

Luke 5:1-11

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[0 : 00] It was the summer of 1986.

I had just finished my junior year in high school. Having grown up in a home that went to church, but in which Christian worship was not a daily part of our lives.

Having gone through a confirmation process where I filled out a statement of faith without knowing any of what I really wrote. And submitted it so that I could be brought in as a member of the church that our family went to.

Having wandered out on a youth group retreat one night and looking up at the stars and wondered if maybe there was a God. And wondering if maybe there was something to this whole thing.

But never getting an answer until during my sophomore and junior year I met Bill and Becky and other friends who knew Jesus.

[1 : 24] And I didn't like their Jesus very much, but I liked them. And I saw that they had something that was to me irresistibly attractive.

And so I kept hanging out with them and I kept asking questions. And it brought me to this summer. The summer where my friend went off across the sea and left me with Mere Christianity by C.S. Lewis.

And in that time as I read through this book. I saw who Jesus was for the first time. And C.S. Lewis walked through the argument that he puts forth in that book.

I found myself being compelled by it. And I got to the end. And I remember thinking, if this is true, what am I going to do with it?

I could no longer think, I wonder if there might be something to this. Now I knew something. Now I knew something about who Jesus was.

[2 : 35] I had been confronted with him. And I knew that I needed to respond. Friends, this morning as we continue in our series in the book of Luke, we will find a similar encounter with the Apostle Peter and some of his friends.

As they encountered Jesus and saw him, perhaps for the first time, with real eyes. So we're looking at the Gospel of Luke. If you want to turn there, I think it's page 860 in your pew Bible.

Is that right? Yes? Good. As we turn there, let me just remind us of where we are. We're doing a series this winter on who is this Jesus.

Looking at Luke chapter 4 through chapter 8. If you remember, we started a couple weeks ago hearing about Jesus as he walked into the synagogue and he sat down and he read the words from Isaiah.

Isaiah, the Spirit of the Lord is upon me because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, and to proclaim the day of the Lord's favor.

[3 : 51] And then having read this, he sat down and he said, Today it is fulfilled. What he was basically saying is, Now that I am here. And then as we've seen, after that he went out and he did ministry.

And he did it with a kind of authority. Authority over spiritual forces of darkness. Authority over physical sickness that would cause to destroy. Destroy. And in all of these things it arouses in our hearts the question, Who is this one?

And that brings us to our text this morning. Luke chapter 5. We're going to look at verses 1 through 11. So please read along with me. On one occasion, while the crowd was pressing in on him to hear the word of God, he was standing by the lake of Gennesaret, 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. And Simon answered, Master, we toiled all night and took nothing.

[5 : 18] But at your word, I will let down the nets. And when they 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 they had taken. And so also were James and John, the 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.

Let's pray together. Lord, we thank you for your word. And we thank you that in it you reveal yourself to us. Lord, that it is not simply an instruction book for us on how to live.

[6 : 33] But it is a book about you. That we might see you clearly and know you rightly. And respond in love and worship and obedience. God, what a precious gift it is that you have given us your word.

So that we might know what kind of a God you truly are. And Lord, as we look at this word this morning, I pray for receptive hearts. Lord, for eyes that are ready to see you anew, afresh.

Or maybe for the first time. Lord, I pray that you might use me. Lord, that my words would be useful in lifting up Jesus in our midst.

That we might see him and respond. And we pray this in Jesus' name. Amen. Well, friends.

As we look at this story, one of the fun things about doing the Gospels is that they're stories. And by that I don't mean they're fictional. By that I mean they're narrative. Which means that the way that God is telling truth is telling it through an account of what happened.

[7 : 42] And so, what we're going to do is we're going to look at this. And instead of giving you an outline of here are the three theses that Luke wants you to understand. What I want you to see is there are three movements in this drama.

There are three actions that happen. Or three places. Three sections of this passage that capture us and grip us and teach us a bit about what is going on.

