Called to Catch Men | Luke 5

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Take your Bibles if you would and go with me back to Luke chapter 5. It's sometime in the mid-morning. Not sure what time it is. Time enough for them to get up, get out, be looking for Jesus and want to see him.

Peter's been working all night. He and his buddies have been busing it all night, hard as they can go. They haven't caught any fish and they're very tired and they're now washing their nets.

Washing their nets. Make sure I say that right for you. Because I used to say wash. But anyway, they're washing their nets. And Jesus comes along and in verse 1 the people are pressing on him.

Man, people want to hear the word of God. And so Jesus sees some fishermen there. They're washing their nets and he goes into one of the ships.

He climbs onto Peter's boat. And he sits down in Peter's boat. And he says, hey, Peter, can you just push around a little bit from there? I need a little bit more microphone off the lake.

And I'm going to preach to these people, talk to these people. And Simon pushes her out in there. And after they've been listening to some preaching for a while, Jesus says, now, hey, Peter, glad you took that first step with me, buddy.

What I want you to do now is I want you to take your boat, go out a little bit deeper. And I want you to throw your nets over. See what you can catch. Peter looks at him and says, you know, you're a carpenter and a preacher.

You don't know a whole lot about fishing. He doesn't say that. But I think it might have been implied. I mean, I know that's what you do if I looked at you and told you I'd do your job. And Peter goes, oh, Lord.

Now, we worked all night long. Me and the boys, we know what we're doing. And we ain't caught a thing. But, all right, we'll do it.

We're going to throw one of the nets in. We'll go out. We'll throw one of the nets in. And when they go out and they throw one of the nets in, just one, it breaks. It is so full of fish.

[2:07] They have come from everywhere. The fish came swimming to him. He didn't have to fish them. He's had to catch them because they came straight to him. And it got to being so full that he hollers at his buddies and says, look, y'all better go over here and help me.

My boat ain't going to hold these fish. And they catch so many fish that two boats are about to sink. And Peter goes, this is no normal guy.

I even think Peter might have thought, if he'd have been around here, I could catch all my fish I need in a week and one day for a week or two, and I'd be all right. He broke two boats down, you know.

And he says, depart from me. You must be somebody, and I'm a sinful man. He was shocked at how many they caught.

And James and John are there, and they've been working with Simon, Peter. And Jesus looks at him and says, you didn't know it when I showed up this morning, but I came with a plan. And now you're going to go catch men.

You're going to become a fisher of men. And Peter immediately, and James and John, verse 11, they forsook all and followed him. I'd like to talk to you about how God goes about calling Peter into the ministry.

And I'd like you to take some steps and look at them with me. And I think they'll work in your life as well as they work in my life. And I think they'll work in our children's life. And I think we can get some strong ideas.

Go with me, if you would. Back to Luke chapter 5 and verse 1. And notice that Jesus works through our circumstances. He knows where you are. He knows who you are.

He knows what you're doing. Jesus isn't up in heaven separated from you. He is well aware of what's going on. And in chapter 5 and verse 1, people were hungry to hear the word of God.

It says, it came to pass that as the people pressed upon him to hear the word of God. You know, people wanted a message from God. They want to know what God taught.

[4:17] And Jesus had been going around and preaching. And they have seen that. And they've understood that. And now he's there. And everybody's just coming to hear him.

And Jesus uses what's there. He's not going to manufacture something. He's not looking for something that's outside of your life. He's going to use what's there. And so there are two ships in chapter 5 and verse 2.

And they're there. And the fishermen have stepped out of those. And they're washing their nets. They're getting them ready to use again the next day. And he climbs on to Peter's boat.

Luke chapter 5 verse 3. Simon, Peter, Cephas, all the same guy. And he climbs into Peter's boat. And Peter's now a captive audience.

I mean, it's his boat. And they're off the shore. And Jesus is preaching. And it ain't that big a boat. And Peter's sitting right over there listening to Jesus.

[5:17] And he thrust out a little from the land. Now, I want you to notice what God's doing. Now, we wouldn't know this except we got the whole story. Peter doesn't realize what's happening.

But when God wants to direct you, he comes to where you are. And he finds you where you are. And it all starts with some very small steps.

It starts with you just beginning to obey little things that God tells you to do. Simon obeyed what he knew and understood and what was asked of him.

Look in Luke chapter 5 and verse 4. And when he had left speaking, he said unto Simon, Launch out into the deep and let down your nets for a drought. Now, you know what's happened?

I mean, I don't know if you catch it. But Jesus just walks up and climbs up on Peter's boat and says, Hey, bud, you don't mind? I'll sit down right here. I'd like to shove this thing back a little bit. I need to be able to preach a little better here.

