for a catch.”*

Not only in the vicinity of comfortable, settled church life, but also among the great masses of people in our world. The precious souls for whom Our Saviour bled and died!

**Launch out into the deep and let down your nets for a catch.** When the church is obedient to this, when we see the fields “**white unto harvest**”, men will be caught.

Every miracle had its purpose and this one is no exception. Peter now sees Jesus in an entirely new light. **Jesus is Lord and he is a sinful man.** Peter saw his own reluctance to obey the Lord’s command to let down the nets as sin.

**So they pulled their boats to shore and by every indication turned their backs on the most successful catch of their careers.** The two boatloads of fish probably would have brought in a handsome profit at the local market.

Verse eleven says, *“And as soon as they landed, they left everything and followed Jesus.”*

**The response of leaving everything**, ...implies a question often asked. **Must all believers leave their vocations to serve Jesus?** How is the call of believers like and unlike this call to Peter? The answer to that question emerges in the history of the church.

**As the New Testament letters show, not everyone is called into full-time ministry.** In fact, Paul kept right on working as a tentmaker as he ministered.

The important element is that the call to walk with Jesus **takes a priority, so that we're prepared to be whatever or wherever God calls us to be.**

For some, like the healed Gadarene demonic in Luke 8:38-39, it means staying home to testify to Jesus. **Take a listen!**

*"The man who had been freed from the demons begged to go with him. But Jesus sent him home, saying, No, go back to your family, and tell them everything God has done for you. So he went all through the town proclaiming the great things Jesus had done for him."*

For some, it may mean the mission field; for others it may mean the mission field at their daily job or in a parachurch ministry.

**E.G.** As a courier for an express delivery service, a man tried to deliver a package that required refrigeration, but found no one home.

He went to the house next door and told the woman who answered that he had a package for her neighbour.

"Oh, she works Monday through Friday and every other Saturday," said the woman, "and some Sundays.

She leaves about 7:40 in the morning and gets home around 5:30, unless she goes to the store, in which case it's closer to 7. And she's going to the store tonight because her kids are coming to visit.

When she paused to take a breath, the courier asked if she would accept her neighbour's package. "Oh, no, I can't do that," she said. "I don't know her that well."

As we prepare for a very busy summer, God is inviting us to join Him to reach out with the Gospel in our community, praying that some would accept the package of salvation God offers.

It's at His command that we spiritually launch out into our community and let down our nets. **We all work together to bring in the catch**, but behind it all, we're not responsible for the catch.

**The Lord is!**

**We work together, but the Lord gets the credit and glory.**

**All of us can play a part.** Some of us may not have the energy to be on the front line any more, but beloved, we can give generously of our resources in support of God's work and be prayer warriors.

This passage reminds us no matter of expertise, no amount of strength, no amount of human wisdom is enough. We need Jesus.

**Prayer:** Thank You Lord for Your Word. May Your Spirit continue to work the truth of this passage into our hearts and our minds, and may we be the people who hear that still small voice clearly speaking to us.