

Third Presbyterian Church
Midweek Bible Study
Miracle Series
Miracle of the Catch of Fish
Lesson 3 – When Jesus Gets into Your Boat!

Luke 5:1-11 (NIV)

1 One day as Jesus was standing by the Lake of Gennesaret, with the people crowding around him and listening to the word of God, 2 he saw at the water's edge two boats, left there by the fishermen, who were washing their nets. 3 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. 4 When he had finished speaking, he said to Simon, "Put out into deep water, and let down the nets for a catch." 5 Simon answered, "Master, we've worked hard all night and haven't caught anything. But because you say so, I will let down the nets." 6 When they had done so, they caught such a large number of fish that their nets began to break. 7 So they signaled 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. 8 When Simon Peter saw this, he fell at Jesus' knees and said, "Go away from me, Lord; I am a sinful man!" 9 For he and all his companions were astonished at the catch of fish they had taken, 10 and so were James and John, the sons of Zebedee, Simon's partners. Then Jesus said to Simon, "Don't be afraid; from now on you will catch men." 11 So they pulled their boats up on shore, left everything and followed him.

1. Give Example of how Jesus has Got into your boat and interrupted your life to change your way of thinking, reveal his power and heighten your commitment level to His will for your life.
2. How do past failures keep us from following Jesus?
 - a. Has the Lord ever led you to do something again that you have already failed?
 - b. Why does the Lord do this in our lives?
3. Explain the term used in the sermon; "Some people can be TOO SMART FOR FAITH." How do we guard against this disposition?
4. What difference does it make to recognize Jesus as savior of the world but not my personal savior?
5. Explain the statement used in the sermon: "**We do what we want to do and make excuses for what we don't want to do.**"
 - a. What excuses have you given Jesus to not be obedient to his command after he jumped into the boat of your life?
6. In what ways does fear tempt us to ignore the voice of God? Give specific examples
7. Jesus takes us from where we are to where he wants us to be "BY PUSHING US." Explain how Jesus pushes.
8. The sermon talks about worship first begins with confession of who we are.
 - a. Why is this the first position of worship?
 - b. Why is confession hard to do for us?
 - c. Why is worship without confession empty?
9. What do we have to "leave behind" in order to follow Christ today?
10. How does a person go about being a fisher of men?
11. Share your main takeaway from the sermon and the lesson?

Jesus Calls His First Disciples: Steps to Calling Men, 5:1-11

(5:1-11) Introduction: Jesus Christ set out to catch men, that is, to catch them for God. He desires to catch all men, but He is unable to catch everyone by Himself. He needs help, the help of all who will follow Him. The present passage is a descriptive picture of how Jesus goes about calling men to help Him in the enormous task of reaching the world.

1. Lake Gennesaret (v.1).
2. Step 1: seeing a vision of people who need to hear the Word of God (v.1).
3. Step 2: seizing resources (v.2-3).
4. Step 3: removing reluctant obedience (v.4-5).
5. Step 4: demonstrating godly power (v.6-7).
6. Step 5: stirring a deep confession (v.8-9).
7. Step 6: challenging men to discipleship, that is, to catch other men (v.10).
8. Step 7: watching for the decision to forsake all (v.11).

1. (5:1) Lake Gennesaret: the scene of this experience took place on Lake Gennesaret which was the same as the Sea of Galilee.

2. (5:1) Word of God, Hunger for—Righteousness—Vision: the first step to calling men is seeing a vision of people—people who need the Word of God. The people were actually "pressing" (*epikeisthai*^{PWS: 3035}) in upon Jesus. They gathered and crowded around Him. Note why: to hear the Word of God. They pressed to hear the Word of God. They had a craving, a *hunger and thirst* after righteousness. Note two things.

1. Jesus met the hunger and thirst of people.

"Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled" (**Matthew 5:6**).

"Blessed are ye that hunger now: for ye shall be filled. Blessed are ye that weep now: for ye shall laugh" (**Luke 6:21**).

"But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life" (**John 4:14**).

"In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink" (**John 7:37**).

"As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby: if so be ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious" (**1 Peter 2:2-3**).

"They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat" (**Rev. 7:16**).

2. Jesus saw that He could never meet the needs of all the people, not by Himself. He needed others to help.

"Therefore said he unto them, The harvest truly is great, but the labourers are few: pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he would send forth labourers into his harvest" (**Luke 10:2**).

