

Luke 5:1-11

Hearing the Call

It was March 4th, 1933. The United States of America had been through a world war and the great depression. Americans needed confidence in their form government. Franklin Delano Roosevelt had been elected president and he was using his Inaugural Address to rally the nation. He said:

This is pre-eminently the time to speak the truth, the whole truth, frankly and boldly. Nor need we shrink from honestly facing conditions in our country today. This great nation will endure as it has endured, will revive and will prosper.

So first of all let me assert my firm belief that the only thing we have to fear. . .is fear itself. . . nameless, unreasoning, unjustified terror which paralyzes needed efforts to convert retreat into advance.

The only thing we have to fear. . .is fear itself. That phrase became a famous rallying point for Roosevelt and the nation. But is it always true? Actually I believe that the opposite is true. The only thing we really have to fear is not being afraid. Fear is a healthy thing, if it's the right kind of fear. What is the right kind of fear?

Turn to Luke 5 pg 995

Read vs 1-3

Jesus has been ministering in the region of Galilee, casting out demons and healing people. One significant person that Jesus healed is recorded in chapter 4 verses thirty-eight and thirty-nine. In those verses Luke records that Jesus went into the house of Simon Peter and found Simon's mother-in-law sick. We're told that Jesus stood over her and rebuked the fever and the fever left her at that moment.

That's important because one of the main characters in chapter 5 is Peter. Chapter four shows us that Peter was familiar with Jesus before chapter five. He saw the power that Jesus had to heal the sick first hand. He probably witnessed his other healings too, so he saw that Jesus had supernatural power. He also could have heard Jesus teaching in the synagogues around Galilee and witnessed his authoritative teaching .

So here we find Jesus teaching a crowd of people the word of God. They were listening to him. He had a captive audience, what more could he ask for? Wasn't this what he was sent to earth to do, to teach people

about God and the way of salvation. But then he saw something else that attracted his attention.

He saw two boats by the water's edge. Two old boats used for fishing. There were two boats because fishermen often worked together in a co-op arrangement to catch more fish. Jesus saw the fishermen washing their nets that they used to catch their fish. And Jesus changed what he was doing.

He stopped. He went over to the boats and asked one of the fishermen to take him out on the boat a little way from the shore.

And the fisherman, named Simon, did just that. Jesus sat down in the boat and continued to teach the people from there.

Now Jesus was in a different location. He could still address the people, maybe more effectively since they could all see him now further away from them. His voice might be able to project to more them since he was facing all of them and the shore functioned better acoustically like an amphitheater.

But I believe there was clearly another reason why Jesus wanted to speak from the boat. He wanted later on to talk to the owner of the boat, Simon.

We're going to learn some things this morning about following Jesus by looking at Peter. The first thing we're going to see is this:

I. Like Peter we must see that Jesus has a right to say how we run every part of our lives.

Read vs 4-7

My dad liked deep sea fishing. When I was real small, before Castro, he'd go to Cuba on business but while he was there he'd always get in some Marlin fishing. He couldn't afford to bring back the whole fish if he caught one, but he's still got a mounted marlin spear on the wall as a trophy.

When I got a little older he would take me out with him off the coast of New Jersey. I don't know if it had anything to do with me or not, but we never caught anything when I was along. All I got was seasick. So I can identify with Peter when he says, "*Master, we have toiled all night and caught nothing...*"

Peter and his brother Andrew, and their neighbors James and John, the sons of Zebedee, were partners, often working together as they fished the Sea of Galilee. They fished commercially.

Now remember, Jesus is a carpenter. He's become an itinerant preacher but his specialty isn't fishing. Peter's the expert in that department. Now Jesus is saying, "Let's get this boat out and catch some fish."

I wonder what the expression was on Peter's face? Is it weariness -- or irritation? They've been out all night, which was prime fishing time. They've just finished washing out all their nets.

But Peter agrees. Is he humoring Jesus? Or honoring him? Or is he weary beyond the point of caring. Maybe he bites his tongue rather than explain to his landlubber friend that the best fishing is done at night, and that in the daytime the catch isn't nearly as good.

But he doesn't argue. He pulls in the anchor that has held them in the shallows just off shore, and pulls up the sail so that it catches the breeze coming off the western hills. The ship begins to pick up a little speed until they are out in the deeper parts. Now Peter is the example of efficiency. He'll show Jesus how real fisherman do things -- even if they don't catch anything. One end of the net goes over the side, and Peter and his crew play out the long net until it is extended full length. Now he fastens the other end of the net to the far end to the boat.

