

The Catch of Fish Lk.5:1-11 lesson 14 1-16-99

Last week: Jesus, when He walked this earth, veiled Himself with humanity, but He was still 100% almighty God. And when He decided something was going to happen or not happen, that was it. Even in His humility, something about the commanding presence of the authority of the Sovereign King of the Universe just froze these people in their tracks.

1:30

Have you noticed, ever since we have been back in Galilee, no disciples? Where did they go?

Mk 1:16 As Jesus walked beside the Sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and his brother Andrew casting a net into the lake, for they were fishermen. ..19 When he had gone a little farther, he saw James son of Zebedee and his brother John in a boat, preparing their nets.

They went back to their old lives. Jesus called them, they left their business, followed for almost a year, arrived back home, and went back to work. They thought they were signing on to a short-term mission.

3:00

v.16 - **casting their nets** (AMPHIBALLO) 8 foot in diameter casting net - skilled throw like a lasso - shallow water

At once they left their nets (DIKTUON) **and followed him** Libs: Mark just cut and pasted a bunch of oral traditions and various sources - not reliable hist acc. The very fact that the 2 different words are used is evidence that it *is* a reliable historical acc. You will see why in a moment.

5:10

Mk 1:17 "Come, follow me," Jesus said, "and I will make you fishers of men."

Does that make you excited? Not me. I like the idea of evangelism, but I just don't get too excited about the image of fishing (fish feeding) I think I would like it more if there were more catching involved.

When Jesus said this, He did not intend for you to picture sitting in a chair chewing on a piece of hay waiting for a nibble. (That's the way most of us think of evangelism or ministry) He said this to commercial fishermen.

This job they had was no picnic. it was backbreaking work (and dangerous). They would go out at night into the deep water (no good in daytime). They would take their huge nets – over 100 ft long, and semicircle. [(DIKTUON)] Spread them out, let the weighted perimeter fall down over the fish, and then pull them hand over hand back in. (Imagine a net that size soaking wet). Then again, and again. – so they were not out there with a rod and reel. This was very hard work that only strong, courageous men could perform.

8:04

It paid better than average. Sea of Galilee: “There is probably no other sheet of water in the world of equal dimensions with such a variety and profusion of fish” - Eastons

They would drop the nets over huge schools of fish. In the morning, they would sell them in the marketplace, and pay all their employees. I don't know how many fish they normally caught in a night, but it would have to be enough to cover all the salaries, all the equipment overhead, and profit.

Most small businesses like this have a very small profit margin. For example, maybe they needed to catch 1000 a night to break even – so anything over that was profit. Less than that would be a disaster.

Once the fish were sold, came the grueling work of putting everything away – a tedious but important process. They would probably get some breakfast, then begin cleaning out whatever debris got tangled into the nets. Then they would work on mending them (didn't have today's nylon ropes). Imagine yourself – sitting there after laboring hard all night, now just sitting on the beach in the warmth of the morning sun – mending the nets.

Once that was done, it was probably all they could do to get themselves to stand up, and begin spreading the nets out on the rocks to dry. After they were dried out, they could fold them all up, and place them in the boat so they were ready to go back out that night. Then they could go home and get some rest.

But not this day.

Mk 1:16 As Jesus walked beside the Sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and his brother Andrew casting a net into the lake,

This is a totally different word for net – casting net. (AMPHIBALLO) 8 foot in diameter casting net - skilled throw like a lasso - shallow water

What's going on? Are these guys greedy? After an entire shift of commercial fishing, now they are trying to snag a few more?

No – no one is that greedy. These men were exhausted. Why were they doing this? The answer is in Luke's account. Lk.5:5 **"...we've worked hard all night and haven't caught anything."**

I don't know what they needed to cover their overhead. But this night they didn't get enough for any profit – they didn't get enough to cover their expenses. They didn't catch 1000, 700, 300, 50, 10, 1! That is unheard of – there is no natural explanation. It's a miracle. They must have wondered if they were in the twilight Zone.

12:30

Why are they fishing along the shore with casting nets? They need breakfast! They need to feed their families!

After a real successful night, the process of putting away the nets was probably more tolerable. But after a night like this, it must have been tough to be motivated.

