

Calling All Disciples Luke 5:1-11

Luke is demonstrating Jesus's ministry as the last Adam. God gave Adam dominion over creation, but he surrendered that honor in the Fall. Jesus came to reclaim it and Luke is proving that Jesus is the God in the flesh.

Just in this short section:

- a) He commands demons. 31-37 – supernatural.
- b) He cures the sick. 38-40 – physical.
- c) He controls fish 5:1-11 - animal.
- d) He cleanses a leper. 5:12-15 – physical

One of the ways Luke encourages Theophilus's faith is by telling him stories of the first people who trusted Jesus.

All 4 gospels record that Jesus gathered a cohort of disciples before he began his itinerant ministry in earnest. Only Luke reports this solo ministry of Jesus in and around Capernaum before calling the disciples.

First: The Location. 1

"On one occasion" = We don't know how much time has passed between this and Jesus's return from Judea (4:44).

- a) 1 - Jesus' healing ministry has attracted large crowds.
- b) 1b – And Jesus was teaching them the Bible.

"the word of God" = Only once in Matt and Mark (15:6 & 7:13) but almost 20 times in Luke-Acts it means preaching the Gospel.

Jesus did not perform miracles for only temporal purposes. In this scenario, his ultimate intent is not to provide economic assistance to beleaguered fishermen. The key is always to see Jesus as God behind the miracle (8:51-56 & 9:28-36).

On this occasion, the people are not only listening to the Word of God, but God speak the Word.

- c) 1c - Gennesaret = Sea of Galilee (Sea of Chinnereth in OT. John also

calls it the Sea of Tiberias (6:1). Perhaps because he is not from there, Luke never calls it the Sea of Galilee. In addition, it is never called the Sea of Galilee outside of the NT.

- d) Freshwater, about 13 miles wide, 7 miles long & 700 feet below sea level.
- e) Its primary source is the Jordan River which flows from Mount Hermon through the Sea of Galilee into the Dead Sea.

Second: The Opportunity. 2-3

- a) 2a – Jesus saw two boats.

Is one operated by Peter & Andrew and the other by John and James?

- b) 2b – The fishermen were not using them.
- c) 2b – They were washing their “trammel” nets.
- d) 3a – He got into Simon’s boat and pushed off the land.
- e) 3b – From there, he continued to teach the people.

Third: Jesus’s Call to Fish. 4-5

John 1:41-42 – Andrew was at Jesus’s baptism. He then brought his brother to Jesus.

Andrew, Simon Peter’s brother, was one of the two who heard what John had said and who had followed Jesus. ⁴¹ The first thing Andrew did was to find his brother Simon and tell him, “We have found the Messiah” (that is, the Christ). ⁴² And he brought him to Jesus. Jesus looked at him and said, “You are Simon son of John. You will be called Cephas” (which, when translated, is Peter)

1. Jesus’s Charge to Peter. 3-4.
 - a) 3b – “Put out a little from the land” – this is 2nd person singular.
 - b) 4b – “Put out into the deep” – this is 2nd person singular.
 - c) 4b – “Let your nets down” – this is 2nd person plural.

This is the ever-widening influence and call of Jesus to those around him. No one should think that Jesus is calling only Peter. Nor is this call only for the disciples.

Notice Jesus's tact –

- a) Easy – Put out a little from the land – That makes sense.
- b) Moderate – Put out into the deep – That presents questions.
- c) Difficult – Let your nets down – That seems ludicrous.

2. Peter's Response to Jesus. 5

- a) "Master" = *epistates* = superintendent, commander, chief – "You're the boss."

This word occurs only in Luke and in every instance but one from people who are being challenged to follow Jesus.

1 - At this point, Peter is relying on his knowledge and skill.

No one likes on-the-job-training from someone who hasn't been trained in the job.

It's one thing for Jesus to teach the Bible, it's another thing to borrow Peter's boat but it's a thing-to-far to tell Peter how to fish.

2 - Unlike the demons, the fever, the leper or the fish, Peter hesitates to obey.

v 5 – We know that Peter has already been up all night working...

