

life group study guide

COME FOLLOW ME

March 3, 2013



Luke 4:44-5:11

Introduction

An army private comes straight to his Lieutenant. He complains that his Sargeant is totally nuts and out to get him. The private adds, "I wouldn't be surprised if he asked me to jump into a lake."

The Lieutenant replies "I don't think that's right, but if it ever happens, report to me directly."

Noting the thrilled expression on the private's face, he adds... "But you better be wet when you report to me."

- What was the strangest command or assignment you were ever given at work (or school or the military)?
- What was the result?

We will look at a story with a command of Jesus that doesn't seem to make sense, but ends in a life-changing decision for three of those involved.

Bible Study and Application

Luke 4:44-5:11

We will go verse-by-verse to examine lessons and applications on what it means to answer Jesus' call to "Follow me."

Luke 4:44 So He kept on preaching in the synagogues of Judea.

We see from the previous verses (verse 42ff), crowds have followed Jesus and sought him out even as He sought seclusion. They implore Jesus to stay with them. He answers that His purpose is larger than just meeting their needs and expectations.

- In what ways do we try to put Jesus "in a box" of our own expectations?
- Does our prayer life reflect that of the crowd's expectations or of Jesus' larger purpose? Give specific examples.
- How are we to react when the prayer for our needs are not being met according to our expectations?

Luke 5:1-3 Now it happened that while the crowd was pressing around Him and listening to the word of God, He was standing by the lake of Gennesaret; and He saw two boats lying at the edge of the lake; but the fisherman had gotten out of them and were washing their nets. And He got into one the boats, which was Simon's, and asked him to put out a little way from the land. And He sat down and began teaching the people from the boat.

Jesus' miracles and reputation had attracted crowds. But now we see them held by the word of God.

- In your opinion, does the word of God still attract people? Why or why not?

Jesus was a master at utilizing the situation and resources at hand to teach and reach people with the Truth (i.e., five loaves and two fish). In this case, he uses a fisherman's boat as a podium for teaching.

- How can you use your limited resources to reach people with the gospel?

life group study guide

In this situation, Jesus asked for a favor (borrowing the boat). It is humbling to ask for help.

- How can we, by asking for help from those around us, seek to build relationships and create opportunities to share the word of God?
- Could you invite a neighbor or co-worker to join you in serving on a We Love Avon project?

Luke 5:4-5 When He had finished speaking, He said to Simon, "Put out into the deep water and let down your net for a catch." Simon answered and said, "Master, we have worked hard and caught nothing, but I will do as you say and let down the nets."

Simon has just heard Jesus preaching the word of God. For many of us, like Simon Peter, listening in agreement is easy. But then Simon is asked to put his faith in action, and he begins to make excuses and object.

- Why is it so easy to see the speck of dust in our neighbor's eye while being oblivious to the plank in our own?
- Why is listening (to Biblical teaching) in the general sense so easy, yet applying in the specific situation so difficult?

Note that Jesus does not ask Simon to let down his nets; he commands him to do so. Yet Simon objects.

- Do you find yourself explaining away some verses of Scripture in light of your personal situation?
- What are Simon's objections/excuses? Have you ever used a variation of the same excuses?

Simon is a fisherman, and is called to obedience in the context of his profession.

- In what ways can you apply the wisdom and commands of Christ in the workplace?
- Why is it that the workplace is somewhere it is easy to make excuses about applying specific commands of Scripture?
- In what way(s) is this situation an example of the difference between faith and belief?

Luke 5:6-7 When they had done this, they enclosed a great quantity of fish, and their nets began to break; so they signaled to their partners in the other boat for them to come and help them. And they came and filled both of the boats, so that they began to sink.

- What was the result of Simon's obedience?
- Can you share a similar, personal story of such a result of obedience to God's word—a result which ran counter to conventional wisdom?
- Do you believe miracles—such as this one with the catch of fish—still occur today? Do you think most Christians obey God's commands with such expectations?

Luke 5:8-10a But when Simon Peter saw that, he fell down at Jesus' feet, saying, "I am a sinful man, O Lord!" 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.

- What was Simon, James and John's reaction to the miracle?
- Why would a miraculous catch of fish cause someone to react with recognition of their personal sinfulness?

life group study guide

Luke 5:10-11 And Jesus said to Simon, "Do not fear, from now on you will be catching men." When they had brought their boats to land, they left everything and followed Him.

- Many times the reaction we see in the Bible to miracles is one of fear. Why do you think this is?
- Fear often arises when the subject is evangelism ("catching men"). Why do you think people fear sharing their faith with others? How can we overcome this fear?

The result of this encounter with Jesus is that James, John and Peter left everything and followed Him.

- What did you have to leave behind to follow Christ?
- What does it mean to leave everything and follow Christ in our society? Does it always mean uprooting our family and becoming missionaries? If not, how else can this be done?
- What are you hanging onto that is keeping you from fully following Jesus? Pray for the courage to take the first steps in this direction.
- Following Jesus can mean letting go of some things and taking up a cross (Matt 16:24). What things do you need to "take up" in order to follow Jesus?