Luke: they had worked hard all night. Term trans. **"worked hard"** implies difficulty and trouble in the work resulting in exhaustion and discouragement. It is trans "discouraged" in Rev.2:3.

They had labored hard all night and now they are exhausted and discouraged, and frustrated.

Can you imagine Jesus coming up at this moment and saying, "I'm going to call you to a ministry that is similar to fishing"?

But there's one more thing you need to know. On this particular morning, the monotony of the work was broken up by the fact that Jesus showed up and did what He always did whenever He went anywhere – He preached.

Lk.5:1-11 One day as Jesus was standing by the Lake of Gennesaret, with the people crowding around him and listening to the word of God, 2he saw at the water's edge two boats, left there by the fishermen, who were washing their nets. 3He got into one of the boats, the one belonging to Simon, and asked

him to put out a little from shore. Then he sat down and taught the people from the boat.

15:30

He arranges for the logistics of making sure everyone can hear and see, and then He begins teaching. There's no telling how much attention Peter was paying. He probably tried to listen, but it's tough to make it all the way through a sermon when you worked all night, and now you're just sitting there motionless on the sunny beach.

He was probably half asleep...until suddenly he heard his own name. 'Simon!'

AN "UNREASONABLE" COMMAND

4 "Put out into deep water, and let down the nets for a catch."

Now that you have just done all this work, I want you to take the crew back out. Keep in mind, at this point, Peter doesn't know what is going to happen. When he hears this, what he hears is that Jesus is telling him to take 1000 pounds of nets, load them into the boat, go out to deep water, and do the same process they did all night. How long would that take? All day.

If you didn't catch anything at night, you really won't in the day – the fish are too deep. Jesus is telling them to go out there and work another shift of backbreaking work. Then what? They will have to prepare the nets just in time to go out again at night!

AN UNQUESTIONING OBEDIENCE

5 Simon answered, "Master, we've worked hard all night and haven't caught anything. But because you say so, I will let down the nets."

17:35

Isn't that great? Peter isn't always the most obedient, but what a great response this is. (not "You are going to tell me how to fish?")

This is the kind of obedience God rewards. Obey even before you understand.

They were ready for a long day of fishing. But that's not what happened.

AN OVERWHELMING MIRACLE

Lk 5:6 When they had done so, they caught such a large number of fish that their nets began to break. 7 So they signaled their partners in the other boat to come and help them, and they came and filled both boats so full that they began to sink.

Picture: Every fish in the sea of Galilee jumps in the net – Like a hatchery.

Instinct- snap into action s - Peter barking orders.

“Pull pull pull pull pull!” “Rip” “Stop stop stop stop stop!”
calls other boat - shoveling - boats start to sink!

Same as other time - Fishing with Jesus is hard on the equipment

The blessings of God are often so abundant they create new problems. (This year “Please send us more people” Next year: “Please give us more space”)

These boats were over 27 ft. long. To sink these things would take several tons of fish.

21:27

AN AWESOME FEAR

Lk 5:8 When Simon Peter saw this, he fell at Jesus' knees and said, "Go away from me, Lord; I am a sinful man!" 9 For he and all his companions were astonished at the catch of fish they had taken, 10and so were James and John, the sons of Zebedee, Simon's partners.

When you first meet someone, you are very careful. You may be polite, but you don't expose too much of yourself to the person. You make yourself vulnerable to close friends, but when you just meet someone, you wear some armor. We have a natural reaction whenever we meet someone, to evaluate them, figure out what kind of person they are, and answer one basic question: “Is this person safe or not?”

3 ministers: 1. Drunk 2. Porn 3. Gossip (Some people are safe, others are not)

24:18

When the disciples saw this man make the sea obey Him, they were gripped with fear. “We don't have a category for this man.” This is not just a miracle-worker. This is the Lord of fish, and the Lord of fishermen, and the lord of nature, and the Lord of all creation. At this moment, Peter realizes he is standing a foot away from an all-seeing, holy God. The result is he instantly becomes aware of the corruption in his heart and wants Jesus to leave.