- "*all night*" GR = "*through the whole night*" to emphasize their labor and exhaustion-

...and spent the morning washing and mending his nets (v 2) , so we can sympathize with him. But Jesus knows this and still challenges him.

3 - Peter comes from a long line of hesitators. Think about Moses -

Exodus 3:10, 11, 13, 4:1, 10

(Sadly, this will not be the last time the disciples protest to Jesus (8:24; 45, 9:13; 18:28).

- b) "*We have toiled all night and took nothing!*"

Jesus tells them to do so when they are discouraged and exhausted. The nets will have to be washed all over again.

It's true. This is the result when we are working alone, and Jesus is not in the boat.

c) *"But at your word I will let down the nets."*

Here is Peter as the professional fisherman and the freshman disciple.

Fourth: The Miraculous Catch. 6-7

a) *"And when they had done this..."*

Luke is clear to let Theophilus know that what he is about to read next is the direct result of Peter's obedience to Jesus.

b) *They enclosed a large number of fish...*

Nothing in their experience taught them they could catch so many fish in one spot in the middle of the day, but obedience reaped the catch of a lifetime for Peter and his friends.

Jesus knew exactly where the fish were. Peter is the master fisherman, but Jesus is the Master.

Later, he's going to tell Peter where to find one specific fish with a coin in its mouth –

Matthew 17:27 - ...go to the sea and cast a hook and take the first fish that comes up, and when you open its mouth you will find a shekel

What is Luke telling Theophilus?

- 1 – Jesus is omniscient
- 2 – Jesus is omnipotent

Nemiah 9:6-7 - You are the LORD, you alone. You have made heaven, the heaven of heavens, with all their host, the earth and all that is on it, the seas and all that is in them; and you preserve all of them; and the host of heaven worships you.

Psalms 104:24-29 - O LORD, how manifold are your works! In wisdom have you made them all; the earth is full of your creatures.²⁵ Here is the sea, great and wide, which teems with creatures innumerable, living things both small and great.²⁶ There go the ships, and Leviathan, which you formed to play in it.²⁷ These all look to you, to give them their food in due season.²⁸ When you give it to them, they gather it up; when you open your hand, they are filled with good things.²⁹ When you hide your face, they are dismayed; when you take away their breath, they die and return to their dust.

- 1 – Jesus is omniscient
- 2 – Jesus is omnipotent
- 3- When confronted by God, obedience is the only course of action.

- c) And their nets were breaking...
- d) They signaled their partners in the other boat to come help them...
- e) And they came and filled both the boats...
- f) So that they began to sink...

In this case, there is no way to count their blessings one-by-one.

Fifth: Peter's Confession. 8-10a

- a) 8a - Simon recognizes how miraculous this is.

V 9 – “astonished” = *thambos* - Only Luke uses this word and he uses it in both Luke and Acts.

- b) 8b - He fell down at Jesus' knee.
- c) 8c - He confesses his sinfulness.

This is the first time the word, “*sinner*” is found in Luke. Is Luke telling Theophilus that the greatest sinner became the greatest disciple, giving hope for every sinner? After all the key to Luke is 19:10 - *For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost.*

This is not the first time someone has reacted to God's presence like this. Sinners are traditionally destroyed by God's presence.

Exodus 20:18-19 - Now when all the people saw the thunder and the flashes of lightning and the sound of the trumpet and the mountain smoking, the people were afraid and trembled, and they stood far off¹⁹ and said to Moses, “You speak to us, and we will listen; but do not let God speak to us, lest we die.”

Judges 13:22 – [Samson's father to his wife] We shall surely die, for we have seen God.

Job 42:5-6 - I had heard of you by the hearing of the ear, but now my eye sees you;⁶ therefore I despise myself, and repent in dust and ashes.

Isaiah 6:5 - Woe is me! For I am lost; for I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; for my eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts!

Revelation 1:17 - When I saw him, I fell at his feet as though dead.

