

Lord Over All

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Preacher: Rev Kenneth I Macleod

[0 : 00] Let us now turn to the Gospel of Luke, chapter 5, Luke chapter 5, Gospel of Luke chapter 5, and let us read from the beginning of the chapter.

Now I know that at the beginning of the year, or sometime a good few months ago, we looked at verse 5 of this, where Jesus had asked Peter to put out into the deep, and verse 5 it says, And Simon answered, Master, we toiled all the night and took nothing, but at your word I will let down the nets.

But we were homing in particularly on that. There will be a little bit of overlap, but I want to look at this whole section today, so let us read it. On one occasion, while the crowd was pressing in on him to hear the word of God, he was standing by the lake of Kennesaret.

And he saw two boats by the lake, but the fishermen had gone out of them and were washing their nets. Getting into one of the boats, which was Simon's, he asked him to put out a little from the land.

And he sat down and taught the people from the boat. And when he had finished speaking, he said to Simon, Put out into the deep, and let down your nets for a catch.

[1 : 27] And Simon answered, Master, we toiled all night and took nothing, but at your word I will let down the nets. And when he had done this, they enclosed a large number of fish, and their nets were breaking.

They signaled to their partners in the other boat to come and help them. And they came and filled both the boats so that they began to sink. But when Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord.

For he and all who were with him were astonished at the catch of fish that they had taken. And so also were James and John, sons of Zebedee, who were partners with Simon.

And Jesus said to Simon, Do not be afraid. From now on you will be catching men. And when they had brought their boats to land, they left everything and followed him.

And so on. I suppose there are a lot of people in here who are familiar with the little chorus, I will make you fishers of men if you will follow me.

[2 : 46] And of course, this particular incident here is what gives rise to that particular chorus. And you know, there's nothing greater in this world than to be a fisher of men or to be a fisher of people.

When we use the word men there, it is taking the human race in general. Men, women, boys and girls. It is the greatest work in the whole wide world.

And while there are people who are put aside specially for that work, it is a work that every Christian ought to be involved in, irrespective of the age.

I read about how one lady who was married to a minister, and she was reading this Bible story to her children.

And she said, you know, your daddy is a fisher of men. And one of the little girls said, well, she said, so am I. Because she said, I tell people in school about Jesus.

[3 : 51] And so she was a fisher of men as well. And I believe that there are lots of people who sometimes don't realize just how effective their witness is.

And I think that the Christian witness and the Christian testimony of a lot of people is far greater than they ever realize.

Not just by what we say, but by what we are. It can be, of course, it can be in a negative sense as well as in a positive, but it should be in a positive sense.

But here we have this wonderful incident where we find Jesus turning the situation as he was always doing, using earthly, everyday things.

And, of course, there's the touch of the miraculous about it to teach a new and a wonderful lesson and to lead these men whom he was choosing to go out to be missionaries, as it were, for him. [4 : 57] Now, here we have this huge crowd following Jesus. And, of course, everywhere that Jesus went, there were always crowds. They were eager to hear because his teaching was so awesome.

It was so new. It was so, in a sense, radical. And as Jesus is, we have read about it here. While the crowd were pressing in on him, they were just pushing in.

And it's obvious he was standing down by the shores of Galilee. And if you have ever been, I know quite a lot of you have been to Israel, if you ever get the opportunity to go, do go.

I was there once, and I would love to go back. And I think that's one of the things that makes the Bible so kind of real in the sense that you are seeing the actual places and you are visualizing at the actual spots.

And I remember I was out there on a bike ride. But we stopped and we had the opportunity, it was at lunchtime, to go for a swim in the Sea of Galilee. And there were little boats just by the shore.

[6 : 00] And I couldn't help but, and I'm sure all of us there couldn't help but visualize and see this is what it was like when Jesus, there was this crowd by the shore and he was almost being pushed to the sea.

And he asked one of the fishermen there if he could borrow his boat to go on. It was just by the water's edge. And that was his pulpit. And Jesus, he sat down in that boat and he began to speak to the people from there.

And I think it's also interesting that Jesus, his preaching and his teaching from what we can gather, although it was forceful, it was authoritative, it was powerful, yet you always get the impression that Jesus was controlled in his preaching.

That it wasn't the kind of bashing and crashing symptoms that we associate with preaching, but that he tended to talk to people. That he spoke, but there was a clarity, there was a reality, there was an authority about his words.

And people would cling on to everything that he said. Now, as we know, Luke doesn't tell us anything that Jesus said. But when he'd finished, and this is what I want us really to move on to, when he had finished his preaching, he turned to Simon, and that's what he says in verse 4, and when he had finished speaking, he said to Simon, put out into the deep and let down your nets for a catch.

