

## **Scripture Reading:**

**Luke 5:1 “So it was, as the multitude pressed about Him to hear the word of God, that He stood by the Lake of Gennesaret, 2 and saw two boats standing by the lake; but the fishermen had gone from them and were washing their nets. 3 Then He got into one of the boats, which was Simon's, and asked him to put out a little from the land. And He sat down and taught the multitudes from the boat. 4 When He had stopped speaking, He said to Simon, "Launch out into the deep and let down your nets for a catch." 5 But Simon answered and said to Him, "Master, we have toiled all night and caught nothing; nevertheless at Your word I will let down the net." 6 And when they had done this, they caught a great number of fish, and their net was breaking. 7 So they signaled to their partners in the other boat to come and help them. And they came and filled both the boats, so that they began to sink. 8 When Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord!" 9 For he and all who were with him were astonished at the catch of fish which they had taken; 10 and so also were James and John, the sons of Zebedee, who were partners with Simon. And Jesus said to Simon, "Do not be afraid. From now on you will catch men." 11 So when they had brought their boats to land, they forsook all and followed Him.**

# *Simon Peter: The Fisher of Men*

**This morning we continue our journey through the Gospel of Luke and we will be formally introduced to another major figure of the New Testament.**

**Fisherman Simon Peter who will become a Fisher of Men!**

- **Luke used a rapid series of events in the later part of chapter four to focus on the authority of Jesus.**
- **With this morning's reading, we see a different literary tool used, with a lengthy story on the encounter between Jesus and Simon Peter.**

**This account will provide some important lessons for us about our lives and the mission of the church.**

**We will also see how important it is to remember that the Four Gospels are weaved together by the Holy Spirit, their common author, to give us the full picture of Jesus and His work as the Son of Man.**

**Both Matthew and Mark do not even mention the miracle of the fish, while the Gospel of John assumes an intimate knowledge of this event as we learn about how Jesus related to Peter after the Resurrection at this same location!**

**Luke's aim is to focus on the calling of Peter, even though all four Gospels agree that Peter's brother Andrew & the sons of Zebedee, John and James were also called that day.**

- **It is interesting that Luke explains how Jesus came to encounter Peter by referring to the crowds pressing in on Jesus.**

**This seems to stand in contrast with the end of chapter four where we read, "43 but He said to them, "I must preach the kingdom of God to the other cities also, because for this purpose I have been sent." 44 And He was preaching in the synagogues of Galilee."**

- **As we shall see later in Acts, the common practice was to take the Gospel, the Good News, to the nation of Israel and then to the Gentiles.**
- **This was Christ's own command after His Resurrection when the disciples wanted to know if he was going to "restore the kingdom," thinking the Gospel was all about national Israel.**

**Jesus told them, "8 But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."**

**We see the beginning of this here in Luke chapter five: Jesus has presented the Gospel in the Synagogues of Galilee where it is rejected by the apostate shepherds of Israel and now is pressed upon by vast crowds of people: Some with believing faith, others there to see the show or as we will later see, just hanging around for the free food.**

- **As we look at what happens with Peter and his fellow fishermen, we see Jesus teaching the disciples that they will take the Gospel to the Gentiles as well, to ALL the nations of the earth.**

**[Note: In the Old Testament the dominant pictures are almost always shepherds and the land: Now we have fishermen and the sea!]**

**Luke passes over what Jesus taught that morning and focuses on Peter: BUT this account still gives us a beautiful picture of Jesus, the creator and sustainer of all there is, sitting in His creation teaching His truth to the people gathered there.**

- **Skeptics will often say something like, "Well, if God exists, He should just appear right here and tell me what to do and then I will believe!"**

**Our answer, remembering this account should be two-fold:**

**1) We have many eyewitness accounts of appearances like this one to relate where God appears and tells us what to do...**

**AND we should point out that many of those present did not believe even when the God of the universe was there speaking with them!**

- **We could do an entire sermon on that alone, but Luke's focus is on the encounter with Peter!**

**Jesus turns and tells Peter to go into the deep and let down the nets.**

- **This is not Peter's first encounter with Jesus, so it should not surprise us that he obeys this seemingly bizarre request:**
- **BUT remember, they had fished ALL night with no reward and now Jesus wants them to try about mid-day [wrong time] and deep water [wrong place]**
- **Peter is honest in his objection, but obeys and the result is almost immediate: There are enough fish to begin breaking the nets, they call for help and the catch is enough to start sinking two ships!**
- **Here is a lesson for us that we should not miss this morning: Obedience brings blessing while disobedience brings curses.**
- **This is a theme that runs from Genesis to Revelation and we have here one of the most personal and clear examples of how this principle works.**

**The command made little sense to Peter as the fisherman and came at a time where they must have been exhausted, but he obeyed and was blessed.**

- **We are going to see the direct application of this in regards to evangelism as Peter is commissioned to be a fisher of men with this lesson still fresh in his mind.**

**However, we must not pass over this important place without thinking of other areas where Peter can teach us a lesson:**

**Where the rubber meets the road!**

**1) When families are facing financial troubles, the FIRST thing that we tell them is to be faithful in their tithing. If they have not been, they will think this is impossible, just as Peter thought it foolish to cast yet another net for fish!**