We're going to see first, we're going to see Jesus unveiled. And secondly, we're going to see Peter undone. And third, we are going to see Jesus calling for us to follow.

So, let's look at those three movements and see what they have for us this morning. First of all, Jesus unveiled in the glory of the catch. This is in verses 1 through 7. And as you look at this, I want you to sit by the Sea of Galilee.

This Gennesaret is just a section of shoreline along the Sea of Galilee. Luke uses a different word to tell you. It's the same familiar place of Galilee. So, Jesus is ministering up north in Israel.

[8 : 46] He's collected a group of people. They've heard about what he's doing. They've heard about his teaching with authority. And they've gathered along to do it. I want you to notice, too, that Luke says on one occasion.

He's not saying this is an account of everything Jesus did. And he's not even saying, oh, and this is what happened right after what happened at the end of chapter 4. He's just saying, oh, let me tell you something else about what Jesus was doing during this time.

And he was gathered in this. And the crowd became so big that they were pressing in on him. And he saw the crowd growing and he thought, how do I love them? They've come here to hear the words that I have to say to them.

And I want them to do that. So, we love them enough to look for a solution. And lo and behold, there it was. Two fishing boats by the water. The fishermen, having fished all night, were now out of their boats.

Tending to their nets at the end of a long night. And he said to the fishermen, hey, can I use your boat? And so, they pushed out from shore and the boat became his pulpit.

[9 : 51] And the water became his microphone amplification as he preached to a large crowd. But notice that for Luke, this isn't the point today. It is the context in which Jesus was doing something else.

It's simply the setup. Because in verse 4 then, we begin to see the story really take shape. Peter, put out into the deep.

Put your nets down. Now, Peter would have been pretty taken aback by this. For a number of reasons.

One, Jesus was a carpenter, not a fisherman. Or maybe Jesus was an itinerant religious teacher. But he still didn't know anything about fishing.

And anyone who knows anything about fishing knows that if you've fished all night and you haven't caught anything, you don't go out in the middle of the day to try again.

[10 : 57] Because the fish aren't out in the middle of the day. That's why fishermen always fish at dawn and dusk. They go out in the right times of day. And this was the wrong time of day.

As one commentator said, But interestingly, with all of that resistance, Peter still responds.

He knows something of Jesus. He's heard the teaching, maybe, as he's been mending the nets. Maybe, likely, the account of his healing of his mother had happened, as it was reported in chapter 4.

He knew something of him. He called him master. It's an honorary term, like, of teacher or one who deserves honor. He said, This is the dumbest thing in the world, but alright, I'll try it.

Peter allowed Jesus to invade an inappropriate place in his life. Peter may have looked at him and said, He's a great teacher.

[12 : 20] He maybe even, he healed my mother. That seems like a good place for Jesus to stay in my life. Now Jesus has insinuated himself into the place of Peter's expertise.

The place of his greatest ability. Peter's doubtful, but he gives him a chance. I want to stop for a minute.

I want you to think about your own life. Jesus walks into your lab. Why don't you try this? I couldn't even begin to, like, give you technical terms.

Titrate this. Spin this. I don't even know. I was an asty major. You know what I mean. Jesus walks into your homeschooling. Maybe you should do this with your kids.

He invites you into your romantic life. He goes along on the date. Follows you into your bedroom. How about this? He walks with you down the hall in your high school.

[13 : 33] Greeting your friends. Sitting with you in the lunchroom. How do you respond? Master, we fished all night.

We didn't catch anything. But since you ask, we'll do it. I'll bet he wouldn't get master out of us most of the time.

More like the question. Jesus, what do you have to do with this part of my life? This isn't where you belong. In those places of our greatest expertise.

When we think we're in control, and when we think God really doesn't know what he's doing or what he's up to, we resist him, and we don't see him as he truly is.

But Peter gave him a doubtful chance. And look with me at verse 6 and 7. Luke tells us in excruciating detail to make sure we don't miss what happened.