Luke 7:34 – (Jesus is the) “friend of...sinners!” and self-confessed sinners in Luke are the most responsive to Jesus (5:30, 32; 7:34, 39; 15:1-2, 7, 10; 18:13; 19:7).

But Peter’s request for Jesus to “depart from me” differs from the crowds in Capernaum who said, “Please stay” (4:1) perhaps because Peter saw something they didn’t. For instance,

d) 8d – He acknowledges Jesus as Lord.

No longer *epistates* but *kurios* = Lord/Master – Peter is the first person in Luke’s Gospel to call Jesus, “Lord,” and this term occurs 30 times in Luke and always with Christological implications. (He’s also the first to see inside the empty tomb – 24:12).

Deuteronomy 6:13 - *It is the LORD your God you shall fear. Him you shall serve and by his name you shall swear.*

IMP: This is how Luke wants Theophilus (and all his readers) to respond to this story!

Sixth: Jesus’s Ultimate Command. 10b-11

Jesus has asked a lot of Peter in this text. Luke wants it to echo in Theophilus’s ears...but there is one thing left to hear Jesus say.

a) 10b - Do not be afraid = same in infancy narrative.

Luke A&E, it’s only natural to want to run when we see our sin. Peter wanted Jesus to go away, but Jesus wants to draw Peter near.

Isaiah 57:15a - *For thus says the One who is high and lifted up, who inhabits eternity, whose name is Holy: “I dwell in the high and holy place, and also with him who is of a contrite and lowly spirit,*

Isaiah 66:1-2 - *Thus says the LORD: “Heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool; what is the house that you would build for me, and what is the place of my rest?² All these things my hand has made, and so all these things came to be, declares the LORD. But this is the one to whom I will look: he who is humble and contrite in spirit and trembles at my word.*

b) 10c - From now on you will be catching men.

Here is Peter, the professional catcher who is now caught by Jesus.

"From now on" = This indicates a change of mind, heart, and direction (that's repentance)

- *anthropos* = humans

Fishing is traditionally a fatal occupation for the fish. But here,

- *zogreo* = take alive, capture

"Give someone a fish and you feed them for a day. Teach a person to fish and you feed them for a lifetime. Teach a person to fish for people and everyone lives forever."

- c) 11 – What else are you going to do?

PS - Jesus's call to the disciples was actually in three stages -

- a) "*Come and see*" – John 1:39
- b) "*Follow me*" – Mark 1:17
- c) "*Come and be with me*" – Mark 3:14
- d) "*Remain in me*" – John 15:5

Conclusion:

This text begins and ends with Jesus speaking to Peter.

What have I learned?

1. Disciples listen to Jesus.

V 5b – "*But at your word...*" may be the key phrase in this text

In Luke's gospel, many people gather at many times to hear Jesus, but it is to no personal difference (2:47; 5:15; 6:18; 10:39; 15:1; 19:48; 21:38).

James 1:14 – "*Faith without works is dead*" and faith without obedience is not faith.

Luke has previously recorded Zechariah's hesitation, Mary's obedience and now Peter's. He's undoubtedly hoping for Theophilus to equally obey.

It's dangerous to hear Jesus and not listen –

Matthew 11:20-24 - *Then he began to denounce the cities where most of his mighty works had been done, because they did not repent. ²¹ "Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! For if the mighty works done in you had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes. ²² But I tell you, it will be more bearable on the day of judgment for Tyre and Sidon than for you. ²³ And you, Capernaum, will you be exalted to heaven? You will be brought down to Hades. For if the mighty works done in you had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day. ²⁴ But I tell you that it will be more tolerable on the day of judgment for the land of Sodom than for you."*

2. Disciples constantly repent.
3. Disciples leave everything to follow Jesus.

Peter and his friends had been watching Jesus. They had seen him heal Peter's mother-in-law and had heard about his miracles throughout Galilee and Judea. Now, confronted by his personal call, they abandon everything but him.

APP: It is interesting that Jesus challenges Peter concerning what he knows best at a moment of failure and weariness (he's been up all night and caught nothing). Jesus challenges him at his strongest point but the worst moment.