**Those who continue to disobey will continue to struggle, and even if they manage to accumulate worldly treasure at some point they would likely end up as the rich man who just built bigger barns, with no regard for their souls or the souls of others, because their focus and priorities have been wrong from the beginning.**

**Those who say "there is NO way, humanly speaking" and then proceed to do what Jesus has commanded will find they have their daily bread and peace of mind!**

**2) When work, play, family or just plain busyness keeps people from attending worship on Sunday and enjoying the blessings of the Lord's Day, we remind them of God's commandments, and if they are members, the vows they have taken.**

**Again, if they respond with "there is not enough time in the week to take one day in seven for rest," but then obey they are truly blessed and find God's strength and wisdom to handle the rest of the week.**

**If they don't, their busyness or distractions will not only ruin the Lord's Day, but all the rest of the week as well.**

**3) When married folks have problems, again we call them back to the vows they have taken and the clear commands of Scripture to put the Lord first in their lives, to submit one to another with the husband to love his wife and the wife to submit to the husband. Only this type of simple obedience will restore the marital bliss. Sex therapy or fancy counseling or special get-away conferences will only be like putting Neosporin and a Band-Aid on a cancerous growth.**

**➤ I could go on, but I think you get the picture and we need to move on and see Peter's reaction!**

**Luke is using Peter as an example of how we should bow to the authority of Jesus as we learned in Chapter four:**

**All of his expertise as a fisherman told him there was no use dropping a net in deep water at midday AFTER they had failed to catch anything toiling all night. BUT he simply bowed to the authority of Jesus and said, "nevertheless at Your word I will let down the net." As a result, the story gets very exciting and Peter clearly sees the power of the Messiah!**

**Next we see Peter responding to the reality of who Jesus is just as we do each Lord's Day during our Covenant Renewal Worship: We respond to His call to worship and immediately confess our sins.**

**Peter, "fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord!"**

**After the resurrection and the coming of the Holy Spirit we, and Peter, no longer ask Jesus to depart, but we are still in awe & commanded to confess our sins.**

- **In both cases, Jesus comes to bring comfort and a commission!**
- **Jesus said to Peter, “Do not be afraid. From now on you will catch men.”**

**In our worship service we receive from the officers of Christ Church the assurance of pardon: The assurance of our forgiveness follows our confession of sin and begins our journey through Word and Sacrament so we can be commissioned as “fishers of men.”**

**As I mentioned earlier, Peter is now commissioned to become a fisher of men, and he, Andrew, John and James respond by leaving all behind to serve Jesus. I am sure Peter and the rest of them never forgot the powerful lesson Jesus taught them on this morning by the sea:**

**They had toiled all night with all their human skill and strength BUT brought in no fish.**

- **They listened to the simple command of Jesus, and soon their boats were filled to overflowing.**

**Peter certainly had those times where his flesh reared up and brought strong rebukes from both Jesus and later the Apostle Paul. BUT the Peter that we will see in the Book of Acts is greatly used of God and knows that ALL authority and power has been given to Jesus which ensures Peter’s and OUR success as fishers of men!**

**It would be edifying to also look at John’s account of Peter and Jesus again at the Sea of Galilee in chapter twenty-one of John’s Gospel: But I will have to leave that as your homework assignment!**

- **Remember that the Holy Spirit is the common author of all four Gospels and expects us to consider them as a whole!**

**As you do, look for what is similar and what is contrasted as you again see Jesus meeting Peter at the Sea of Galilee after he fished all night without catching a thing!**

**Once again, the Lord’s command is followed and the result is a rich blessing for Peter and the world. A massive catch of 153 LARGE fish which represented I believe the fullness of the Gentiles being brought in by the Saints: The fishers of men!**

**Please take the time to compare these accounts in Luke 5 and John 21!**

**This morning we should reflect on the final admonition we read responsively in the service which Peter left the Saints as he wrote to them for the last time preparing to be martyred as Jesus had predicted.**

**Peter reminded them in verse 19, “And so we have the prophetic word confirmed, which you do well to heed as a light that shines in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts...”**

**Our confidence rests on the sure Word of God!**

- **It is free...**
- **It is available**
- **Lady Wisdom crying in the streets**
- **Peter says we should listen!**

**Our hymn of response is “Rise Again Ye Lion Hearted”**

**Let us heartily sing and commit to be the Peter’s of our day who will follow our Lord’s command and be fishers of men...**

**No matter what the cost!**

**Communion Meditation:**

**27** For who is greater, he who sits at the table, or he who serves? Is it not he who sits at the table? Yet I am among you as the One who serves. **28** But you are those who have continued with Me in My trials. **29** And I bestow upon you a kingdom, just as My Father bestowed one upon Me, **30** that you may eat and drink at My table in My kingdom, and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel." **31** *And the Lord said, "Simon, Simon! Indeed, Satan has asked for you, that he may sift you as wheat.* **32** But I have prayed for you, that your faith should not fail; and when you have returned to Me, strengthen your brethren." **33** But he said to Him, "Lord, I am ready to go with You, both to prison and to death." **34** Then He said, "I tell you, Peter, the rooster shall not crow this day before you will deny three times that you know Me."