Shove this thing on back a little bit. Give me a little room. And Peter backs the boat up.

And Jesus sitting there preaching. And he's obeyed him all but so far. He allowed him in.

He allowed him to work in his life.

He allowed him to take over his boat. And now he tells Peter, I think y'all ought to go catch some fish. You know what I mean? You don't have to work for me for nothing. I'll take care of it. I'll pay my rent.

I'll sit on your boat. I'll fill it up now. And look at what happens, if you would. In Luke chapter 5 and verse 5, Simon said, Now, Master, we have fished all night.

We are expert fishermen. It's what we do six days a week. We probably sneak out some on the Sabbath when we're not supposed to. But we are fishermen.

But I'll just do whatever you tell me to do. That's a mighty good step to finding out what God wants you to do. That's a mighty good step to finding out what God wants you to do.

[7:13] Some great truths that you can look at from verses 1 through 5. Number one was that people are hungry for the word of God. They want to hear about Jesus.

That always makes me think about every place in the world that has yet to hear about him. It makes me know that every place I've ever preached in the world, people have been hungry to hear the word of God.

It means that when you step into a place like Adikipa, Peru, or when you step into China, or when you step into India, it's amazing. You open a Bible and people seem ready to come and hear the word of God.

People are hungry for it, but we ought to help get it out more. Jesus meets people where they are. But the ones that Jesus ends up using start out with daily obedience.

Would you write that down somewhere? Daily obedience. It's not big steps. It's not giving a million dollars. It's not witnessing to a thousand people. It's not doing some drastic, dramatic thing.

[8:16] It's doing the little things he asks of you every day. Second thing I want you to look at, if you would, in Luke chapter 5 and verse 5. It's the words of Jesus convince Peter to obey.

The words of Jesus convince Peter to obey. I love, I want you to outline in verse 5. Nevertheless, at thy word, I will let down the net.

Two or three things are pretty interesting to me in that little bit of those little verses. Jesus said, let down your nets. And Peter's kind of like, okay, I'll humor you.

I'm putting down one net. But he believes enough and obeys enough to take one step, and he's convinced by the word of God. Small steps of obedience lead to greater steps.

When you take small steps, when you obey God in little things, God always asks another step, and another step, and another step.

[9:21] And the next thing you know, you're really doing things God wants you to do. You're right. And you're like, how did I get here? It all was just daily obedience. In chapter 5, verse 4, he said, let down your nets.

In chapter 5, verse 5, he said, I will let down the net. The small, half-step of obedience brought great results.

And I'll tell you what will really bring great results. You see, it was nevertheless at thy word. Many of us don't grow in grace because we don't spend time in the word.

Amen. We don't grow because we don't read our Bibles. Cannon Bloom finished the Chinese Bible from cover to cover the second time this week.

Just today, yesterday or today, somebody just finished the whole Chinese Bible. Trent made the comment about that, how unusual that must be. And he said, well, I know Chinese people read their Bible. And Trent said, well, I bet you don't know many Americans that read the Chinese Bible.

[10:27] So you're still in an elite group. Amen. But look at this, if you would. Peter may know more about fishing, but he shows respect to Jesus and he obeys him.

Faith obeys. Love obeys. I think the thing that would most grab me in the whole passage of Scripture is this.

Nevertheless, at thy word. I know I know more than you about this. I mean, honestly, unless he is who he is.

I mean, if you're looking at him and he walks up, he's got two legs and two arms and two eyes and two ears. He's a man. And so Peter looks at him and said, now you've been carpenting for 30 years and I've been fishing that long.

But you're saying stuff. And I just heard you preaching the word of God. And the word of God does something. I'd just like to remind you a few things about the word of God that I know you already know.

But in Hebrews chapter 4 and verse 12. Do you know that the Bible is alive? I wish you'd underline that. I wish you'd go there. It says the word of God is quick.

That word quick means it's alive. The word of God is alive. And I don't understand that. It is beyond my comprehension. I know it. Not because of just what it says.

I know it because of what it says. But I also know it because of what it does in my own life. But the Bible is alive. If you ever get around it too much, it'll change you.

If you get around to preaching. If you get around to teaching. If you get around to Sunday school class. If you get around all of it. The Bible's alive. It's not alive. I just love this. It's powerful.

It's powerful. And then it says this. Did you know that the Bible knows what you're thinking? Amen. How does that know what that's doing?

[12:31] I don't know, but it says it does. And I'll tell you something else that's really shocking. It's proven it to me many times over the years. Many times I've been reading the Bible. I'm like, whoa.

You ought not have said that. It's like today's the day I needed that. And I read it and the Holy Spirit goes, boom. And I'm like, okay. Huh? I was sitting in my living room on a morning.