[14 : 44] They enclosed a large number of fish, and their nets were breaking. That meant that the weight was greater than what those nets were built to catch.

And so they called their friend over in the other boat, and they put the fish in the boat, and these boats that were made to fish, made to hold fish, were sinking because the catch was so great.

This is a fisherman's tale beyond belief. It was this big! But it really was. It wasn't a fiction.

And joy turns into panic. But it's a gleeful panic. What are we going to do? And notice this too. When Jesus invades Peter's area of expertise, he doesn't do it flippantly.

It's not just a random display of power for the fun of it. He actually graciously provides for Peter the thing that he most needed and didn't have on his own.

[15 : 52] He blessed Peter and the other fishermen with the catch that they could not catch on their own. So Jesus' display of power was not simply asserting himself to say, I'm better than you, or I'm bigger than you, or I'm greater than you, although all of those things, as we will see, are true.

But he's saying, don't you see how much I love you? That I will use all of my greatness for your good.

And so, with Peter, we must look at this Jesus again with new eyes. Who is this man?

Suddenly the compartments come down. It's running through Peter's head. Who is he? What has he just done? He's the creator who knows the fish.

Whether he commanded them to jump into the nets, or whether he just knew where they were at the wrong time of day, he's the one who rules over creation. He's the almighty provider who's able, at the snap of his finger, with what humanly seems like an irrational request, provide the thing that we most need.

[17 : 07] He is the sovereign over all. He is the Holy One of God. Who is he? This must be God. Not just a teacher.

Not just a helpful man who might tell me something useful about my spiritual life. But someone who is greater than all. This must be God.

The analogy is, if Jesus can rule in the area of my greatest expertise, then doesn't he have a claim to rule over all?

If Jesus can do this in the place where I'm the professional, then doesn't Jesus make me accountable to him in everything that I do?

And if that request is so surprising, and the response so unbelievable, then the second thing that happens in this story is additionally so surprising.

[18 : 14] Because, as we see moving on to verses 8 through 10, we see our second movement. Because we see Peter, Simon Peter, responding, and his response is surprising.

What we see is him undone. Look with me again at verse 8. When Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord.

With echoes of the Isaiah passage that we read further, when Isaiah encountered the glory of God, and fell down before him, and says, Woe is me.

Peter falls down before Jesus. And he says three things. First thing he says is, Depart from me.

This is not a Mike Myers, I am not worthy. There is no tongue in cheek. It is not even just awe and wonder. You are bigger than me.

[19 : 21] But what it is, is in this common pattern that we see over and over in the scriptures, when people encounter God himself, when people encounter messengers of the God most high, they fall down on their faces, and their beginning start is, O Lord, I can't handle this.

It's too much. Depart from me, for I am afraid that I might die in your presence. Depart from me, for I am fearful that I am not worthy to be before you.

I cannot stand in your presence. It would be like the present who, hearing a surprising knock at the door, finds the king standing at the doorstep saying, May I come in and eat?

No, I'm not worthy. My table is not clean. My food is not good enough. I have nothing to offer what you really deserve. You must be mistaken, Lord.

It must be another house you're looking for. I think that's what Peter is saying when he says, Depart from me, Lord. He's expressing this fear. Then the second thing, For I am a sinful man.

[20 : 42] Jesus hasn't said anything about sin. We haven't heard anything about righteousness, about the law, about doing right and wrong. None of that has happened.

How did Peter get here? This doesn't make any sense, does it? Spurgeon helpfully says this about it.

I do not doubt that in the sermon which Christ delivered, there was such a clear declaration of the holiness of God that Peter felt himself unveiled, discovered, his heart laid bare.

And now came the finishing stroke. The one who had done this could also rule the fishes of the sea. He must, therefore, be God. And if it was to God that all the defects and evils of Peter's heart had been revealed and thoroughly known, and almost fearing, with a kind of inarticulate cry of alarm because the criminal was in the presence of the judge, the polluted in the presence of the immaculate, Peter says, depart from me for I am a sinful man, O Lord.

