



THE COMPASS

RED HILL LUTHERAN CHURCH

The Compass:
Encounter-Examine-Explore-Embrace God's Word
On
Your Discipleship Path

Sermon Series: "Living Hope."
(Easter, 2026)

"Hope and Discouragement." Text(s): *Psalm 23; Luke 5.1-11; 1 Thessalonians 5.24.*

☐ Day #1—Monday, April 20th. Read: Luke 5.1-11. –Encounter: God's Word and your life—What do you Hear and/or See?

Luke 5.1-11 tells how Jesus approached four discouraged, professional fishermen by using fishing to get their attention, and ultimately to obtain their life commitments in return for permanently blessing them. Each of us has had an experience of a long effort with nothing to show for it, or losing a job after working hard at it, or needing personal security and a feeling of significance. As we examine the reality of discouragement this week, we will see how this Biblical fishing story of surrendering to the will of Jesus and obeying him unconditionally applies to us in situations when we've come up empty and need a miracle.

Simon Peter, as an experienced fisherman, knew that there was little likelihood of a catch, since the best fishing was done at night in the deep water. (During the daytime, they fished in the shallow water). The lake they were on, "Gennesaret" ("Chinnereth" in the Old Testament) is another name for the Sea (really lake) of Galilee, and refers specifically to the area just south of Capernaum (See *Mark 6.53*).

Jesus is not a fisherman; He is a Rabbi and carpenter. Peter likely knows this and must have wondered what Jesus knew about fishing in Gennesaret. What Peter discovers is that Jesus knew more than Peter assumed. Jesus challenges Peter with something that Peter was experiencing and knew about—fishing. Fishing was Peter's life and livelihood. If Peter caught no fish, he had no income. Jesus will challenge Peter to trust Him even in the midst of Peter's doubts and discouragements. Jesus will meet you in your doubts and discouragement and ask you to trust Him—He knows more than you think! When you are empty, tired, and striving for anything that will satisfy, Jesus will call you to surrender to His plan for you.

Jesus uses our personalities and our resources for *His glory*. The question is: "Will I surrender to Jesus who I am and what I have?"

Consider/Reflect: How has Jesus used you (your personality, your desires, your passions, your resources)? If you have some difficulty answering these questions, pray this week for Jesus to use you for His glory and others blessing.

☐ Day #2—Tuesday, April 21st. Read: Luke 5.8-11. —Examine: The Text and its

Peter's reaction is not at all surprising. Astonishment (*v.9*) (Greek: *thambos*, "amazement") seized them all. Through this miracle, Peter saw Jesus more clearly, as seen in the shift of address from "Master," (*v.5*), a term of respectful address, such as "sir," to "Lord," a term that acknowledges superiority. This suggests Peter's growing recognition of *whom Jesus really is*. The trouble is, when a person sees Jesus more clearly, they also see themselves more clearly! His beauty exposes our flaws; His perfection reveals our sinfulness. Just like Peter, our human, first response to such awareness is often, "go away," I do not deserve you! Only by surrendering to Jesus can we find forgiveness for our sins and inner personal renewal.

This confession of sin and failure seems so hard to make, until we have made it. Then we discover that, once we have admitted we are sinners, we are set free. Once we are honest with ourselves as sinners, do we become more ready to hear the healing words of Jesus Christ. Just as Jesus did with Peter, Jesus forgives us and transforms us as well. What Jesus told Peter

is something He says to each of us who come to Him, acknowledging our sin: *from now on, life will be different!* To Peter, Jesus said, “Don’t be afraid; from now on you will catch men” (v. 10). Peter and his two companions left everything there on the beach—including the great catch of fish—and followed Jesus. All that had been important to them before was now willingly set aside. When we find fulfillment in a relationship with Jesus Christ, all of life truly becomes new!

After witnessing Jesus’ miracle, what did Simon Peter do (*Luke 5.8-9*)? Think about:

- Why might we miss by focusing on the blessing instead of the provider of the blessing?
- What would it take for you to obey whatever Jesus says to do?
- Because of fear, most people would not abandon everything they’ve done or become accustomed to. Consider what the absence of fear could enable you to accomplish.

Consider/Reflect: After the biggest catch of their fishing career, the four disciples left everything to follow Jesus and their lives were completely changed. Today, pray about and expect that God will put people in your life whom you can help by telling them about Jesus who can change their lives. When you recognize such a person, move without fear and talk about your relationship with Jesus; then share your experiences with a faithful friend, telling them how you felt, what you did, and what happened.