The miraculous catch of fish is intended to demonstrate God's power through the disciples as they catch men.

Acts 2:37-41 - *Now when they heard this they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, "Brothers, what shall we do?" ³⁸ And Peter said to them, "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. ³⁹ For the promise is for you and for your children and for all who are far off, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to himself." ⁴⁰ And with many other words he bore witness and continued to exhort them, saying, "Save yourselves from this crooked generation." ⁴¹ So those who received his word were baptized, and there were added that day about three thousand souls.*

GOSPEL: This is not just Peter's choice. It's Theophilus's. It's yours.

"Come for the miracles, stay for Jesus."

To the church: Every member should be doing something, and no member should be doing nothing. **Song:** *Christ our Hope in Life and Death.*

Community Groups

1. Who is Luke and why did he write this Gospel?
2. What text/event in Luke has been the most meaningful to you thus far?
3. Read Luke 5:1-12
4. In what arenas has Jesus already demonstrated his power?
5. Where does this event take place?
6. Who are the major characters?
7. In your own words, what happens in this text?
8. Why do you think Jesus waited until Peter had fished all night without catching any fish to challenge him? How might you apply that experience?
9. How does Jesus progressively challenge Jesus and what might your takeaway be about that?
10. How does Peter respond to Jesus's encouragement to go fishing?
11. What is Peter relying on?
12. About what might you be hesitating in obedience?
13. How does Peter respond to the great catch of fish?
14. How might Peter's terminology for Jesus demonstrate his life change?
15. How does Jesus respond to Peter's confession and fear?
16. What does Luke prove to Theophilus about Jesus in this text?
17. What does Jesus ultimately tell Peter to do?
18. What is Luke's point in recording this story?
19. What most stands out to you in this passage?
20. What is your takeaway?

Daily Devotion

Monday, April 8th. Read Luke 5:1-11. This text opens with a crowd crowding Jesus into the lake. In response, he asked to borrow Simon's boat so that he can sit just offshore and continue to teach the people. Eventually, Simon left this boat to follow Jesus. In effect, God owns everything. We are called to view life this way and to steward God's gifts. Are you holding back anything from Christ? Is it safer with you or God? Recommit everyone of God's gifts to him right now. Then begin to manage them accordingly.

Tuesday, April 9th. Read Luke 5:1-11. Jesus asked Peter to do three things in vs 3-4. God's call on Peter is deepening and widening. What about you? In verse 5, Peter responded, "You're the boss," acknowledging Jesus's control of his life and livelihood. Yesterday you thought about your material possessions. Today you're thinking about your very life and the lives of those you love. Can you trust Jesus with this too? Take

time now to commit yourself and your loved ones to Christ and then daily recommit everyone to Jesus.

Wednesday, April 10th. Read Luke 5:1-11 & Hb 11:1. Look closely in verse 5 at the change in Peter's response to Jesus. How is God challenging your faith? How are you doubting? Take time now to confess, "*Lord, I believe; help my unbelief*" (Mk 9:24). Then daily bring that person/thing before the Lord asking God to help your unbelief.

Thursday, April 11th. Read Luke 5:1-11 & 1 John 1:9. When Peter saw the great catch of fish, he fell before Jesus, confessed his sinfulness, and acknowledged Jesus's Lordship. How does God respond to our confession? How does God's "faithful/he'll do it every time" response encourage our confession? Is there any sin you are trying to hide from God? Can he be "Lord" of your life if you are doing so? Think about what you are missing out on by running from, rather than to Jesus. Take time today to confess your sin and bask in God's forgiveness.

Friday, April 12th. Read Luke 5:1-11 & Matt 28:18-20. In fishing, something usually ends up dying, but not in this text. What does it mean to "catch" men? Whom have you "caught" for Jesus? Who in your world needs to be "caught" by Jesus? Pray for them right now. Then, ask the Lord for wisdom in fishing for this person. Perhaps you could ask a friend to pray with you and for you as you fish for people.