

“Fishers of Men”
(Luke 5:1-11)

I. Introduction.

A. Orientation.

This morning, we saw Jesus’ authority:

In God’s Word,

Over the demons,

Over sickness,

Were reminded

Over the devil,

And His own life.

He’s showing us

He is the Messiah,

The Son of God,

The One Father sent

To be King over Creation;

And being King

That we should submit to His authority

Because one day we will give account to Him.

We also saw,

From the reaction of those in the synagogue

The only way we can get ready:

By trusting Jesus.

At first, they were amazed –

At the authority He exuded in His teaching,

At His ability to command demons –

They even went after Him when He left
Because they wanted Him to stay.

And yet they later would reject Him
Because they really didn't know/love Him.

If we want to be ready for that day,
We need to trust Jesus,
But we also need to see evidence
That we really do trust Him:
That we love Him,
And are turning from our sins to follow Him.

The fact there are still so many
Who don't know Him,
Who don't obey Him,
And so aren't ready to stand before Him,
Is why tonight's message is so important:

B. Preview.

This morning we saw
That Jesus couldn't stay in Capernaum
Because there were so many
Who hadn't yet heard the Gospel.

Tonight, knowing that the work
Would be much greater
Than He would be able to do,

We see Him now call some to help:

Here, we see two things:

Jesus reveals Himself through the miracle of the great catch (vv. 1-10);

And the calling of His first disciples (vv. 10-11).

II. Sermon.

A. First, we see Jesus revealing Himself

Through the miracle of the great catch (vv. 1-7).

After preaching throughout the synagogues of Galilee,

Jesus returned to Capernaum

And went down to the shore of Lake Gennesaret (v. 1) –

Lake Gennesaret is simply another name

For the Sea of Galilee;

So-called because of a city of that name

On the western shore just below Capernaum;

It's a large fresh water lake –

With about 33 miles of shoreline,

With a maximum depth of 141 feet –

Compare this to Lake Tahoe

Which has 71 miles of shoreline,

With a maximum depth of 1645 feet.

Jesus was standing at the harbor

Where the ships made land.

Because of His popularity,

A crowd had gathered to listen to Him,

And because they were pressing on Him (v. 1),

He got into a boat and asked its owner –

Simon,

Whom Jesus already knew

Since He had healed his mother-in-law

And was staying at his house –

To put out a little from the land –

So He could put some distance

Between Himself and the people –

And when he had,

Jesus sat down and began to teach them (v. 3).

We're not told by Luke

What He taught on this occasion –

We know it was connected

With His mission to preach the Gospel,

Since everything He taught was directly related to this –

Something we should think about

When we minister to someone –

Luke again had a different focus:

He wanted us to see the miracle Jesus does next.

When Jesus finished speaking,

He said to Simon,

“Put out into the deep water and let down your nets for a catch” (v. 4).

Simon replied they had just worked
The whole night and had caught nothing –
They had landed their boats
And were washing their nets (v. 2) –
Which means they were done for the day.

But since it was Jesus who was asking,
Simon was willing to do it.

He put out again into the deep water
And let down the nets (v. 4).
And when they had done this –
That is, Simon and his brother Andrew –
The nets encircled a large number of fish –
To the point they began to tear –

So they signaled to their partners in the other boat –
James and John, the sons of Zebedee (v. 10) –
To come and help them.

They hauled in so many fish
That both boats were filled
To the point of sinking (v. 7).

This is much like a later time
When the disciples will have fished all night
And caught nothing,
Only to have Jesus tell them to throw their nets

On the other side of the boat –

And they found a great catch (John 21:6) –

What difference does it make

Which side of the boat you fish from?

Here they had fished all night,

And caught nothing –

The fish just weren't biting –

What difference would it make

If they put the nets down again?

Humanly speaking,

It shouldn't have made any difference –

Except Jesus told them to do it –

He doesn't just know where the fish are,

He's the One who called them there –

Jesus has authority over the fish.

That this couldn't have happened

Without Jesus' involvement is clear

From Simon, Andrew, James and John's reaction:

“But when Simon Peter saw *that*, he fell down at Jesus' feet, saying, ‘Go away from me Lord, for I am a sinful man!’ For amazement had seized him and all his companions because of the catch of fish which they had taken; and so also *were* James and John, sons of Zebedee, who were partners with Simon” (vv. 8-10).

