



DEVOTIONAL MESSAGE

READ LUKE 5: 1-11

● A Sense of Need 1-3, 5a

One day as Jesus was standing by the Lake of Gennesaret, with the people crowding around him and listening to the word of God, he saw at the water's edge two boats, left there by the fishermen, who were washing their nets. He got into one of the boats, the one belonging to Simon, and asked him to put out a little from shore. Then he sat down and taught the people from the boat. ... "Master, we've worked hard all night and haven't caught anything" (Luke 5:1-3, 5a). How fitting it is. Jesus comes to the scene of Peter's failure and uses it to preach the Word. He takes the ordinary and makes it sacred. He uses a simple fishing boat as the setting for a mighty miracle.

- Nothing in this story happens by chance. All is meant to teach us an important truth: God still prepares us for his call by allowing us to endure personal failure. Until we sense our need of him, we will not be ready to follow him. After all, if you think you are self-sufficient, why would you need Christ? We must be stripped of our self-confidence before we can be greatly used of God. Peter must be broken before he is ready to respond to the call of Christ.

● The Challenge of Obedience 4-5

- Obedience always asks something of us. When he had finished speaking, he said to Simon, "*Put out into deep water, and let down the nets for a catch.*" Simon answered, "*Master, we've worked hard all night and haven't caught anything. (Nevertheless) But because you say so, I will let down the nets*" (Luke 5:4-5).
- The words of Jesus contain both a command and a promise. It's not as if Jesus is saying, "*Let's go out into the deep water, put down the nets, and we'll see what happens.*" Jesus is promising that if Peter will obey, he will catch fish. I'm sure that after a long night of fruitless fishing, this must have been hard to believe.
- We can learn some useful lessons from this: 1) God never gives foolish commands—though they may look foolish at the time; 2) God intends to bless those who obey him without hesitation; 3) God's greatest miracles usually require our cooperation. "*Nevertheless, at Thy Word*" Across the centuries believers have found them to be their divine marching orders. Conditions may be dark and the world may fight against us, circumstances may overwhelm us, and our fears nearly submerge us. But God speaks and his children say, "*Nevertheless, at Thy Word*" Middle-aged Abraham set off across the desert with no more than this: "*Nevertheless, at Thy Word*" Noah built an ark in the face of an unbelieving world with no more than this: "*Nevertheless, at Thy Word*" Moses defied Pharaoh, looking to heaven and saying, "*Nevertheless, at Thy Word*" Joshua marched around Jericho day after day with this in his heart: "*Nevertheless, at Thy Word*" and young David confounded all the doubting men of Israel by marching into the valley armed with this confidence: "*Nevertheless, at Thy Word.*" (KJV). Then Peter added, "*I will let down the nets.*" We still have a part to do.

● A Demonstration of Divine Power 6-7

- When they had done so, they caught such a large number of fish that their nets began to break.

WEEKLY EVENTS/NOTICES

Issue 28

So they signalled their partners in the other boat to come and help them, and they came and filled both boats so full that they began to sink (*Luke 5:6-7*). What a sight! So many fish came into the nets that they begin to break. Filling both boats with fish that they began to sink, this is the biggest catch ever - and it happened in the middle of the day.

- Please note that the fish were there all along. It's not as if Jesus created the fish on the spur of the moment. Those fish were in the water the night before; Peter just couldn't find them. But when Jesus is in the boat, everything changes. Everything is happening according to God's plan. He allowed Peter to fail so he would learn what he could do with Jesus' help.
- **Confession of Inadequacy 8-10a**
- When Simon Peter saw this, he fell at Jesus' knees and said, "*Go away from me, Lord; I am a sinful man!*" For he and all his companions were astonished at the catch of fish they had taken, and so were James and John, the sons of Zebedee, Simon's partners (*Luke 5:8-10a*). Like most of us, Peter had room in his mind for anything he himself could handle. But when Jesus got involved, the results drove him to his knees in desperate prayer.
- The scene is reminiscent of Isaiah's reaction upon seeing the Lord high and lifted up: "Woe to me!" I cried. "*I am ruined! For I am a man of unclean lips, and I live among a people of unclean lips, and my eyes have seen the King, the LORD Almighty*" (*Isaiah 6:5*). Once Peter realized who Jesus really was - the true Son of God from heaven—he saw himself in a new light. To see God is to see ourselves as we really are. And sometimes the vision is too much for us to handle. Peter could not stand the contrast between the purity and power of Christ and his own sinfulness. Here is a man who has been deeply changed on the inside. His pride has been burned away by a transforming vision of Christ.
- **A Call to Personal Commitment 10b-11**
- Then Jesus said to Simon, "*Don't be afraid; from now on you will catch men.*" So they pulled their boats up on shore, left everything and followed him (*Luke 5:10b-11*). Now Jesus is going to give Peter a new occupation. Before this day he had fished for fish. Henceforth, he will fish for men. On the day of Pentecost 3000 men will respond to his powerful gospel sermon (*Acts 2*).
- The same thing happens to all of us sooner or later. When we respond to Christ's call, he changes us and then he changes our personal agenda. If we decide to take Christ seriously, we may end up doing something we never thought possible. "*What if Jesus asks me to do something I can't do?*" He will! He always does. If he only asked you to do stuff you could already do, you wouldn't need him. But when he asks us to do something we can't do, he gives us the power to do what we thought we could never do.

Events /Notices

- ▶ Bible study will take place this coming *Friday* at 7pm