

# CHOSEN

A L E N T E N J O U R N E Y

## — WEEK FIVE — “FOR A PURPOSE”

### — CHECK-IN —

**How are you? What’s one cool thing God has done in your life in the last week? And... today, we’re talking about a guy fishing on a boat who has a lifechanging experience. So, have you fished? Do you fish? Tell your best fishing story. (Maybe it’s just about the best fish you ate.)**

### — OPENING PRAYER —

**God of Purpose,  
remind us that we are called despite our fears.  
Help us to follow you unafraid.**

## — INTRODUCTION —

Welcome to week 5 of our series, “Chosen,” where we have been looking at Jesus’s “chosen” followers, investigating how they were drawn to him as a way to hopefully see ourselves in their stories and be drawn to him, as well. We’ve met Mary of Magdalene, Matthew the tax collector, Nicodemus the Pharisee, and, last week, James and John, the Sons of Thunder. (That’s a lot to review, so if you missed any... go back and check out the Reflections on the mobile app, website, Facebook page, and the accompanying guides. It’s good stuff!) For today, we’ll continue our dive into these stories, both the embellished ones from the tv show, *The Chosen*, and their Biblical sources, as we’re introduced to perhaps the primary character within the disciples. But we’ll come back to him.

**Warm-up Question: Mags, Matt, Nic, the Sons of Thunder (James & John,) who is your favorite character we’ve covered so far, and why? Or, if you’re watching the show or are familiar with the gospels, do you have a favorite character we haven’t covered yet? Ready, go!**

## — THE CHOSEN —

As we're using this series to prepare our hearts for Easter, let's remember our thesis: Jesus's most devoted followers were drawn to him because... in him they found healing for their *brokenness*. And we are diving into these characters and their stories because in them we identify our own brokenness, such that we might be drawn to Jesus in the same powerful and healing way they were. Today, we meet the third of the triumvirate, (yes, triumvirate, look it up... that's 10 points for Pastor Mike,) of Jesus's followers. When Jesus needed his inner circle, he called on the two dudes we met last week, James and John. But also a third guy, someone who would become the leader of the disciples and *the* leader of the early church...

### SIMON

Now, this is not Simon the Zealot, Simon the Sorcerer, Simon the Pharisee, Simon the Cyrene, Simon the Tanner, Simon the brother, Simon the Leper, Simon Says, or even Simon the handheld game from the 70s. (There were lots of Simons in the Bible.) This Simon was the brother of Andrew, the son of Jonah, and one of the first to be called to be a follower of Jesus. Jesus liked giving nicknames, and this Simon gets perhaps the most important of all the nicknames of Jesus's followers, a nickname not designed to differentiate him from the other Simons, but rather one that was to call him out of an old life into a new one.

But that's where we'll end. To start, we need to go back to the story of how he found Jesus... or rather, how Jesus found him.

**Read Luke, chapter 5, verses 1 through 11.**

“From now on you'll be fishing for people.” (v.11, NLT) Note that is is also how our Sons of Thunder from last week became Jesus's followers, as well. Jesus teaching. A crowd listening. Empty nets. No Fish. And a boat used for a stage. All this led to a moment that would change the entire course of Simon's life, and ultimately the course of human history.

**Question 1: Even without such a cool portrayal of this scene in the tv show, *The Chosen*, you can imagine just how awesome this event is. What stands out to you about this moment? How would you have felt were you Simon... sleepy, worn out, frustrated and this stranger starts giving you orders? If you were Andrew or James or John or the crowds on the shore watching, (we often forget they're still there,) what would have been your reaction? What catches your attention about this story?**

All we really know of Simon's backstory is what we read here. He's a fisherman. He lives in the Capernaum area. We know from another story, where Jesus heals his mother-in-law, that he is married. (A solid way to get in good with the wife and in-laws.) But that's about all the facts we get from the Bible. There are hints,

though, within the scriptures that allow the incredibly creative writers of the *The Chosen* to do what they do, create 3 episodes worth of backstory for Simon. The first hint they run with is that the boys are fishing at night. Now, sometimes, that's just when the good fishing is. But, it could also mean that they're fishing under the cover of darkness for a less-than-respectable reason. Also, we read this remark from Simon in verse 8, "Oh, Lord, please leave me—I'm such a sinful man." The show takes this info and creates a backstory where Simon, behind on his taxes, (to Matthew, of course,) makes a deal with the Romans to clear his debt, and the night before he meets Jesus, he's out at night fishing in a last desperate attempt to pay his debt before they seize his boat and throw him in prison, effectively destroying his life. And so, the next morning, he's tired, frustrated, exhausted, and desperate... enter Jesus.