Peter had seen Jesus

Heal his mother-in-law –

But this was far more impressive:

The kind of miracles Jesus did,

Aren't like those that are claimed today:

Where you can't really tell

Whether anything has really changed/happened:

His stopped traffic and created a sense of fear and amazement

Because they were so obvious.

The first thing Peter thought

Was what Jesus intended him to think:

Who this One must be –

The Lord;

The covenant God of Israel –

Something that would become even clearer

To him in Caesarea Philippi (Matt. 16:16) –

The second thing,

Was what he was in comparison:

A sinful man –

This is the same reaction Isaiah had

When he stood in God's presence:

“Woe is me, for I am ruined! Because I am a man of unclean lips, and I live among a people of unclean lips; for my eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts” (Isa. 6:5).

We're so used to seeing Jesus

As the One who loves us and saves us

That we tend to forget who He is:

The Holy God –

But that's because of how He came to us:

With such grace and mercy to win our hearts.

We see that love revealed here:

When Peter fell down at His feet,

Begging Him from fear to leave,

Jesus said the same thing to him

As the angel said to Zacharias in the Temple (Luke 1:13),

And to Mary (v. 30),

And to the shepherds in the fields

On the night of Jesus' birth (2:10):

“Do not be afraid” (5:10).

Jesus didn't come to condemn Peter,

He came to reveal Himself to him,

That He might save him,

Because He loves him.

B. But Jesus did this for another reason:

He wanted Peter to be part

Of the fishing expedition

That He had already embarked on:

He said, “Do not fear, from now on you will be catching men” (Luke 2:10).

Here was the call of the first disciple.

He called the others as well:

Andrew, James and John (Matt. 10:2) –

And they immediately submitted:

“When they had brought their boats to land,
They left everything and followed Him” (v. 11).

They left their worldly employment –

And whatever they hoped to gain from it –

And their families for a time –

And began to follow Jesus –

Returning to the miracle of the fish

For just a moment:

We understand Jesus did this

To show them who He was

And so why they should follow Him.

But it also seems likely

That it was meant to show them

The success they would have in this venture:

That just as Jesus has absolute control

Over the fish to bring them into the net,

So He can bring the souls of His people to faith:

Those the Father gave Him

For the work He had set out to do:

Jesus, “All that the Father gives Me will come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I will certainly not cast out” (John 6:37).

C. So what can we learn from this?

First, that if we're trusting Jesus,

The Father has given us to Him:

Jesus has been casting His net year after year,

And the Father,

In His sovereign good pleasure and mercy,

Was pleased to bring us into that net.

But He didn't catch us

Just to release us,

Or merely to make us trophies –

He saved us to do

What He did –

And what He called these disciples to do –

Become fishers of men.

This is to be our full-time occupation,

Only we are to carry it out in a way

Different from the disciples.

As we go about our business

From day to day –

Wherever the Lord has called us –

We are to be as Christ to those around us:

We are to stand out –

Be different,

Act different,

Talk different –

From those in this world.

We are to serve,

And not expect others to serve us.

And we are to cast our nets –

By telling others the simple message of the Gospel –

Paul, “For since in the wisdom of God the world through its wisdom did not *come to* know God, God was well-pleased through the foolishness of the message preached to save those who believe” (1 Cor. 1:21).

Second, as we do this,

We are to take courage

That the Lord will save those who are His –

When we look at the world,

And see how far they’ve gone away

From the Lord and His truth –

How impossible it seems

That any of them would ever receive Jesus –

We need to remember

That the Lord

Can not only bring them into His net –

As easily as He brought those fish –

He will bring them –

His sheep will hear His voice,

And they will come.

This has been the encouragement

Of every Calvinistic evangelist

Who has ever set his hand to the work –

And it's still ours today:

The Lord will bring His sheep into His fold;

They only need to hear His voice:

The way He speaks to them is through us.

May the Lord give us the love

And the courage we need

To tell others His Gospel,

That they might escape judgment

And stand before Jesus on that day. Amen.

<http://www.gcmoesto.org>