Jean Paul Sartre: famous philosopher who wrote a one-act drama called “No Exit” It was about hell. Hell is being in a room with other people staring at you forever

and not saying anything. Sartre understood that nothing is worse for a human being than to be exposed and scrutinized.

Sartre was horrified by the idea of the existence of God, because God would know everything. The worst thing he could imagine would be “to be submitted to the unremitting gaze of a holy God.”

The most dangerous place in the universe for a sinner is in the presence of a holy God.

As humans, we have a built in fear of God’s holiness, as well we should. But do you want to hear something startling? If Sartre would have read this, he would have thought the writer was insane: David said **search me O God, and know my heart...see if there be any wicked way in me**

??? Someone who actually knows he is vile on the inside and still *wants* to be scrutinized by God? How could that be? It’s because David had experienced something Sartre knew nothing about: forgiveness. Ro.1-4 teach about salvation by faith, and 5:1 Therefore we have peace with God.

28:05

The second time Jesus did this exact same miracle (after the res.), Peter swims to Jesus – the opposite reaction.

What happened in between? Faith

The amazing truth the Christians carry around with them is the reality that the one place in the universe where you can really be vulnerable and safe, naked without fear is in the presence of Christ. Even though we have this built in fear of God’s holiness, and we know we are sinful – in Christ we are welcome.

Some in this room may have no peace with God. To you I say this: Understand that there is absolutely no escape from the holiness of God. You either have to gain peace with God, or never have peace.

How do you gain peace with God? Let’s see how Peter did it.

30:00

Peter is scared to death, because He knows what he deserves. Is Jesus going to give Peter what he deserves?

AN UNQUALIFIED PROMISE

Lk 5:10 **Then Jesus said to Simon, "Don't be afraid; from now on you will catch men."**

Instead of punishing him, Jesus calls him. Jesus didn't just say, "I will make you fishers of men." Luke tells us the rest of what He said: "I will make you fishers of men, and from now on you will be catching men."

And at the moment Jesus said that, hundreds of fish are flopping all over the beach. Do you see why Jesus did this miracle?

Jesus had called them to follow Him. They did, short term, and then tried to leave.

Without me, you can't do anything -. You fish, wagon wheels and sandles. you obey me, great success (proves)

32:35

AN INSTANT CAREER CHANGE

11 So they pulled their boats up on shore, left everything and followed him.

(Now Mk. Makes sense – not a hodgpodge) He called them to leave their business for good. Jesus: "I didn't call you for the short-term." There may be short-term assignments, but there is no such thing a short-tem calling.

These disciples had to learn that you cannot make a partial commitment to following Christ. Following Christ means just that – the day you begin following Him is the last day of you choosing your own path through life.

"But I'm a self-directed man" "I'm an independent woman" "I have to carry out my own plans."

Isa.30:1 **"Woe to...those who carry out plans that are not mine"**

"But it's my life!"

Jer 10:23 **"a man's life is not his own; it is not for man to direct his steps."**

Why so willing to leave everything? Because Jesus had just demonstrated his ability to grant success when they obeyed. (Fishing no fun when controller of fish says no)

Will they have luck? Same as they just had (not a random miracle)

Just Jesus' optimism, or does he have the power to guarantee some significant success?

Limited success? One soul once in a while? NO! The kind that makes the nets break and boats sink - more than you can handle.

34:02

What happened? Did Peter have mild success?

Acts 2:38, 41 - 3000 in one sermon (reminds me of the catch of fish) see?

You leave these nets and I'll make you fishers and catchers and I'll give success and they did and They turned the world up-side-down!

This is what it is like to work for the Lord! Success! When God calls someone He guarantees success.

35:10

Jn.15:5 - a little fruit? MUCH (apart from me you will fish all night with no success)

Josh.1:8 - be faithful and you will be prosperous and successful

1 Co.3:6 - Paul planted, Appolos watered, but the Lord gave the increase

Neh.2:18,20 - the God of heaven will give you success

What is He calling us to? SALVATION

Want to know the #1 reason why people should be Xian? God is calling them to be.