3. (5:2-3) Resource—Opportunity, Serving: the second step to calling men is seizing resources. Jesus had to find some way to handle the throng of people both then and later. The crowds were so large and their needs so many that He just could not handle their disorder. He could not meet the needs of everyone. Standing there and being confronted with the present problem, He scanned the horizon for some way to handle the matter.

As He looked around, He saw an opportunity and laid His plans. He saw a boat and a fisherman in the boat, and He needed both. The boat could be used as a pulpit, and the man could become a disciple. He asked the man to let Him use the boat as a pulpit and to steer the boat out from land a short distance. The point is this: Jesus seized and used the resources available. He had the vision of people needing the Word of God, but He needed a pulpit and others to help, so He scanned the horizon and found both.

"Say not ye, There are yet four months, and then cometh harvest? behold, I say unto you, Lift up your eyes, and look to the fields; for they are white already to harvest. And he that reapeth receiveth wages, and gathereth fruit unto life eternal: that both he that soweth and he that reapeth may rejoice together" (John 4:35-36).

4. (5:4-5) Obedience— Reluctance: the third step to calling men is the *removal of reluctant obedience*. As soon as Jesus finished His preaching, He decided to win Peter's loyalty and discipleship. But first, He had to humble Peter. He had to show Peter that He, the Messiah, could look after and take care of him. He told Peter to put out to sea and fish. Peter objected because he had fished all night and had caught nothing. However, he stopped right in the middle of his objection and obeyed Jesus. Note what had happened.

1. Peter was reluctant to obey Jesus. He objected to what Jesus asked. He was thoroughly *exhausted*, for he had "toiled all night." He was *disappointed*, for he had caught nothing, and he had worked enough hours already. Despite needing to be home in bed, he had stayed and helped the Lord in His preaching by loaning his boat to Him.

2. Peter caught himself in the middle of his objection and obeyed. What caused the switch, the change from reluctance to willing obedience? Probably two things.

- Peter was pretty well convinced that Jesus was who He claimed to be, the Messiah.
- Peter was drawn somewhat to follow Jesus. Therefore, when he began to object to Jesus' will, there was a prick of conscience, and he obeyed his conscience. He followed his heart...
 - not his *mind*, thinking there were no fish.
 - not his *experience*, having already tried and failed to catch fish.
 - not his *body*, being too tired and exhausted, just incapable of going on.

Thought 1. Reluctance should always give in to obedience. We need the spirit that will *try* for God, no matter what the obstacles or how hopeless a situation may seem.

Thought 2. When a man is drawn to Christ, he desperately needs to obey his heart and to obey it immediately.

"Not slothful in business; fervent in spirit; serving the Lord" (Romans 12:11).

"Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord" (1 Cor. 15:58).

"That ye be not slothful, but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises" (Hebrews 6:12).

5. (5:6-7) Jesus Christ, Power— Obedience, Results— Humility: the fourth step to calling men is *demonstrating godly power*. Peter's obedience produced results; his obedience caught fish, and the catch was no ordinary catch. It was much more, so much more that there could be no question about Jesus. Jesus was behind the miracle; Jesus was demonstrating the power of God. (Remember this was the very purpose of Jesus, to win Peter's loyalty and willingness to become a disciple on a full-time basis.) What happened is a little humorous when we remember what Jesus was doing with Peter, and Peter's reluctance and objection, weariness and exhaustion. There was a sense in which the Lord was really laying it on Peter, really letting him have it. Peter thought he was tired, but he didn't know what exhaustion was yet. The Lord must have stood to the side smiling to Himself. How our Lord loved this man Peter, even now! He was after Peter's loyalty, and He was going to get it even if He had to make Peter drop in his tracks (which was exactly what was to happen, Luke 5:8). At any rate, there was some humor in what began to happen to this man who was so reluctant, moaning and groaning about his tiredness. Just imagine Peter already bone weary, grumbling in his mind at this carpenter telling him, the skilled fisherman, how to fish. Imagine Peter's exhaustion and weariness, reluctance and objection, moaning and groaning; and then all of a sudden a catch is made, a catch so great that he was going to have to work wearily along for hour upon hour.

- ⇒ Peter's net broke.
- ⇒ Peter had to call for another whole crew and boat to help.
- ⇒ Both boats were filled as full as they could be.
- ⇒ Then to top it off, both boats began to sink.

Jesus had His man! What else was Peter to do other than what followed? In all the humor of the situation, our Lord's heart was bound to be full of rejoicing because this big hunk of a fisherman, man though he was, was like a little child before the Lord. He was broken in humility before the Lord, and the experience was but the first of many experiences of brokenness yet to come.