☐ **Day #3—Wednesday, April 22nd. Read: Psalm 23.1. –Explore: The background to this text(s).**

Psalm 23 is perhaps one of the most well-known and beloved texts of Scripture. This Psalm is often read at funerals for the hope, peace, and promise it describes concerning God’s character and our relationship with God. The writer of this Psalm, King David, would know exactly the responsibilities of a shepherd because he was one! David knew first-hand that God’s constant presence and care was his only true hope, just as a “good shepherd” would be the only true hope for helpless sheep. Additionally, describing God as a “shepherd” was:

...a common metaphor in the ancient Near East, as many kings compared themselves to shepherds in their leadership capacity. The prophecy of the coming Messiah incorporated the same (Isa. 40:11), and Jesus identified Himself as that expected “Good Shepherd” (John 10:14). He is also called the “Great Shepherd” (Heb. 13:20) and “the Chief Shepherd” (1 Peter 5:4). Because the Lord was David’s Shepherd, his needs were met.¹

As mentioned above, this image of God as a shepherd is carried over into the New Testament as Jesus is described as the “Good Shepherd” who cares for His sheep. Jesus, being our Shepherd, ensures us that as we follow Him, He cares, guides, leads, and heals us. Warren Wiersbe rightly notes:

Christ did not simply die for us; He rose again and lives for us. He is the Great Shepherd, the Great High Priest. “I shall not want” is the theme of Ps. 23. “I shall not want” for: rest and refreshment (v. 2), restoration and righteousness (v. 3), protection in trouble (v. 4), provision in the wilderness (v. 5), and a home to go to at the end of the day (v. 6)²

This psalm is the best loved single passage in the Old Testament. Untold millions have found comfort here in times of sorrow...The psalm evokes a mood of meditative security. It ends with a ringing triumph...Tradition gives Psalm 23 to David because of his vocation as a shepherd (1 Sam. 16:11), and because of the intense personal relationship with God evidenced here...The psalm soon turns from meditation, “The Lord is my shepherd ...,” to the direct address of prayer, “For You are with me....” The first half describes God’s provision (vv. 1–3) and the second half describes God’s protection (vv. 4–6).³

Consider/Reflect: “In faith, David declares that since Yahweh is his shepherd, he “shall not want” (v 1). Our Good Shepherd lovingly provides everything that we need in this life, but we often fail to recognize that these gifts come from Him. Instead, we focus on things that we want, but do not need. How wonderful that our Shepherd does not withhold His blessings from us, but still cares for these needs and more: He gives us His own Son! [Pray]: Good Shepherd, open our eyes to see Your blessing. Open our ears to hear Your voice. Open our hearts that we may love You. Amen.”⁴

1 J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck, Eds. *The Bible Knowledge Commentary* (Wheaton, Illinois: Victor Books, 1985).
2 Warren Wiersbe. *Wiersbe’s Expository Outlines on the Old Testament* (Wheaton, Illinois: Victor Books, 1993).
3 D. Williams and L.J. Ogilvie. *Psalms 1–72* (Nashville, Tennessee: Thomas Nelson, 1986).
4 *The Lutheran Study Bible* (Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2009).

□ **Day #4--Thursday, April 23rd. Read: Psalm 23.2-4.— Explore: The background to this text(s).**

The shepherds in the ancient world knew each sheep by name. The sheep, in turn, could recognize the sound of their shepherd's voice from far distances even if other shepherds were calling to their sheep! Again, Wiersbe describes the important responsibilities of an ancient shepherd and how these mirror God's care of us:

The shepherd goes before the sheep and makes sure they are not walking into danger (John 10:27–28). The sheep never need worry when they follow the shepherd, for he will protect them and provide for them. Even when they go through a dangerous valley (v. 4), the shepherd is beside them, and beyond the valley is the house of rest. At the end of the day, the shepherd leads the flock back to the fold and stands by the open door to examine each one as it enters. If he sees one that is bruised or weary, he puts the refreshing oil upon it to soothe and heal it, and gives it a drink of cool water. How gracious our Shepherd is to care for us!⁵

It is important to notice the very personal way this Psalm begins: The Lord is my shepherd. While guarding against an “it's only me and Jesus” mentality, clearly, God takes personal, individual interest in His people. Williams and Ogilvie make this point:

