

Luke 5:1-11 #2/5th S a Epiphany/12 July 2020

Central Thought: They forsook all and followed Him (T 10)

Goal: With the help of the Holy Spirit bring the people to knowledge of their sin and depravity. Bring them to salvation by causing the people to repent of their sin and turn from unrighteous.

Malady: Often we don't listen to Jesus. We follow our own reasoning.

Means: Proclaim giving up the world to follow Jesus is best.

Theme: Water Fish Nets Word (CT 10)

Introduction:

Saints in Christ, purchased and won from all sin, from death, and from the power of the devil, not with gold or silver, but with Christ's holy, precious blood, and with his innocent suffering and death: Grace, mercy, and peace be to you from God our Father, and our Lord Jesus Christ. The Inspired Word of God comes to us today from the Gospel according to St Luke chapter 5.

Considering the text for today I unofficially designated today fish lovers Sunday. I thought about making it fishermen's Sunday, but that excluded those who like to eat fish. Some of you like fish stories, eating fish, and watching people catch fish; others do not. Today you will hear a fish story with eternal consequences.

Peter, Andrew, James, and John were partners in a fishing business owned by Zebedee, the father of James and John. When you think of calling a pastor, even a second career pastor, usually you don't think of commercial fishermen. Adjectives associated with commercial fishermen are: rough, uneducated, undisciplined, hot headed, and foul mouthed. Plus, they smell like fish. But, Jesus did unusual things. Choosing four commercial fishermen as disciples was one of them. Why did Jesus pick these guys versus recent graduates of rabbinical school? Today's text sheds light on this.

Jesus was out and about teaching. According to Scripture a large crowd gathered. Such a large crowd that Jesus was forced to use Simon's boat as a pulpit. The boat provided Jesus with a good position to preach from.

After the sermon Jesus told Simon to go out onto the lake and drop the net in deep water. Now this is the trust point, and the point of the miracle. Simon may not know much, but he does know a thing or two about fishing. Simon didn't use a depth finder or a fish finder. Simon used basic fish catching knowledge. Simon knew that the best fishing was done at night, when the fish are bold and hungry and come to the shallows to feed. He knew that if you don't catch anything at night, you may as well tend your nets and cut your losses and hope for better the next night. Simon knew it didn't make much sense to put out into the deep during the day when you didn't catch anything in the shallows the previous night. Simon also knew when Jesus said something it paid to listen. Simon replied: "...nevertheless at Your word I will let down the net."

Throughout our lives we encounter crisis points. We face tough decisions. Many day to day choices are simple; what to wear, what to eat, what to do on a day off. Also, like Simon, must make tough choices. Usually we consult somebody concerning the more difficult choices. How often do we call out to Jesus for help? Do we trust Jesus enough to take Him at His Word, even when He asks the counterintuitive thing, the unreasonable thing, and the outrageous thing? Or, do we follow our sin tainted human reasoning? Jesus used this opportunity as a faith building lesson. If they trusted Jesus with catching fish, they would learn to trust Jesus with catching people. If they trusted Him with the little things - their livelihood, they would trust Him with the big things - forgiveness, life, and salvation.

Actually, when you think about it, it was nothing for Jesus to say, "Put out into the deep and let down your nets for a catch." Who needs fish finding sonar when you're the Lord of creation? Jesus spoke the Word that created fish on the fifth day. Jesus knows where all the fish are, because He's the Creator in the flesh. That day the fishermen learned a valuable lesson. As they pulled their filled to the point of breaking nets into the boat, more boats were called to help out. Sometime during the action Simon Peter fell down Jesus' feet. In an act of worship and confession and Peter said, "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord." Peter sounded a bit like the prophet Isaiah when he caught a glimpse of God on His throne in the year that King Uzziah died. Isaiah saw the Lord in His

glory with the six winged seraphs flying around singing, “Holy, holy, holy.” Isaiah said, “I’m dead. I’m a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people with unclean lips. I’m a sinner among sinners.”

That’s how it is when you come face to face with the Lord. It’s not “shine, Jesus shine, oh we’re so happy to be here and you should be too,” it’s “Lord, have mercy, I’m a dead man.” Jesus may have looked plain and ordinary enough, like any other local in Galilee. But it dawned on Peter that there was more to Jesus than met the eye. Peter realized this when the HS made him aware of his own sin. Peter’s instant reaction was to have Jesus go away. The man who possessed the Creator’s authority over the fish in the sea was simply too much to bear. Peter understood that his sin and God’s presence were not compatible.

A miraculous catch of fish, water changed into wine, sicknesses healed with a word, and casting out demons. All were tremendous acts of love; yet, all were frightening to experience. This is how near God is to us in Jesus. Jesus knows the location of the fish, not to mention the birds and the ants. Jesus knows the number of hairs on your head, and the number of your days. Jesus knows your sin, everything you do, think, and say. Jesus knows our deepest darkest secrets. We do well to say with Peter, “Lord, depart from me. Don’t come near me. You are holy, I am anything but holy. You are God’s sinless Son, and I’m a poor, miserable sinner. You are the Lord of creation, and I am your disobedient creature.”

The most astonishing fact is that this same God of power is a God of mercy and forgiveness. God took a burning coal and burnished the lips of His prophet with words of forgiveness: “your guilt is taken away, your sin atoned for.” He called fishermen, Peter, Andrew, James, John, sinners, none of them “worthy” on their own to be His disciples. These men became Jesus’ apostles and first pastors of His church. Jesus’ two words, “Follow me,” are disciple making words. With the same words Jesus calls sinners to repentance. With the same words Jesus calls sinners to His own death and resurrection. That’s where His sheep follow Him, through death to resurrection and life. His path is their path. His life is their life. His forgiveness covers their sin. Jesus gave those fishermen a new life and a new vocation. Jesus said, “Fear not; from now on you will be catchers of

men.” Previously they used nets to catch fish. From that day forward they used a different net. They used God’s Word.

Net fishing is “catholic,” universal, indiscriminate. Nets catch anything and everything. Nets capture what you want and things you don’t want. Fish, old tires, you name it. The mission of the church is like net fishing. The true Church is a boat. The proclamation of God’s Word is casting out a huge net. The casting of the net is not luring people into the kingdom, but sweeping them in, capturing them in the gracious net of forgiveness, life, and salvation. Not discriminating, picking and choosing, deciding which are the keepers and which to throw back. Similar to fish caught in a net, a lot of people don’t want to be there. As the net tightens around them they always look for a way to escape. But the paradox is that the way to save your life is to lose your life.

We follow the Word of Jesus, the Lord of creation, the Savior of all, the Lord of the Church. “Make disciples of all the nations.” Go fishing in the deep water. Cast out your nets, the net of the good news of Jesus’ death and resurrection. Baptize and teach, and in the baptizing and teaching, Jesus says, “I am with you always, to the end of the age.” Go fishing, the Lord says to His church. Cast the net of Jesus’ resurrection wide and deep into the waters of the world. And whether we haul in a boat load or a few, that’s the Lord’s business, and He knows best. The catch, the growth of the church, is His, not ours. God blesses the catch. God blesses us with all things. The greatest catch is right here.

In the name of Jesus, Amen