"I know that thou canst do every thing, and that no thought can be withholden from thee" (Job 42:2).

"Yea, before the day was I am he; and there is none that can deliver out of my hand: I will work, and who shall let [hinder, stop] it?" (Isaiah 43:13).

6. (5:8-9) Confession: the fifth step to calling men is *stirring a deep confession*. Peter knew exactly what had happened. He had been reluctant and objected to the Lord's request, and he had not been too happy that the great catch had caused so much trouble. But he was a skilled fisherman, and he knew that the great catch was no ordinary catch; it was a miracle of the Lord, a miracle which the Lord was using to teach him that he was to obey without reluctance and objection.

Note exactly what happened. When Peter saw the boat beginning to sink, he raced over to Jesus, fell upon his knees, and in a sense (continuing the humor) said, "Lord, I've had enough. Let me alone. I'll do anything." His confession was threefold.

1. He confessed his sin of disobedience and unbelief: of being reluctant to obey the Lord, of questioning the Lord's will and knowledge and power.
2. He confessed Jesus to be the *Lord*. Note that Peter had previously called Jesus "Master" (*epistate*, Luke 5:5), which is a word used to address anyone in authority. But Peter had learned better. He now called Jesus "Lord" (*kurie*). He is the Lord who is holy and convicting, who must be obeyed and followed.
3. He confessed a fear, a reverence, an awe for the Lord (cp. Luke 5:9-10).

"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 6:5).

"I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear; but now mine eye seeth thee: wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes" (Job 42:5-6).

"And Abraham answered and said, Behold now, I have taken upon me to speak unto the LORD, which am but dust and ashes" (Genesis 18:27).

7. (5:10) Call—Discipleship—Mission: the sixth step to calling men is *challenging men to discipleship*, that is, to *catch other men*. Note two significant facts.

1. The words "fear not" (*mē phobou*^{PWS: 1457}) indicate that Peter was actually scared and frightened. Jesus was calming him, telling him to trust and stop fearing. He, the Lord, was in charge and looking after everything.
2. The call to Peter was to "catch men." The word "catch" (*esē zōgrōn*^{PWS: 524}) means to *catch alive* or to *catch for life*. The idea is that Peter was no longer to catch (fish) for death, but he was to catch (men) for life.

"And he saith unto them, Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men" (Matthew 4:19).

"And of some have compassion, making a difference: and others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire; hating even the garment spotted by the flesh" (Jude 22-23).

"Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit [souls], and that your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you" (John 15:16).

DEEPER STUDY #1 (5:10) James

8. (5:11) Decision— Dedication— Forsaking All: the seventh step to calling men is *watching for the decision to forsake all*. Note three things.

1. The men responded immediately.
2. The men left all: their businesses, their professions, and the biggest catch they had ever seen.
3. The men followed Jesus. He was the Lord who had spoken, and they were to be His disciples who obeyed and followed.

"And he said to them all, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me" (Luke 9:23).

"If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple" (Luke 14:26).

"So likewise, whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple" (Luke 14:33).

"If any man serve me, let him follow me; and where I am, there shall also my servant be: if any man serve me, him will my Father honour" (John 12:26).

DEEPER STUDY #1

(5:10) James: there were two disciples named James. (1) The James mentioned in this passage, the brother of John, was the son of Zebedee. He along with Peter and his brother John formed an inner circle around the Lord (Matthew 17:1; Mark 5:37; Mark 9:2; Mark 14:33). He is never mentioned apart from John. He was killed with the sword by Herod (Acts 12:2). (2) James the less was the son of Alphaeus (Matthew 10:3). He was called *the less* because he was shorter of stature.

It should be noted that two other men named James are mentioned in the New Testament. (1) There is James the Lord's half-brother (Matthew 13:55; Mark 6:3; Galatians 1:19). He and the Lord's other brothers and sisters did not believe Jesus to be the Messiah until after Jesus' resurrection (John 7:5; Acts 1:14). James, however, became a great leader and pastor in the early church. He pastored the Jerusalem Church (Acts 12:17; Acts 15:13; Acts 21:18; Galatians 1:19; Galatians 2:9, 12), and he wrote the Epistle of James. (2) There is also James who was the father of Judas (Luke 6:16; Acts 1:13, ASV).

Preacher's Outline and Sermon Bible - Commentary - The Preacher's Outline & Sermon Bible – Luke.