When Jesus wraps up his sermon and the crowds skip out to make sure they're first in line at Tiberius Roadhouse, he asks Simon to row out a bit farther and to let down the nets one more time. And what does Simon do? He protests! He says, "Master...we worked hard all last night and didn't catch a thing." (v. 5, NLT) Now, the word Simon uses here is not "Rabbi," that is sometimes translated "master" or "teacher," like we'll see him use later when he's a student of Jesus. The word he uses here is a Greek word that means, "boss," or "commander." So, it comes with a little sass, like, "okay boss, we ain't caught jack all night, but if you say so..." There's a reluctance and frustration in his response.

But alas, he does what he is asked, and miracle of miracles, the nets become overloaded with fish. He hollers for the Sons of Thunder to aid in the haul, and they nearly capsize both boats with the catch. But when the splashing stops, Simon's elation quickly turns again to despair. He remembers who he is. He remembers who he perceives himself to be. And now, in shame, he realizes he's standing in front of the Messiah. And whether he's just remembered his shady deal with the Romans (as per the show) or some other thing he's done in his past, Simon drops to his knees in fear, feeling unworthy to be in Jesus's presence. "Oh, Lord, please leave me—I'm such a sinful man." (v8. NLT) In this moment, having seen the power of Jesus to command even the fish of the sea, Simon falls to his knees, afraid, and we see his brokenness laid bare. Simon's brokenness is his *fear*. But Jesus, doesn't dismiss him, saying, "okay, I'll leave. Enjoy the fish!" He chooses Simon...

## DESPITE HIS FEAR

We all have those Simon-like moments where we are afraid of being truly known. What Simon learned, and what we'll learn, is that Jesus already knows your fear and chooses you anyway. Despite your fear of being known, despite your fear of being found out, despite your fear of being rejected if Jesus only knew the "real" you... Jesus chooses you anyway.

**Question 2: We all have a desire to be known, but live in fear that if people knew our authentic self, we'd be rejected or we feel unworthy. Are you afraid of people knowing the real you? With whom do you hide yourself the most? Around whom do you feel you can be the most authentically "you"?**

Jesus chooses you despite your fear of being known. And here's why... you can't hide from Jesus. See, in the face of Simon's fear of Jesus finding out his sins, Jesus says, "Don't be afraid." Simon is operating as if Jesus doesn't already know it all, and hasn't planned this whole thing. Look at the story... Verse 2 says Jesus "noticed" two empty boats. Jesus never just happens to notice something. Everything Jesus does is precisely on purpose. So you have to believe that Jesus *chose* that morning to preach, *chose* that particular beach to preach from, and he *chose* Simon's boat to hop onto. And it doesn't stop there. In other versions of this story, Jesus is orchestrating this interaction from the shoreline while the boys are out on the lake. In Luke's version of this story, though, where is Jesus when the miracle takes place? Yeah, HE'S STILL IN THE BOAT! Jesus never got out of the boat! He chose Simon and refused to let him go despite his fear. You can't hide from Jesus. He loves you so much, he chooses the time and place where you are, he chooses your boat to get into, and he'll stay there, saying "don't be afraid," until you realize how much you need him and fall to you knees at his feet. As broken as we are, Jesus draws us in saying, "don't be afraid. I already know, and I choose you still."

**Question 3: Do you try to hide from Jesus? What does it mean to you to know that Jesus chose your proverbial boat and says to you, “don’t be afraid, I choose you”? Is it humbling? Is it disconcerting? Is it challenging? Discuss.**

## — CLOSING —

But the story doesn’t end there, does it? Jesus takes this moment one step farther for Simon. He says, “Follow me... from now on you will fish for people.” (v.11) Jesus doesn’t just forgive Simon’s sins. He doesn’t just heal him of his pain and fear and brokenness. He chooses him...

## FOR A PURPOSE

Remember when we said Simon got perhaps the most important nickname of any disciple Fast forward a bit, and Jesus says to him, “from now on you will be called ‘Peter,’ because you are the rock upon which I will build my church, and all the power of hell will not overcome it.” (Matthew 16:18 NLT) In the Greek, the word “Petros” literally means, “rock.” So this nickname was not meant simply to differentiate him from the other Simons. This nickname was intended to remind him of the purpose he was given at *this* moment on *this* boat... to draw others to Christ, just as he’d gathered in the fish that day. Simon Peter’s brokenness drew him to Christ, but his fear would eventually turn him into a force for Christ in the early



church, making him the foundation upon which that church would be built. He was chosen for a purpose. As are we. We stand afraid, feeling unworthy of being chose by Jesus. But that fear can be turned into a force for leading others to that same love. You can't hide from Jesus. He chose you, and is standing there waiting for you to fall to your knees, realizing just how much you need him. And as he did for Simon that day, he sees past the fears and failures, and chooses you for a purpose.

**Take some time to share prayer requests or celebrations.  
Close in prayer.**