[7 : 35] In other words, Jesus turns to Simon and he says, right then, Simon, thank you for the use of your boat. Let's go fishing. And Jesus, we need to be clear on this, Jesus wasn't saying to them, thank you for the use of the boat, and then went out of the boat, back onto the shore, and then said to them, right, on you go fishing.

Jesus is saying, let's go fishing. I'm going with you. It is very obvious from Peter's reaction when they caught the fish that Jesus was on board with them. And that's one of the wonderful things about Jesus, is his identity with us, how he involves himself with us.

He isn't saying to us, right, on you go. He tells us, yes, on you go, but I'm going with you. And that's what he's saying to them there, come on, let's go fishing. I'm going out with you.

And this is the beauty of Jesus' fellowship with us, his identity with us, that wherever you go, he's going as well. He's not the kind of leader who says, right, that's what you do, and that's what you do, and that's what you do.

I'm going to stay here, and you get on with that. No, Jesus is somebody who is actively involved with us as well. And, of course, there it is, the great, he says, put out into the deep or launch out to the deep and let down your nets for a catch.

[8 : 53] And, of course, Peter straight away protests. Ah, he says, but, and you can understand where Peter is coming from. Master, we toiled all night and took nothing.

But he says, at your word, we will let down the net. And, as you know, there's nothing worse than to spend all your effort and all your energy doing something and getting nothing for it.

And there's, I'm sure, those who, in here, who have been fishing or who have been in any way involved with fishing, not just simply as a matter of a hobby or going out, but those particularly who, at any time, were involved in a career or work will know the frustration of not getting anything.

Because your livelihood depends upon it. Peter, as we know, was married. Peter had a household to feed. And if he's coming home with no fish, there's no money, there's no provision, there's

nothing.

And so, it wasn't just for Peter's own good. There were people dependent on Peter catching. And, of course, they were mending their nets. They were going to go back out, but they were going to, obviously, they would be cleaning up, they would have a rest, and then they would go back out.

[10:07] But the thought of going back out right away, Peter is saying, no, it's a waste of time. Because, you see, Peter knew the waters like nobody else knew them. He spent his life on them.

He knew the cycles. He knew the tide. He knew the run of things. He knew who the fish normally were. Good fishermen know these things. Today, there are so many, technology has made it such that people are able, fishermen, with all the mechanized equipment, are able to work things out in a much better way.

But in these days, they had to study. They studied the nature. And they had a great understanding of when it was right to fish and when it wasn't.

Peter knew from his own assessment and his own judgment of things, this was the wrong time to go. Master, we've toiled all night and we've taken nothing. And if you don't mind, really, what Peter is saying, if you don't mind, he's really saying to Jesus, this is a waste of time.

That's what he wants to say. He doesn't quite have the courage to say it. But there's something about the authority of Christ in his words where Peter has no option but to yield to what Jesus says.

[11:25] And so they go out. And I think we've said this before, but I think it's important to reemphasize it. Peter's reaction is very similar to our own reaction in many things.

In other words, when Jesus wanted to preach, Peter was happy to give him the boat. And Peter realized that Jesus, in his preaching, was there dealing with issues that were beyond him.

Yes, he could use his boat, but the preaching, that was Jesus' territory. And we're often like that, that we're quite happy to hand over, as it were, our lives and the ownership of our services and of whatever work we do for Jesus.

The spiritual things of life, we are happy to have his authority and his rule in these things. But there are other areas of our life. They're ours.

They are ours. Part of our life belongs to Jesus, but another part of our life belongs to us. And whether it is life in the home, or whether it is life at work, or whether it is life in our leisure times, or life in our relationships, or life in...

[12:47] There's lots of little pockets. Of course, they all are linked. They all intertwine one way or another. But sometimes we have this idea, well, this is my part of life. No.

It all belongs to Jesus. And Jesus is making this very point to Peter. You're thinking, Peter, that you know that you're in control, that you have the authority over the fishing.

And that the preaching, that's my area. But Jesus is saying, no, Peter, all your life is under my authority and my lordship.

And my friend, if Jesus is your king, then he has to be king of all your life. Not just parts of it.

And that is something that we are so often reluctant to give up. Because we do not want... That is a problem.

[13:45] That is why I believe it is a major problem why people do not become Christians. And when I say become Christians, where they yield themselves to the lordship of Jesus Christ, it's because they want to hold on to their own will.

It's the last thing a person wants to give up. It's their own will. We all want to be boss of our own life. If you're honest with yourself today, that is true.

