

## **CALLING THE FIRST DISCIPLES**

Luke 5:1-11 Text: 10b *"Then Jesus said to Simon, 'Don't be afraid; from now on you will fish for people.'"*

Our lesson today, is a powerful moment in the ministry of Jesus. Luke told about it in the passage we just read. (5:1-11) It not only shows the miraculous power of Jesus, but it also points out the powerful call to discipleship. So, let's look into this story and discover the great lesson it holds for us.

The scene is by the Sea of Galilee in the Jordan River Valley in the northeastern part of Israel near where John the Baptist baptized Jesus marking the beginning of Jesus' public ministry. (Matthew 3:13-17) It's also known as Lake Gennesaret. Many of Jesus' miracles and teachings took place there. It's where Jesus walked on water. (Matthew 14:22-33) He calmed the storm. (Mark 4:35-41) And now today, the miraculous catch of fish. (Luke 5:1-11) The Sea of Galilee empties into the Jordan River and flows about 156 miles south to the Dead Sea, one of the saltiest bodies of water in the world, and at 1,410 feet below sea level it's the lowest place on Earth. The Jordan River is surrounded by hills and mountains making it a beautiful place. And the Sea of Galilee is still a vital water source for Israel today, as well as a popular destination for tourists. The whole area is rich in history. Archaeological sites such as Capernaum where Jesus performed many miracles, including healing a man possessed by an unclean spirit and healing Simon Peter's mother-in-law are there. And the Mount of Beatitudes where Jesus delivered the Sermon on the Mount is a place of spiritual and historical significance drawing visitors from around the world to explore its beauty and history.

And everywhere Jesus went, crowds would gather around Him. A large crowd had gathered around Him in our lesson today eager to hear His teachings. And Jesus saw two boats at the water's edge left by fishermen who had just finished a long and fruitless night of fishing and were now washing their nets. He went over to those weary and disheartened fishermen who had no catch to show for their efforts. You know how it is when you've been out on the Gulf or among the mangroves all day and haven't had a nibble or caught one fish. Yet, it was in that moment of exhaustion and disappointment that Jesus stepped into their lives. He met them where they were. In the midst of their struggles and routines.

And isn't that where we often meet Jesus? Jesus asked Simon Peter to put his boat back out into the deep water and let the nets down for a catch. Despite Peter's hesitation at first, he did. And Peter's act of obedience, even when it seemed to make no sense, led to an overwhelming blessing. The nets were filled to the point of breaking! The boats became so full of fish they began to sink! And that miraculous catch of fish is a testimony to the power of obedience to Jesus' commands. It demonstrates following Jesus' commands, even when it seems illogical, can lead to extraordinary outcomes. Obedience to Jesus' teachings brings spiritual growth and maturity. By following His commands, believers can live their lives according to God's will, which leads to a deeper relationship with Him and a greater understanding of His purpose. Obedience to Jesus' commands brings personal change! As believers follow His teachings they experience changes in their attitudes, their behaviors, their priorities. And that's the Holy Spirit working in their lives molding them into the image of Christ.

Obedience to Jesus' commands is a powerful witness to others. When believers live out their faith through obedience, they're showing their experience with God's love and power. And that's what inspires others to want a relationship with Jesus and experience the same things. Obedience to Jesus' commands brings peace and happiness. Jesus said, *"If you love Me, keep My commands."* (John 14:15 NIV)

So, by following His teachings, it's going to lead to a sense of purpose and contentment knowing that one's life is lined up with God's will. Obedience to Jesus' commands is essential to His providing protection and guidance. His teachings offer wisdom and direction for steering through life's challenges and avoiding pitfalls. So, you see, the power of obedience to Jesus' commands is life changing. It leads to blessings, spiritual growth, personal transformation. As a believer, obeying Jesus' teachings is necessary for living a faithful and fruitful Christian life. Now, Peter was astonished by the miraculous catch. He fell at Jesus' knees and said, *"Go away from me, Lord; I am a sinful man!"* In the presence of Jesus' Divine power and holiness Simon Peter became deeply aware of his own sinfulness and unworthiness.

And his humble acknowledgement is a crucial step for your spiritual journey. It's only when you acknowledge your need for Jesus that you can fully experience His grace and transformation. Jesus reassured Simon Peter by saying, *"Don't be afraid; from now on you will fish for people."* That was His call to a new purpose. And it's not just for Simon Peter. It's for all of us. Jesus invites us to leave behind our old ways and embrace a new mission—to be fishers of people. Sharing the good news of His love and salvation with the world. This call to

discipleship requires you to trust Jesus and follow Him wholeheartedly. And in response to Jesus' call, Simon Peter, along with James and John, the sons of Zebedee, left everything and followed Jesus. This radical act of leaving their livelihood behind - their boats and their nets, was a total commitment to Jesus. And that challenges you to consider what you might need to leave behind in order to follow Jesus. Are you willing to surrender your comforts, your plans, and your doubts to accept the life Jesus offers?

This story of the miraculous catch and the call to follow Jesus is a powerful reminder of His presence in our daily lives. Blessings come from being obedient and recognizing our need for Him. As you think on this passage and the call to discipleship, be inspired to trust Jesus. Obey His commands. Follow Him with your whole heart so you, like Simon Peter, James, and John, will leave everything behind and hold on to the new purpose Jesus has for you.

Let us pray. Lord, grant us peace and strength for the week ahead. May we trust in Your guidance and seek Your will in all that we do. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.