When we find ourselves in the presence of God, we find ourselves in the presence of all of him. And in his perfect power, in his perfect creatorness that rules over all things, he is also the perfect moral one.

[22 : 15] And in his greatness, we see our smallness. In his perfection, we see our sinfulness. In his power, we see our weakness.

And Peter confesses it. For I am a sinful man. I cannot stand before your holiness. I think it's possible that part of what Peter recognized in that moment was, I didn't really think, Jesus, that you knew anything about fishing.

And so I had you over here in this nice little compartment in my life. And you've now blown that up. And I've recognized how sinful that is.

Because if you are God over all, then you are God over me. And I am a sinful man for not seeing your glory and responding rightly.

Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord. This is the final recognition. He called him earlier, Master. You're one who deserves honor.

[23 : 34] But now he says, you are Lord. And fascinatingly, if you have the time, go back and read Luke 1-3 and see the almost 30 times when the writer Luke uses the word Lord.

And in all of those contexts, it is the Lord God Almighty, the Lord who rules over, the Lord of Israel, the Lord of the promises of the Old Testament, the Lord who brings life to a virgin womb, the Lord who appears and opens barren Elizabeth, the Lord who has shown favor to those who don't deserve favor.

It is this sovereign good Lord. And Peter now uses this term on his lips, no longer master, but Lord. Peter has experienced both his awesome power and greatness and his gracious goodness.

And in this, he is undone. He's forgotten about the fish.

He fell down in the boat at Jesus' knees. Suddenly, as he sees what Jesus has done, Jesus now fills the whole screen of his life.

[24 : 56] Everything that he's concerned about now fades. Only Jesus is there. Friends, I wonder if Jesus has undone you this morning.

I wonder if you've seen him as he really is. If he's opened your eyes to see him as the creator to whom you're accountable, as the holy one whose moral perfection exposes our sin and the ugliness of our hearts.

His gracious love for us that shows us how ungrateful and selfish we really are. His sovereign goodness that shows us how often we grasp for control, for power in our own lives.

Have you seen him as he really is? Has he undone you? When he undoes you, there's no more pretense.

There's no more excuses. There's no more expertise to fall back on in parts of our lives. We are laid bare before him when he undoes us.

[26 : 24] We realize we have no basis to claim rightness before him. We have no merit that we might be commended to him.

We have no goodness to cling to and no self to exalt before him. we see him and we are undone because he is greater because he is God.

Maybe you've been a Christian for a long time. Maybe you grew up reading these stories and thinking, oh yeah, I know that one. That's all about, we'll get to the end about following Jesus and I know the song, I have decided to follow Jesus.

You know, we, you know, or the, I'm sure there are other songs about the fishermen and stuff, but I didn't grow up in that as much so I don't know the songs. But maybe you've grown up in that kind of a background and you know those stories from heart and you're sort of like, yeah, yeah, yeah, we've done this a lot.

I know that. But I wonder if Jesus has become too familiar to you. I wonder if the Jesus of this story has been lost to you under the guise of a nice, pleasant Jesus who wants good for you in your life and yeah, he died on the cross for your sins and that's good and you know, he can sort of take care of that part of your life and let you go on your merry way.

[27 : 58] I wonder if this morning you would see him afresh, if you would see him with new eyes and see him in his glory as he says, I am Lord of all.

I am the giver of life. I am the one who calls you. Maybe some of you are like me and you've grown up in church and you've known about Jesus but you've never really encountered him and you've never really seen him this way ever.

Or maybe you're here because through God's gracious work in your life you're wondering whether there might be something to this Christianity.

Maybe like me you have a friend who believes this stuff and you're like what is that all about? I gotta figure that out. Maybe you're here this morning wondering who is this Jesus?

