

The Fifth Sunday after Trinity

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Date: 05 July 2026

Preacher: Seminarian Matthew Stuart

[0:00] In the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Ghost. Amen. In our Gospel reading this morning, Jesus was by the lake of Gennesaret, and a crowd gathered to hear him preach.

The fishermen had just finished their work for the night and were washing their nets along the shore. Jesus got into the boat belonging to Simon, then asked him to push it out a little way from the shore, so he could speak to the people on the shore from the boat.

When Jesus had finished speaking, he said to Simon, Launch out into the deep, and let down your nets for a catch. Now Simon knew this lake well, having fished it his whole life, and he knew the best time to catch fish was at night.

Not during the day. Besides, he and his men had just worked all night without catching a single fish. His common sense told him that this would be a waste of time.

However, he answered Jesus, Master, we have toiled all night and caught nothing. Nevertheless, at your word, I will let down the net.

[1:19] Simon did not argue. He simply did what our Lord asked him. This time, the nets came up full. So full that they began to break.

And Simon and his men waved to their partners in the other boat to come and help. And both boats filled until they began to sink under the weight of all the fish. This was no ordinary catch.

It was far beyond anything they had ever seen. More than they can use or that their boats could hold. They had not been able to catch a single fish all night.

And now had more than two boats could carry. And it happened the moment they obeyed our Lord's word and let down the net.

Simon Peter had just made the biggest catch of his life. But there was no joy in it for him. Instead, he fell down on his knees and said to Jesus, Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord.

[2:28] He fell down because he had just witnessed the power of God and recognized his own unworthiness. That he was a sinful man in the presence of holiness and he could not bear it.

The nearer he was to Christ, the more clearly he saw what he was. And so he asked the Lord to depart from him. The prophet Isaiah experienced a similar moment in the presence of God.

He saw the Lord high and lifted up in the temple and he cried out, Woe is me for I am undone because I am a man of unclean lips.

Simon Peter realized the great gulf between holiness of God and his own broken and sinful nature. None of us is worthy to be in the presence of God. That is why we kneel and make our confession before we approach the altar. When we acknowledge and bewail our manifold sins and wickedness and confess that the remembrance of them is grievous unto us and the burden of them is intolerable.

[3:48] The nearer we draw to God in humility, the more clearly his light reveals our brokenness and our desperate need for mercy and forgiveness.

Simon Peter fell down at Christ's feet as a sinful man. But our Lord did not leave him. Instead, Jesus gave him comfort and called him to follow.

We come to this altar in the same way, confessing our unworthiness and asking that the Lord, despite our sin, draw near to us in mercy.

Jesus said to Peter, Do not be afraid. From now on, you will catch men. Our Lord did not depart as Simon had asked.

Instead, he gave him a calling. All his life, he had pulled fish from the water. Now he would gather people into God's kingdom and into eternal life.

[4:56] Peter would spend the rest of his days letting down nets at Christ's word. And the church still does the same. We do not gather souls by our own merits or strength any more than Peter filled

those nets by his own ability.

We let down the net where Christ tells us by his word and he fills it. When we humble ourselves and confess our sins, the church does not leave us in our sorrow.

She speaks Christ's own words back to us. Come unto me, all ye that travail and are heavy laden, and I will refresh you. His mercy is greater than the sins that we confess.

Christ comes to the sinner who cannot bear him. And instead of leaving us, he feeds us and sends us out.

So when Simon Peter and his partners brought their boats back to shore, they left everything and followed Jesus.

[6:10] They walked away from all that they had ever known because they had found something worth so much more. We come to this altar on our knees, falling before Jesus as Peter did, undone by what we are, confessing that we have no righteousness of our own.

And the Lord, whom we are not worthy of receiving, does not send us away. He gives us his own body and blood. And he calls us, as he called Simon, to follow him and to go out after the lost.

May the Lord make us humble and may his light reveal our sins, that we may confess them and be raised by his mercy to follow him and go out into the world at his word to be fishers of men.

In the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Ghost. Amen.