



February 4, 2007

Creation Said So

As we go into our fifth Sunday of Epiphany again we remember what Epiphany is about, to make manifest or make known. It's to make manifest Jesus as the Christ. To make known that He is the Messiah. It began with his being made known to the wise men, symbolizing that the savior comes for all mankind not only for the Jew but also for the gentile. Then we saw His first miracle, the power of the laws of nature as He changed water into wine. The third Sunday we dealt with He said so, where He said, "I am the Messiah". And we saw that those around Him also said he was the Messiah. Then we went to "they said so", dealing with His enemies, they said that Jesus had said that He was the Messiah and did those by word and by their actions as they wanted to stone Him for blasphemy but we also saw that they said so they being Satan, the demons. They acknowledged that He is the Christ; the Son of God and today creation says so. How? Well let's set the stage here for one event.

In our Gospel this morning we see that Jesus is standing by the Sea of Galilee and we see that people are crowding around Him and listening to Him as He preaches. But as the people are crowding around I can just imagine they keep getting closer and closer and there's shoving and pushing and talking and it's really inefficient way of getting the Word out. When we look at verse 2, I think this is a key verse, Jesus saw that at the water's edge there were two boats left there by the fisherman who were washing their nets. These boats were pulled up on shore. Why? Because the fisherman had been fishing all night and they've pulled them up now because they don't have docks and the fisherman are washing their nets. You see, for the fisherman it's the end of the day even though it's in the morning they've been fishing at night, which most likely puts this in the summer. Fisherman would fish at night because for one thing it was cooler and their method of fishing was very different than our method of fishing. They would drop the nets and they would row along slowly and then they would have to pull these nets up by hand between two

boats. As they pulled up it would catch the fish that were in between. They would have a lantern on the lights and the light would draw the fish toward the light. Once they had done this they then would get all their fish row back into shore and then came the task of unloading the fish, cleaning the fish getting them ready for market and then they had to prepare for the next night. This was no easy task; it took several hours.

The first thing was they had to clean and wash the nets. This was done by hand and every single fiber of that net was gone over was washed the seaweed scales all of it has to be cleaned out. As they do this they mend the nets. You get a large fish in there it could thrash around and break one of the ropes and so every single strand is inspected, mended repaired. Then once its all washed its stretched out and as its stretched out its also ringing the water out of it so it dries well but it also is going to keep it limber because it has to have good shape for dropping into the water. If they just let it dry it doesn't have shape when they put it in the water and it won't open up. This took 3-4 men to really stretch it out and ring it out and get it ready and then it would be prepared for the next night. A lot of work is going on by these fishermen. Which leads us to verse 3.

Jesus got into one of the boats the one belonging to Simon to Peter and asked them to put a little from shore. He sat down and taught the people from boat. So far all is reasonable, this is a great answer to the problem that Jesus had. The people are shoving around Him wanting to be close to Him. So get in a boat go a little bit off shore and people aren't going to go walking out there then He can just sit there and He can speak to all the people as they line the shore and he'll be herd and thing will be peaceful. Now comes verse four and this is the beginning of things that aren't very reasonable.

Jesus looks to Peter when he'd finished giving His sermon and he says, "Put out into deep water and let down the nets for a catch". Now, as I said this isn't reasonable for three reasons. Reason number one they just finished a full night of fishing, they just finished doing all the cleaning, these fishermen are tired. They are ready to go home and go to bed.

Second problem the deep water is a bad place to fish. If you're going fishing the best place to fish is close to shore. Why? Well, reason one, food is more plentiful in the shallow waters of the shore this is where your small fish the fry live amongst the weeds and bushes that are along the lake. Also as the wind blows across the

bushes this is how insects are blown off the bushes into the water creating food. This is where your mosquitoes are going to be hatching. This is where food is as well as there is sunlight. Sunlight promotes algae growth, promotes algae growth resulting in oxygen in the water which is better for the fish and the sunlight warms the water and so its much more comfortable for the fish. Deep water is cold, there's a lack of food and there's no sunlight because sunlight does not penetrate deeply.