The God of the Bible is Israel's God. Faith in Him, however, is not merely tribal or corporate. It is also personal. God is known in His individual relationships. He is the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (Ex. 3:6). When David was anointed king, God spoke to Samuel, “Arise, anoint him; for this is the one!” then “the Spirit of the Lord came upon David from that day forward” (1 Sam. 16:12–13). The Psalter witnesses to the intimacy of David's relationship with the Lord. Indeed, for David He is “*my shepherd*.”⁶

Yesterday, I mentioned that the shepherd imagery in this Psalm would also echo royal imagery reflected in the ancient world. This would certainly be true with the Jewish Messiah (King), who would likewise care for and lead the people of Israel into a place of safety and peace, just as a shepherd does for his sheep. “For David to call God “*shepherd*,” therefore, is to acknowledge God as his King, his Savior, the One who meets all of his needs...Every need will be met by the guiding, providing hand of God.”⁷ The remaining verses of Psalm 23 will describe how God will, in fact, meet our needs so that we lack no good thing.

Consider/Reflect: [Psalm 23.1-4] “...picture God as a Shepherd. Man is described here as on a journey throughout which the Shepherd God leads him step by step. He provides every need (v. 1). He brings his people to oases of refreshment and strength (v. 2). He renews life with spiritual energy (v. 3). His will for man always leads him to the right pathways (v. 3). He gives courage in times of danger (v. 4).”⁸

□ **Day #5— Friday, April 24th. Read Again: Luke 5.1-11; Psalm 23.5-6.—Explore: The background to this text(s).**

For both Peter and King David, they made the decision to trust God by giving God complete authority over their lives. For Peter, this included his fishing business. For David, it included his role as king. In Peter's case, it was pretty simple: Peter let Jesus into his boat! If you want to move from discouragement to hope, you've got to get Jesus in your boat!

In Luke 5, notice: they worked all night and caught nothing in ten hours. Now in ten minutes they're catching more than they can handle. What's different here? It's the same lake. It's the same boat. It's the same nets. It's the same fishermen. It's the same partners. It's the same fish. The only thing that's different between nothing and fullness is Jesus is in the boat! Do you think that makes a difference?

What is *your* “boat?” Your boat is your life—how you live. This is what Matthew 6.33 points to when Jesus tells us: “*Seek ye first... [Not second, third, fourth or fifth.] the kingdom of God [not success, not satisfaction, not a salary – seek first the kingdom of God] and then all these other things will be added unto you.*” You've got to get the priorities right. You've got to get Jesus in the boat. When you do that then He takes care of your needs.

Sometimes our discouragement arises from our ultimate trust in temporary things. If my ultimate hope and satisfaction is found in a particular relationship, when that relationship is struggling or ends (even the best relationships end), I will be

5 Wiersbe, *Wiersbe's Expository Outlines on the Old Testament*.

6 Williams and Ogilvie. *Psalms 1–72*.

7 Ibid.

8 R.H. Dilday and J.H. Kennedy. *The Teacher's Bible Commentary* (Nashville: Broadman and Holman Publishers, 1972).

discouraged and fearful. Conversely, if my ultimate hope is in God, I will look to Him as my Shepherd, and He will guide and empower me to do what I can in my relationships. I may face hurt, loss, and even grief, but I will not be hopeless because God will never leave me and He will provide the strength I need!

Consider/Reflect: Have you committed your “boat” to Jesus? Some of you are going through tough times right now and you’re trying to change everything else, rather than brining Jesus into your boat. Peter and the fishermen didn’t need to change their nets. They didn’t need to change their boat. They just needed Jesus in charge of the boat. That’s what was needed.

☐ **Day #6-Saturday, April 25th. Read: 1 Thessalonians 5:24.—Embrace: God and His guiding you through His Word.**

If you feel stuck in the midst of a hardship, ask yourself whether you have truly allowed Jesus full access to all areas of your life, especially the painful areas. Are you tired of doing the “same old things,” trying to get out of a difficult situation due to pride, stubbornness, or fear? Pray about this specifically, asking Jesus to move in your circumstances.

You may want to consider telling a faithful friend exactly how you will do what Jesus has been asking you to do, the place where he has called you to take action, and when you think He is asking you to move in that direction.

Other thoughts and questions to consider this week, as you contemplate your Christian journey...

- When has God shown up unexpectedly in your life?
- How inclined are you to talk back to God like Peter?
- What do you have a hard time letting go of to follow Christ completely?
- What would it look like for you to “let down your nets” in your life?

Consider/Reflect: Think about examples in the past, where God has guided you and has provided for you. What can we count on according to 1 Thessalonians 5:24? How might you grow in trusting God’s promises?