Jesus. Jesus. Jesus. Whatever it is. Whatever your situation is. I pray this morning that as you see him that you would be undone.

[29 : 14] I pray this morning that you would encounter him. Friends, when I encountered him it was not because God intervened in some he didn't suddenly make me win the lacrosse championship or make me the star of the school play or give me a straight egg average or whatever.

He didn't come in and invade my areas of expertise. But through the words of my friends and through the words of C.S. Lewis and through my own time actually reading parts of the Bible I encountered him and saw who he was and God opened my eyes to see him for the first time.

So friends, wherever you are this morning I pray I pray that you would see him and if you're sitting there and you know I haven't been undone by Jesus I don't even know this Jesus friends, this is where we look.

This is where you will find him. Keep reading. Keep looking. Come talk to me. Talk to your friend who brought you. Talk to your friend who you've known for 30 years as you've gone to church together and marvel again at who Jesus is.

Be undone by him. So Jesus unveils himself in his glory. Peter and his friends and we are undone as we see him as he really is.

[30 : 48] And then Jesus responds to us again as he does to Peter and he gives this call. Look with me again. Verse 10.

Second half. And Jesus said to Simon don't be afraid. That is I haven't come to destroy you. I'm not going to simply wipe you out though your sin is real and though your unworthiness is right.

No I've come to do something else. You see it's never been about the fish. The beginning and the end of the story tell us that the fish has just been a sign and a symbol and an unveiling of the person.

Jesus says no I'm not going to run from you Peter. Instead I'm going to call you. I'm going to call you to follow me. He doesn't say okay now you've understood me better go back and do your thing and we'll go on and do our thing and I'll go teach and you go fish and we'll be fine.

Isn't that nice? Jesus doesn't say that. He says no I've come to radically reorient your life. There's a place for you to fish.

[32 : 05] but what I want you to do is I want you to begin to see what I'm about and to reorient your life around me and what my purposes are in the world and what my glory is all about.

He says no longer will you fish for those things in the lake but you will fish for the souls of men and women. He'll say come follow me because this is what I'm about don't you see this is my teaching ministry that you've seen.

The net that I throw out is the net of the good news of the kingdom of God and the gospel and the catch that I get is not flapping little fish but it's the souls of men and women cast over the crowds.

This is the call that Jesus gives to them. He says Peter you are not undone I am now capturing you and calling you in fact into a greater thing than what you've ever done and as you are undone from all these little things that consumed your lives and dominated your attention now I want you to reorient those things around me and the things that I am about.

he wants to say no longer is fishing the purpose of your life. No longer is fishing your security.

[33 : 41] No longer is fishing your capital. No longer is being a fisherman your identity. Jesus is Lord of all the fish and the fishermen and he has come to say I now as I call you to follow me I will be for you your security your capital your identity your purpose in life.

Jesus is saying I am not the moon that simply reflects light on you at the night but I am the sun around which you and the planets of your life are meant to orbit.

I am meant to be and call you to make me the gravitational center of what you are and who you are. Because don't you see how easy it is for us to not do that?

How easy it is for us to say yeah Jesus we will give you some of it but not this stuff you can't touch this. This is mine this is where I am in charge this is where I exalt myself this is where I am the one who knows what is going on.

Jesus says no I am the lord of everything even your fishing and now look let's make sure we get this right Jesus doesn't call all Christians to forsake every other vocation to become a minister in case you are confused by that that is not what he is saying here right?