It's true with me. It's true with you. We want to be boss of our own life. We do not want to go where we don't want to go. We don't want to have to do what we don't want to do.

But the thing is, if we're following Jesus, there are times Jesus will tell us to go to places we don't want to go. He will tell us to do things we don't want to do.

He will come into our life and he'll probe into our life and he'll say there are areas and aspects of your life that are wrong they need dealing with. Because if Jesus is lord of our life, he has to be lord of our complete life.

[14:57] And that was one of the lessons that Peter was having to learn. It's a lifelong lesson.

Don't get me wrong. Don't think for one moment that it's all cracked the day you become a Christian. And that when you hand your life over to Jesus by faith, then that it's all done and dusted.

Not at all. It's a lifetime's work. Every day we live, the Lord is at work. Dealing with us. Breaking us.

Molding us. Shaping us. And often we resist because we don't like it. We don't like it. We rebel against it.

And Peter was, it's a lesson that Peter was having to learn. And when we follow the life of Peter, his three years with Jesus, it was a lesson he was having to learn all the time. He was a great man, Peter.

But he had his problems. He had his difficulties just like you and me. And so the Lord is showing us in this incident how that he is Lord over all.

[15:58] And then, of course, we find that Peter says, anyway, even although this is what I think, at your word, I will let down the nets. And again, we have here, we're not going to spend time, the command of Jesus, the authority of Jesus.

And you know, my friends, when we obey the voice of Jesus, that's when the blessing will come. Great blessing came upon Peter. Upon the boat. Upon the work.

And upon all the others who were involved. By being obedient to the Lord. And that, my friends, is where blessing comes. Let down the nets.

At your word, put out into the deep. And let down your nets for a catch. And you know this, I believe the Lord is saying that to us all today. And I would ask that every believer here would make it.

Your commitment to let down your nets for a catch, wherever you're placed. And take encouragement from it. Because when you look at this particular incident, here is Peter.

[17:06] And he's weary. He's fished. He's done everything that is right. He's done it the right way because he knows how to fish. And he's got nothing. And when we apply that spiritually, it's so often through.

It's through sometimes in preaching. Where you prepare. You preach. You pray. You give your all. And you look for results. And there doesn't seem to be anything.

And there's a, it's so easy to say, oh, well, what's the point? That's the kind of, you can almost hear that attitude in Peter. What's the point? We worked all the night and we've got nothing.

And Peter didn't realize it. Just go out one more time, Peter. There's a great catch waiting. And so often we are ready to give up. And may I say to parents who maybe have committed themselves to the spiritual well-being of their young.

And they haven't seen fruit from their efforts. Or fruit from their labors. And maybe today they're discouraged. And they say, well, I've toiled all the night and I've taken nothing.

[18:14] And maybe today you feel like giving up and saying, well, what's the point? Jesus is saying, launch out into the deep. Put out. Keep going.

In other words, that's what Jesus is saying. Keep going. You be faithful to what I've asked you to do. And the Lord has his time for doing, for blessing.

You see, we can only do. We cannot save people. But we can bring the message of the gospel. We can pray for people. We can live the life before people.

We cannot actually convert them. If we could, we would. But Jesus is saying, you be faithful to your part. And leave the rest to me. And the Lord has that time for everything.

His timetable can be very different to ours. Ours is always now. Jesus said that to the disciples on another time. Another occasion he said, you're always wanting it now. Your time is always now.

[19:13] And how true that is. Because there's unnatural impatience within us. Jesus says, I have my own timetable. And so that is why it is so important to keep on going.

And then we see this wonderful miracle. Where they went out. And it tells us here. And when they had done this.

That is when they went back out and launched out into the deep. They enclosed a large number of fish. And their nets were breaking. They signaled to their partners and the other boat to come and help them.

And they came and filled both the boats. So that they began to sink. You know, here's the fishing story. To end all fishing stories. I think everybody has a fishing story.

And we talk about how fishing stories are always exaggerated. And often they are. Your catch. When you're describing it, it's always growing a wee bit bigger, isn't it?

[20:14] It's always this size of fish. Even if it was this size when you caught it. And I'm sure everybody here has a story. Maybe you were out with somebody. And you were both fishing.

One person. The friend you went out had the best of rod. Best of reel. Best of line. And your rod was a sort of an old clumsy thing. And the reel kept falling off.

And you had all kinds of problems. And the line wasn't very good. And the other person was telling you. Oh, you're doing this wrong. Or you're doing that wrong. You're too noisy. You're pulling in too quickly. And at the end of the day, you catch more fish than him.

You feel great about it. And you tell everybody. There are a thousand and one fishing stories. Well, here is the one to end all fishing stories.