All people are called to salvation:

Jesus said He **came** into this world **to call sinners** to repentance. (Mt.9:13, Mk.2:17, Lk.5:32)
Ro.1:5 **we received grace and apostleship to call people from among all the Gentiles to the obedience that comes from faith.** ⁶ And you also are among those who are **called** to belong to Jesus Christ.

I agree with the Reformers who said, "Those whom God calls, He calls seriously." This is why I don't agree with Limited Atonement.

God has genuinely extended the offer of salvation to the world. So everyone is called in that way.

THE XIAN IS ALIVE TO GOD. (responsive)

Rom 6:11 **count yourselves dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus.**

The difference is simple. A **Xian is responsive to God**, an **unbeliever is unresponsive.**

The unbeliever lives as though God doesn't exist. God calls, no response. God woes, he ignores.

But the believer is alive to God. A believer is someone who seeks God, follows God, obeys God, listens to God's Word.

So every person is called to follow Christ. And every person is called to be holy.

But let me ask you this: how many of you have been called into a specific ministry? Answer: all.

In the weeks to come, we will talk about how to know for sure what that ministry is. But for now – realize this: once you discover it, you will have guaranteed success in it. You will not have success in anything else.

Announcements:

- Hand out cards
- Newsletters and tax receipts
- Love feast next Sunday night 6:00
- Sunday morning prayer ministry
- Tapes
-

To those who have not yet responded to God's invitation:

Acts 2:38-39 **"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 The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off-- for all whom the Lord our God will call."**

To those who have:

Heb 3:1 **Therefore, holy brothers, who share in the heavenly calling, fix your thoughts on Jesus, the apostle and high priest whom we confess.**

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Last week: The Sidonian widow and Syrian commander received the blessings in place of Israel, because they responded in humble faith. Jesus was sent to preach the Gospel to one group and one group only – Heaven is available only to one category of people: humble believers.

Should that information cause us to take a different approach to evangelism than is commonly used?

Yes. We should appeal to the humble-hearted, not the fat-walleted, or the most attractive, or most skilled, or to the largest number.

AN UNQUESTIONING OBEDIENCE

5Simon answered, "Master, we've worked hard all night and haven't caught anything. But because you say so, I will let down the nets." Peter responded instantly and without argument to what must have seemed to be a ridiculous, wasteful, and very difficult command.

Why do you think this type of obedience is important? Why can't we just wait until we fully understand, and then obey?

How would you like your kids to obey that way? There is more than one reason why we obey God. One reason is so we do the right thing. But there are other reasons, like

- because the proper way to view God is as our authority. If He has to persuade you to do everything, that is a relationship of pears - not authority.
- Faith pleases Him
- Sometimes we can't understand the reason
- Sometimes we may be able to understand, but if we knew it, it would ruin the whole point (Job)
- Sometimes time is of the essence ("Get out of the street!" "Why?")
- We are not in a position to question God

AN AWESOME FEAR

Jean Paul Sartre was horrified by the idea of the existence of God, because God would know everything. The worst thing he could imagine would be "to be submitted to the unremitting gaze of a holy God."

But David said **search me O God, and know my heart...see if there be any wicked way in me**

In this miracle Peter responded like Sartre. But when Jesus did the same miracle after the resurrection, Peter responded like David.

What was the difference?

A love relationship. Perfect love casts out fear. This morning I asked Tracy if my clothes matched. If it were a first date, I may have been too embarrassed to appear in front of her that way. But this morning I had absolutely no fear – even if she would have laughed, it wouldn't have hurt my feelings in the slightest, because I have a full confidence of her acceptance.

AN UNQUALIFIED PROMISE

Lk 5:10 **Then Jesus said to Simon, "Don't be afraid; from now on you will catch men."** And at the moment Jesus said that, hundreds of fish are flopping all over the beach.

Jesus did this miracle to prove His ability to guarantee success in ministry. You are guaranteed success. But you are not guaranteed success by your standards – only by God's.

What is your ministry, and what would constitute (1) success by human standards and (2) success by God's standards.

1. Lots of people, notoriety, people being responsive to the preaching.
2. The Gospel doing its job (convicting of sin, instructing, glorifying God, giving people tools for understanding biblical truth in the future)