

“Master, we toiled all night and took nothing! But at your word I will let down the nets.”
(LUKE 5:5)

One of my favourite Scriptures is Proverbs 3:5-6 *“Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He will make straight your paths.”* I find such comfort in knowing that not only do we not need to rely on our own understanding, but that we *shouldn't* in fact. As believers, we have the incredible privilege of having the Holy Spirit dwelling in us, guiding us and empowering us ... we need only trust in the Lord.

Simon trusted Jesus when he asked him to let down his nets once again. While most of us may not be in the fishing industry, I am sure we can all identify with this beloved bible story. The fishermen had been fishing all night and had caught nothing. Jesus interrupts them as they are cleaning their nets and asks Simon if he can get into his boat and teach the crowds who are on the shore. Simon's empty boat signifies failure and disappointment at having 'toiled all night' with no catch. But Simon allows Jesus to climb into his empty boat and effectively use it as his podium to teach.

This has been a very personal revelation for me. I have been struggling with health issues for the past few months – which in many ways has been my 'empty boat'. My health has at many times left me feeling inadequate to do the work that God has called me to do. But as I have allowed Jesus to enter in and to teach me from this place of brokenness, and sense of failure and defeat, I have found myself in awe of how the Holy Spirit has guided and empowered me.

But the story doesn't end there, and after teaching the crowds Jesus tells Simon to put out his nets once again. Simon was a fisherman. Jesus, who was a carpenter by trade, had entered his 'place of work' and was instructing him to put out his nets. Simon doesn't rely on his own understanding, but humbly obeys. And I believe that we can all learn so much from his response: *“Master, we toiled all night and took nothing! **But at your word** I will let down the nets.”* Exhausted, discouraged, frustrated - I'm sure Simon felt all of these and more - he still chose to allow Jesus' word to have authority as he followed His instruction. For me the miracle of this story isn't the huge catch that followed, nearly sinking two boats. For me the miracle is Simon's heart completely yielded to the Master and the authority of his word!

Just as Simon chose to allow Jesus to use his 'empty boat' instead of wallowing in disappointment, we too have this decision to make. We can choose to look at our 'empty boat'- our circumstances - through our own understanding, or allow Jesus to enter in and use it for His purpose and glory. We need to take every decision, every conversation, every piece of work that we do, and submit it to the authority of God's Word and allow the Holy Spirit to empower us and direct our path.