A wonderful, wonderful incident. And here we have at this particular moment. That when this miracle occurs. Simon Peter, who had been so reluctant to go back out.

[21 : 17] But because of the authority in Jesus' words. He goes out. Something incredible happens. Peter's heart melts.

Because all of a sudden he realizes. That the person standing beside him in the boat. While he is most obviously a man. And is an identical man to himself.

Is more than a man. He realizes this is the Messiah. This is Jesus Christ. This is the Son of God. And that is why Peter turns to Jesus. And he says, Depart from me. For I am a sinful man. Oh Lord. Have you come to that conclusion.

That Jesus Christ is Lord. I think it was C.S. Lewis. That said about the Lord Jesus Christ. Looking at his claims.

[22 : 16] That there were three alternatives with Jesus. One. That he was the greatest trickster. That this world ever knew. In trying to deceive people.

Secondly. That the claims he was making. If he wasn't Christ. Showed that he was mad. And that he should have been locked away.

Or thirdly. That the claims that he made. Were true. And it is very obvious. As we study scripture. That Jesus was not a deceiver.

Although there were people in his day. Who thought he was. But when we read. The word of God. And the whole picture is brought before us. And all the prophecies.

Regarding Christ. We see that. A. He was not a trickster. B. He was not mad. Although there were people who thought he was mad. But that he most certainly was.

[23 : 15] And is. Who he claims to be. And if Jesus is. Who he claims to be. Then there is only one outcome.

For you and for me. And that is the outcome that Peter. The same as Peter did. Is to fall down. Before him. Acknowledging his lordship.

If you today. Believe. The word of God. And what the Bible reveals to us. About Jesus Christ. If you believe that. Can I ask you.

Why do you refuse. To bow down before Jesus. And accept him. As your lord. It's a question. You have to ask yourself.

Because he is lord. Lord. It's an incredibly. Searching question. Well that's what Peter did. He bowed down. Before the feet of Jesus.

[24 : 16] And you see. At that moment. Peter. He says. Depart from me. For I am a sinful man. Oh lord. At that moment. Peter felt so small.

And so insignificant. A while ago. Peter was king. He was a king of fishermen. He was a man. Who knew it all. He was the one. Who was trying to tell Jesus. It's a waste of time lord.

But it's changed now. He's on his knees. Before Jesus. And at that moment. He is seeing his own sin. He is seeing his sin. In his words.

He is seeing the sin. Of his life. Of how he's living life. He's convicted. Of his sin. And my friend. The more we see of the Lord. The more we see our own insignificance.

We read about that. In Isaiah chapter 6. Woe is me. Says the prophet. Woe is me. For I am undone. [25 : 16] For I have seen. When he saw the glory of the Lord. It changed everything. You know. It

will change our perspective. On our self. On our community. Our world view.

Everything will change. When we get a sight. Of the Lord. When we see his glory. And I would ask you. My dear friend. Pray for that.

Pray in order to see the Lord. To see him as a high. Exalted. Lord over all. To see his glory. His majesty. His dominion. His authority.

His control. His rule. To see his love. To see all these things. Jesus. And you will see. Your own sin. And Peter is saying. Depart from me. For I am a sinful man. Oh Lord. Now this is a funny thing. The last thing in the world. That Peter wanted. That Peter wanted. Was Jesus. To depart from him.

[26 : 13] He wanted to stay with Jesus. And be close to Jesus. And yet he felt. Because of his own depravity. And sin. That he was so unclean. That he couldn't be. In the presence of Jesus.

And you know. That is exactly. The way it is. When we. See the Lord. There is this. Dual experience.

Where on the one hand. We are saying. Lord. I just. I am so unclean. And you can understand. What Peter is saying. Depart from me. And at the same time.

You are saying. Oh Lord. Stay close to me. That is a mark. Of a believer. And if. You know. If your heart. Is echoing.

These. Very statements. If you are today. Saying. And speaking. With the language. Of Peter. I would say. That that is a language.

[27 : 08] Of grace. If you. On the one hand. Are saying. Depart from me Lord. Because I am. I am such a sinner. Yet at the same time.

Saying. Lord. I want you. And you know. The wonderful thing. Is that. Those. Like Peter. Who are saying. To the Lord. Depart from me.

Because I am so sinful. And yet I want you. At the end of the day. The Lord will never say. To them. Depart from me. He will say. Depart from me. To those. Who have never thought.

In this way. Or acted in this way. But to those. Who have. Said. Depart Lord. But oh. Draw close to me.