All off a sudden they feel a jolt, the lines become tight, and the boat leans over at a dangerous angle. A whole school of fish has hit the net and they're pulling hard against the boat. Peter begins to give orders pulling in the ropes on the net to bring it closer to the boat. It is a huge catch.

Carefully they row ashore. It is the biggest catch they have EVER brought in. And not at night, but in the middle of the day!

Now, Peter is quite the character most of the time. He says things and does things that seem so impetuous. John MacArthur has called Peter, "The disciple with the foot-shaped mouth."

He did everything from say, "I'll die for you Lord" to cursing and swearing and saying, "I do not know this Man of whom you speak!" after Jesus was arrested.

Peter always seemed to be in the middle of something, but there's one thing you can say for Peter, he followed Jesus. Sometimes boldly, sometimes imperfectly, but he followed Jesus.

For Peter, doing things his own way had failed him, so He gave God's way a try, even though it didn't make any sense to him at the time.

Maybe doing things your own way has left you empty, and it's time for you to do things God's way. Maybe your own knowledge and your own skills have failed you and you need God's power, God's knowledge, and God's skill. You need to do things God's way.

Maybe it's time for you today to obey God, and do things His way, even if you don't understand where, why, or how it's all going to work out. It might mean you have to change the way you raise your kids. It might mean to have to get back into your Bible and become a prayer warrior. It might mean you have to change your career. It might mean you have to surrender your life to service in God's kingdom. It might mean for you to quit fighting and run to the cross of Jesus Christ for forgiveness and redemption and a brand new start to life.

You might have noticed, there's a lot of people around who are quick to call themselves a Christian, but there aren't so many who are willing to obey.

Actually, according to the Bible being forgiven of our sins and having a new life begins with a step of obedience. It's not a work that we do, but it is a response to God's offer of forgiveness.

See, according to Scripture there is an insurmountable barrier between us and God. The barrier is two fold: our sin and God's perfection.

In the OT Book of Isaiah the prophet Isaiah is given a vision of God. Listen to how he responds: *In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord sitting on a throne, high and lifted up, and the train of His robe filled the temple. Above it stood seraphim; each one had six wings: with two he covered his face, with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew.*

And one cried to another and said: "Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts; The whole earth is full of His glory!"

And the posts of the door were shaken by the voice of him who cried out, and the house was filled with smoke. So I said: "Woe is me, for I am undone! Because 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."

Later on in the same book of Isaiah God says this to His people Israel: *But your iniquities have separated you from your God; And your sins have hidden His face from you, So that He will not hear.*

God is infinitely holy and We're sinners before him. The barrier between us is impenetrable. We're separated from God, destined to hell. The Bible says there's no amount of good that we could ever do the bridge that gap.

Instead, it tells us that God bridged it for us. *For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.*

God bridged the gap, He broke down the barrier, by sending His son Jesus Christ into the world. Jesus lived the perfect life that we could never live and He went to the cross to bear our sins.

The command of God to us is, *"Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved..."*

It's when we come to the place in our spiritual lives when we realize that We're separated from God, sinners before His holiness, and we trust Christ, and Christ alone for our forgiveness that we're truly forgiven.

God's plan gives all the glory to God alone. *"For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast."*

Our greatest fear isn't fear itself, our greatest fear should be that we don't fear the wrath of God. Our greatest fear should be that we don't fear the living Lord. Cause if we don't fear God and His wrath we'll never see we need a Savior.

When we see our need of a Savior and we believe in Jesus Christ the Bible says we're born into God's family by faith in the work of Christ. But a new birth means growth and here's where obedience comes in. Like Peter we need to see that Jesus has a right to say how we run every part of our lives.

We're forgiven through faith but we're bought with a price. Out of love we need to follow God to honor Him and to experience all the good things He has for us.

Sometimes following God means obeying even when it doesn't make complete sense to us.

When Simon Peter does things God's way they catch so many fish that their nets began to break and even the boats began to sink! Now that's a lot of fish! They probably caught more fish in that one cast than they had caught in the entire previous month. God blesses when we do things His way.

There's something else I see here about obedience. We're not trying to allegorize the Bible here, but to me it seems that there's some significance to Jesus commanding Peter to launch out into the deep water.

This movement from shallow water into deeper water is an object lesson of what Jesus was going to do in Peter's faith life. How does Jesus take us from where we're to where he wants us to be?

By pushing us, that's how. Jesus pushes us, ever gently, sometimes with words, sometimes with actions, away from one level of stability, like the shallow water near the shore, to a place where we're more dependent on God, like the deeper water.