[35 : 19] not everyone is called to literally leave their boats and their nets God called these men in a very special way to play a special role they were his disciples who went with him and through them he then shared and spread the ministry that he was called to of proclaiming the word and bringing the kingdom of God to this world they were the beginning of the church which was the thing that he was birthing through his ministry and yes he called them to leave their nets and their fish and everything to follow him but practically for us some of you are going to be called to leave all the security all the identity all the capital and all the expertise that you have in your career and to abandon all of those things to Jesus hand and then to go back and to do the very same thing and I know some of you that's a really hard road to walk

I don't know if you ever think about it but I sit up here sometimes and I think I have the easy life I get to do this all day every day this is my joy that this is my vocation some of you have a hard road to walk in what you do having to live out making Jesus the center of your life as a carpenter or a fisherman as a postdoc or a mom as a teacher as an executive as a student as simply a citizen in this world whatever you do the call here is to reorient your life around Jesus and to live for him and to follow him in his work and yes that does mean that in your workplace you are called to carry out his mission which is to love people in his name and to proclaim the good news that Jesus has come you are called to do that wherever you are and whatever you do but he doesn't mean that you have to leave your vocation and your work but he does mean reorient your life make me the center see who

I am and this is what I want you to see friends is that this isn't a command try harder try harder to be a better Christian be more committed to being more committed no that's not it because you see friends this story helps us see the very dynamics of the gospel itself Jesus reveals himself in his glory and friends you know that in the gospel of Luke this section chapter 4 through 9 is a setup it started with this quotation from Isaiah about Jesus has come and the kingdom has come and then there's a display of it in chapters 4 through 9 this is what it looks like Jesus is Lord over this Jesus is Lord over that Jesus showing the character of God's kingdom where he's setting the captives free and bringing freedom to those who are oppressed and bringing sight to the blind and he does all these things and then in chapter 9 in Luke Jesus turns and he sets his face towards

Jerusalem and as he goes to Jerusalem he encounters increasing resistance people hate him for his message and he has resisted more and more and Luke structures the whole gospel to lead us to the end chapters where we see Jesus in the fullness of his glory in the greatest expression of his sovereign power and his love for us as he lays down his life for us as he offers himself up in our place because we are sinful men and ought to be destroyed by holy God yet Jesus says no I will take that place and I will suffer the destruction that your sins deserve and I will hang on that cross in your place because I love you and because

I have come to redeem you to make you my own and he died and he rose again to show his power even over sin and death to show that his redemption is real and one day will be complete as he lives it out as he comes one day to return to make it all right friends when we see this Jesus when this Jesus is unveiled before our eyes we are able both like Peter to fall at his knees and say woe is me I am undone before you and yet we are able then to rise at his gracious call and say I will follow you and I will leave everything because I've seen how great you are why would I want to follow anything else why would

[41 : 01] I want to spend my life glorifying anything else other than the thing that you are because you are the best and the greatest thing I have ever encountered so friends it's not about us working harder to work harder or being more committed to being more committed but it's about us seeing Jesus as he really is because when we see him like that he will do this work in us he will undo us and convict us of sin he will show us the areas where we have not given him the lordship of our lives he will bring us faith when we don't have faith he will do these things when we see him rightly so friends the call to

Peter is a call to us will you follow me with all that that means from this passage we talked about it before some of you this may be a call for the first time that you need to respond to I have never followed him I have never seen him like that I have never understood what he did for me I never understood who he really is friends today he calls you follow me some of you have lived your life knowing about him or knowing him for a long time but maybe today he's put a finger on a part of your life that he's invaded with his lordship and his call to follow to leave everything and to follow him maybe you need to surrender those areas to him and reaffirm that you will follow him no turning back no turning back we don't usually do this in this church but

I'm actually going to ask the worship team to come in and I want to give you just a reflect on what we've heard this morning to think about this to pray God will you help me to pray God will you will you show me yourself will you make my eyes see who you are maybe you already hear the Holy Spirit whispering to you how you need to respond to him this morning so the musicians begin to play I'm just going to give you just a moment here to reflect to pray and then we'll respond by singing singing a song of recognition that Jesus is worthy to follow him so why don't we bow our heads and just take a moment together to to forget to forward oh and to battleologist

Thank you.

Thank you.

[45 : 27] Thank you. Thank you. So stand as you will and let's sing together.