He will say. Enter. Into the joy. Of the Lord. Forever. And then. Finally. Jesus says to them. After.

[28 : 06] After this. When. When they. Jesus. When Peter had said. I am a sinful man. They were all astonished. And so also were. James and John. Sons of Zebedee. Who had partners.

With Simon. And Jesus said to Simon. Do not be afraid. From now on. You will be catching men. And when they had brought. Their boats to land. They left everything. And followed him.

You will be catching men. The word. Catch here. Has the idea. Of taking. Someone alive. And. When you catch. When you catch.

Someone. It has the idea. Nobody wants to be. The idea of. When you catch something. You're catching a fish. Fish. That fish. Does not want to be caught.

If the fish. Wanted to be caught. It would jump onto the bank. Itself. Doesn't want to be caught. You're catching it. As it were. Against its will. And that is true.

[29 : 01] Spiritually. As well. That people. In order to be caught. In order to be caught. For Jesus. There are people. All these people. Are swimming.

As it were. In the sea. Of. Of life. And they do not. Want to be caught. Because.

As we said earlier. Their will. People. Want to be in charge. Of their own destiny. People want to be the ones. Calling the shot. They don't want.

That their lives. Will be taken in other ways. In other directions. But the Lord says. I have got a huge. Number of people. That are yet to be caught.

For me. Go out. Go out. And get them. We are living. In the days. Of great gospel. Blessing. Of gospel.

[29 : 55] Preaching. Of gospel. In gathering. In this world. Today. There are. Hundreds. And thousands. Of people. Who are coming to faith.

In the Lord. Jesus Christ. It's an ongoing. Work. And the Lord. Is saying. In his word. That the fields. Are white. And ready.

To harvest. But that the laborers. Are few. Pray. Therefore. The Lord. Of the harvest. That he will send out. Laborers. Into that harvest.

Because there are people. To be caught. And the thing is. This. That if. You are taken alive. Today. For the kingdom. Of God. You won't regret it.

Because Jesus. Is not going to do you. Anything. But that which is. Ultimately. For your good. Right now. If you are swimming. Against. The tide. Or swimming. I should say. Against Jesus.

[30 : 51] And right now. There is part of you. That say. One day. I hope to be caught. In the gospel net. I want one day. That Jesus. Will reach down.

And take me. Into his kingdom. But not. Yet. Maybe that's. What you are saying. Not. Yet. Because you are not sure.

How. It will be. As a Christian. And I can understand that. Because there is a. You are saying to yourself. I know. Where I am now.

I am used. To where I am now. But I. I don't know. What it is like. I have seen other people. And what it is like. For them.

But. I don't know. What it will be like. For me. Well this is all. Part of the trust. Where you have to trust. The Lord. And his word. And the Lord.

[31 : 46] Spells it out. In his word. All the benefits. And all the glory. In becoming. A believer. And the Lord. Is looking.

For other people. So that. You today. If you could be caught. For the Lord. Straight away. Your next job. Would be. That you would be going out. To catch people.

For the Lord. I read about. A new convert. He was a mechanic. Working in a garage. And he came to his minister. And he said. After he was converted.

He was just converted. He said. Oh I want a job. In the church. And the mechanic said to him.

Where do you. The minister said to him. Where is it you do work. Oh he said. In such and such a garage. All right.

He said. How many Christians. Are in that garage. Oh he said none. Well he said. That's your job.

Go and work. Where you are. Because that's the Lord. As I work for you there. And that's so true in life.

[32 : 43] There are so many people. So many people. Who need to hear this gospel. Maybe you're saying to yourself. I'm not very good. At witnessing to people.

Well remember. That your life. Is a witness. And. Even you're praying. For people. It's a wonderful thing. Do you pray. I know that you'll pray for your family. Do you pray for the people.

Beside you in church. The people behind you in church. People in front of you in church. The people you work with. Pray for them. Ask the Lord. To make them a burden.

Upon your heart. You do. What you can. And leave the rest. To the Lord. Let us pray. Oh Lord.

Our God. We. We ask thee to. Help us. As we. Seek to go forward. Day by day. As we launch on. Even from this particular moment.

[33 : 39] We are going out. Into the unknown. Everything. Is in the past. All of our life. Already. That has. Taken place. Up to this point.

Is now. Confined. To the past. And yet. Our whole life. Past and present. And future. Is all one. Help us then Lord. As we move forward.

That we may do so. Focused. Upon the Lord. And may there be. A growing willingness. To submit. Our lives. Entirely. And totally. To the Lordship.

And to the authority. Of Christ. Bless us. We pray. Do us good. And take away. All our sin. In Jesus name. We ask it. Amen.