The third problem, its an insult. They have just fished all night and they haven't caught anything and Jesus is saying go out where's there's lousy fishing then you'll do better. And so we see Peter say, "Master, we've worked hard all night and haven't caught anything but because you say so I will let down the nets". We see here from Peter tremendous respect he says I'll do what you say yet there appears to be doubt. Yes, Jesus has performed a number of miracles but Peter is saying this is my realm Lord there is no fish in the deep water and trust me when I say I'm not reading into this. Why? Let's look at verses 6 and 7.

When they had done so they caught such a large number of fish their nets began to break so they signaled their partners in the other boat to come and help them and they came and filled both boats so full the boats began to sink and look at verse 8. When Simon-Peter saw this he sees how many fish they've got he sees that the boats are ready to sink he fell at Jesus' knees and said, "Go away from me Lord I am a sinful man". Why does he fall on his knees? Why does he say, "Go away from me Lord I am a sinful man"? Well verse 9 then holds the key. "For he and all his companions were astonished at the catch of fish they had taken". The reason, they didn't believe. Peter was just going through the motions inside they didn't believe that they were going to catch anything. But still is that really a reason to fall and say go away from me? No, unless you realize that Jesus is the Messiah and being the Messiah He is omniscient, omniscient know everything. Then you know that He knows what you were thinking and you know that Jesus knows that you are thinking, we aren't going to catch anything. Peter realizes in the presence of holiness and when you're in the presence of holiness it then becomes obvious and it becomes humbling. Peter is totally humbled and eh realizes I am a sinner and do not deserve to be in the presence of the Lord God Almighty.

I think it also says a little bit about where we should be when it comes to God. Respect and humility, I'm afraid in today's day and age we lose a little or a lot of that. This past summer a group of girls, members of a sports team, were invited to the White House because they were champions a couple of them wore flip-flops. Boy, did that create quite a stir. It was seen as a total lack of respect. Going to the tomb of the Unknown Soldier in Washington D.C. not a word is spoken. Those soldiers there are in full dress uniform they will continue to do their vigil and their changing of the guard regardless of rain, sleet, snow, heat, cold even hurricane and what are they doing this for? For three dead bodies and what they represent. When it comes to church I hear about coffee in sanctuaries, eating during church services, churches that have snack bars, there's talking that goes on during church service, people come in with sloppy clothes on and you know what? If we expect people to wear shoes at the White House, if we expect people to stand at attention for three dead bodies I think that we could learn a little bit from Peter because if Peter falls on his knees what should we do and how should we act? It should be with respect because it is God's house and it is His service.

Jesus is God's son who said, "I am with you always", who said, "where two or three are gathered there am I in the midst", which takes us back to Epiphany. How do we know He is God? And why should we come to His house with total respect, total reverence and in total humility? Creation says so. How? Well Jesus exercised power over it when He did His miracles and those miracles can be broken into three categories, which we've put together in a handout this morning. Don't take my word for it go home read each one and then ask your self is Jesus the Christ the Son of God? The first category of miracles is healing. We see that Jesus healed a man with leprosy, He healed the Roman Centurion servant, He healed Peter's mother-in-law, He healed a paralyzed man, He paralyzed the woman of bleeding, he healed two blind men, He healed a mute and a demon possessed man, a man with a shriveled hand, a blind, mute demon possessed man He healed a Canaanite woman's daughter, He healed a boy with a demon, healed a deaf mute, healed a possessed man in the synagogue, a crippled woman, ten men with leprosy.

Then there's the miracles that are showing absolute power over nature itself as he calmed the storm, walked on water, fed 5,000, fed 4,000, the story of the coin and the fish, the fig tree that withered, the

large catch of fish, water that turned into wine and another large catch of fish.

But probably the most inspiring are the miracles of the raising of the dead. The widow's son, Lazarus, as you look at those that's a very impressive list. You know of any other teachers that have done that? Any other preachers that have done that? Never heard of anyone else walking on water. You see, Jesus is God, He even said to the Pharisees, "Believe the miracles that you may know and understand that the Father is in me and I in the Father". Look at the miracles and see He is the Christ, the very Son of God. And hopefully we will all be like Peter and bow with respect, reverence and with all humility for we are in His presence.

In His name, Amen.