And Like Peter we might also argue with him, saying, "Lord, I've already been there and done that." I've already tried reading the Bible, I've already prayed, and it hasn't worked. I've already gone to church, tried to be obedient. But hopefully we won't stop there, but will continue to say, "But if this is what you want me to do, to go once again from where I am now, then I'll do it."

What happens in the deeper water? It is more scary. It is more unstable, at least more unfamiliar. But it is also where there are more fish. Fishermen never catch many fish from the shore; they have to go out into the deep water to catch larger fish and more fish.

Jesus wants to take us from our comfortable shoreline to a deeper place where we'll find more food for our soul and more dependence on him.

This can come in some uncomfortable ways. It can come in the form of an illness, or a crisis, either to you or to someone you know, and all of a sudden, you are drifting away from predictability and one kind of stability to a place that is more mysterious and where you can't see the bottom.

But God is taking you there. He is not abandoning you in that illness or crisis. He's actually using that situation like a boat to take you further out into a relationship with Him.

And the comforting thing for us to know is that even though we don't know exactly where the boat is going, we know that Jesus is sitting in the boat with us. To know that the captain of the boat is with us is comforting when we don't know where We're going. But the captain does.

The journey to the deeper water is always to help us to know God better. Remember, like Peter we must see that Jesus has a right to say how we run every part of our lives.

The second important truth about following Jesus is this: *Like Peter we must have a vital encounter with the living Lord that shows us how holy He is and how sinful We're.*

Read vs 8-9

Every once in a while we have a TV commercial featuring some character that pops off a box and starts talking. There's the Trix rabbit or the Pillsbury dough boy. They pop off the box and start talking and the people in the room talk back to them.

Now let me ask you a question. If a guy jumped off a package onto your kitchen counter would you stand around and hold a conversation with him like this was just an everyday occurrence? I don't think so!

Peter had just seen a genuine miracle. He was shaken to the core. But hadn't he seen other miracles before this one?

Think about Peter's life up until this point. His brother Andrew introduced him to Jesus, tells him that Jesus is the Messiah, Jesus heals people in town, and then heals Peter's own mom, and yet before this miracle what does Peter do? Does he follow Jesus along with the crowds? Along with his brother? No. He goes back to his boat and goes fishing again.

How many people do you know that you can see that God has been working in their life and yet, they just keep on going like nothing's happened. They might show up every week for church, maybe even get involved in ministries of the church and yet they live their lives just as they always have.

How can we see God and keep on going like usual?

The answer is that we can't. The hard truth is that, even if we're in church 5 nights a week, if we keep living our lives the same old way as we always have, then we haven't seen God at all.

And I think that's where Peter was. He's saw God's work, he's stood face to face with Jesus, and I would not doubt that he was a pious Jew, but being pious doesn't give you a real relationship with God. Peter looked at Jesus, but didn't see Jesus- he didn't know Jesus in all His fulness.

What does it look like to see Jesus? How do you know?

Charles Colson's book "The Body"....

"In 1960, Israeli undercover agents orchestrated the daring kidnapping of one of the worst of the Holocaust masterminds, Adolf Eichmann. After capturing him in the South American hideout, they transported him to Israel to stand trial.

There, prosecutors called a string of former concentration camp prisoners as witnesses. One was a small haggard man named Yehiel Dinur, who had miraculously escaped death in Auschwitz. On his day to testify, Dinur entered the courtroom and stared at the man in the bulletproof glass booth-the man who had murdered Dinur's friends, personally executed a number of Jews, and presided over the slaughter of millions more. As the eyes of the two men met-victim and murderous tyrant- the courtroom fell silent, filled with the tension of the confrontation. But no one was prepared for what happened next.

Yehiel Dinur began to shout and sob, collapsing to the floor. Was he overcome by hatred...by the horrifying memories...by the evil incarnate in Eichmann's face? No. As he later explained in a riveting "60 minutes" interview, it was because Eichmann was not the demonic personification of evil that Dinur had expected. Rather, he was an ordinary man, just like anyone else. And in that one instant, Dinur came to the stunning realization that sin and evil are the human condition. "I was afraid about myself," Dinur said. "I saw that I am capable to do this...exactly like he." Dinur's remarkable statements caused Mike Wallace to turn to the camera and ask the audience the most painful of all questions: "How is it possible...for a man to act as Eichmann acted?...Was he a monster? A madman? OR was he perhaps something more terrifying...was he normal?" Yehiel Dinur's shocking conclusion? "Eichmann is in all of us."

Do you know when you have seen God? It is when you look in the mirror and say like Dinur, "I fear what I see- Eichmann is in me."

It isn't fear that we have to fear. The truth should shake us.

The Bible tells us *"There is none righteous, not even one."* *"There is none who does good, not even one."*

And when we see God - when are faced with the Almighty Holy God, all of that becomes readily apparent to us. We, like Isaiah cry out to God *"Woe is me for I am ruined!- I am a man of unclean lips!"*

That is the reaction of someone who has truly seen God.

God wants to really work in our lives, but first there has to be a broken spirit which cries out- "God have mercy on me!"

After witnessing the power of God, Peter realized that he was in the presence of God. Something he did not understand before the deep-water experience.

Back in verse five Peter calls Jesus "Master." The word that Luke uses here for master refers to one in leadership or with high status. It is a word that Luke uses that is synonymous with "rabbi." Peter realized in verse five that Jesus was one of authority. He realized from his teaching, preaching, and healing that he was one in leadership and he obeyed him on that level.

But when he moved out into the deep waters and experienced the power of God, he realized that this Jesus was more than just a "rabbi," he realized that this was God himself. In verse eight Peter doesn't call Jesus "Master," but he calls him "Lord." The Greek word is "*kurios*," and refers to one who has supernatural power and supernatural authority.

In verse five Peter had a respect for Jesus. After experiencing the power of God before him Peter had a reverence for Jesus. He moved from respecting Jesus to revering Jesus. Not only did he call him Lord, but also he fell down at his knees. Because he had a deep experience of the person of Jesus Christ.

Remember, like Peter we must see that Jesus has a right to say how we run every part of our lives.

Like Peter we must have a vital encounter with the living Lord that shows us how holy He is and how sinful We're.

Finally the third important truth about following Jesus is this: *We must see that We're part of a gospel team, committed to reaching others with the good news.*

Read 10-11

Here's where fear of the wrong thing can get in the way. We're concerned about food to eat; Jesus is concerned about food for the hungry soul. We're concerned about bills to pay; Jesus is concerned about the eternal bill that we have to pay because of sin. We're concerned about clothes to wear; Jesus is concerned about the clothing of righteousness to cover our spiritual nakedness.

We're concerned about our life; Jesus is concerned about the life of those who don't yet know him. We're concerned about our retirement accounts; Jesus is concerned about people who will retire from life without knowing him. We're concerned about our kids' college bills; Jesus is concerned about our college kids' spiritual life. We're concerned about fish; Jesus is concerned about men.

We're concerned about things; Jesus is concerned about people.

And whenever Jesus has an encounter with us, he wants us to be more concerned about spiritual things than physical things.

And the way that Jesus often reaches us in our blindness and busyness in life is to take the physical things that We're so concerned about and turn it in a way that it becomes a lesson about spiritual things. And then we realize that Jesus is meeting us right in the middle of our life.

The final verse of this passage marks a turning point for both Jesus and for the fisherman. "*So when they had brought their boats to land, they forsook all and followed Him.*" There is both the negative and the positive, the leaving and the following.

I've wondered about Mrs. Peter and the other fisher families in Capernaum. Peter and the others came back often, since Jesus was using Capernaum as his base-of-operations in Galilee. But they were gone so much of the time. Did they rent out the boats to others who took over the business in their absence?

Or did Zebedee, father of Peter's partners James and John, help them out? Did the amazing two boatfulls of fish tide over the families until the fishermen returned? We don't know and we're not told.

What we are told is that while once Peter was catching fish, now he's catching men.

In Matthew 4 Jesus told His disciples "*Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men.*"

Are you truly following Jesus today? If you are you'll be a fisher of men. If you're not a fisher of men then you haven't followed Jesus in the truest sense of the word.

Christ wishes to be made known to the world through us. The first disciples realized that they couldn't effectively follow Christ unless they left their job as fishermen. As disciples of Christ we are called to cut loose certain things in our lives if we hope to follow him. Could this be part of the fear that afflicts us when we think about following Christ? What will we have to let go of? A bit of TV? Our fear of failure? A few of our pleasures? Our insecurity? Our own distorted self-image? Control of our lives?

Remember Jesus' words to Peter. *Do not be afraid.*

- *Jesus has a right to say how we run every part of our lives.*
- *We have to have a vital encounter with the living Lord that shows us how holy He is and how sinful we're.*
- *We must see that we're part of a gospel team, committed to reaching others with the good news.*