And I'm reading my Bible in Spanish. And this is years ago. And I'm just sitting there. And the hustle and bustle is going around. My wife's getting all the kids ready. And everybody's getting ready. We're going to go. And I'm reading.

And I went. And honestly, a Mack truck ran over my heart. I was like. And I walked into Betty. And I said, we're leaving. In just a few days.

We're out of here. We're going back to the States. There was a big problem came in mind. My family. I didn't know what I know now. But that day he said, you better do something.

[13:33] And I needed to. It's a discerner of your thoughts. But it's worse than that. This Bible even knows what you're thinking about doing.

What you're wanting to do. What your intents are. I mean, you're saying, I'm going in the Bibles like you already know. Now, that's impossible. Unless it is a God book.

You hold in your lap a God book. It's a book that always accomplishes its purposes. The Bible says in Isaiah 55 11, it shall accomplish that which I please.

Talk about the word of God. Years ago. No, don't tell anybody about this. But I used to listen to this guy named Tennessee Ernie Ford. Thank you.

Us young people know about him. Amen. And Tennessee Ernie Ford had this time where he talked along. And he said, I'm going on a trip.

[14:32] And he said, my bag is packed. All I lack. And he started naming. I need to take my mirror. And I need to take my hammer. And I need to take my sword.

And he just named all these things. He said, boy, my bag's already full. He said, but I found room. And I neatly stored my Bible. Did you know the Bible's a hammer in Jeremiah chapter 23 and verse 29?

Did you know it's like a hammer that breaks rocks in pieces? It's like fire. If you ever get around this thing, it'll break your hard heart. It'll melt your icy heart. It'll make a change in your life.

And that's what happens in old Peter's life. Nevertheless, at thy word. Could I get a little commitment from you if you're not already doing it?

You're probably way already doing it. But why don't you make a decision to spend some time every day in the Bible? And stop it with the hunt and peck and point. God will show me no day.

[15:36] You shall offer the burnt offering in the morning. I bet he already did that. Come on. That's not the way we read our Bibles.

Can I get an amen? You just start here and read the next verse and the next verse because God wants to do a work. It's not a magic book. It's not a magic book. But it is a supernatural, powerful book.

Now here's some truths for you to take home with you. Take small steps of obedience every day. I know I said it once. But in the story of Peter, what he's doing is just doing, Can I get in your boat?

Yep. Do you mind pushing it out a little bit where I can preach? Yep. All right. Would you launch it out there and see if you can catch some fish? Oh, Lord. Okay. Nevertheless, at thy word. He's just obeying little steps.

God doesn't usually scream into the void of us ignoring him. You live most of your...

People say I sound mad. I don't mean you. If the few fits put it on, if it don't just look at it and put it back. But you know, if you're ignoring God all week long, don't expect him to really be trying to work in your life.

He doesn't go around screaming, Hey, I know you ain't listening. I fix a slap up. He doesn't do that. He wants you to be listening to him. Peter was there and he said, Can I get in the boat?

You mind pushing it back a little bit? You want to launch it out into the deep? If we love God and believe him, we'll obey him step by step. You're in church. You're obeying him. So let's take some steps.

Number three. Peter's small, half-hearted obedience led to crazy results. The fish that were not there came swimming in, in large schools of fish.

I don't know if you can... I got this crazy imagination. But you got this whole lake of Galilee. It's full of fish. And Peter's been looking all night long.

[17:43] I was just preaching. I preached Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday night in a church in Alabama. And this guy, he said, he got to church that night. He said, Well, it's been a good day.

And I said, Well, great. He said, Well, not that good. I said, What do you mean? He said, I fished all day, but didn't catch anything. I'm like, I'm preaching on Sunday. I didn't say that to him. And he said, It was a tournament.

He said, But we did win \$250 for them. It didn't catch nothing. Okay, that's pretty unusual. He said, We even went out to that lake three days earlier to fish it, to find out where they were.

We didn't find nothing where we went. We didn't find nothing today. That's about where Peter is. And Peter's there, and Peter says, Okay.

I'll do it. I'm going to let down that net. And you know who Jesus is? He's God. And Jesus says, Fish! And all of a sudden, Peter drops that net in there, and that net just, I bet his boat was just running with the fish.

[18:46] He's trying, What in the world are we going to do? And he starts screaming, Hey, James and John, get over and help me. The fish came out of nowhere. Luke chapter 5 and verse 6, They enclosed a great multitude in their net break.

There's so many fish in chapter 5 and verse 7, that they call on their partners and say, Come and help us. And they started filling both boats up with fish, and they were so full, they, both boats, began to sink.

One net, two boatloads. Well, that's how God does things, isn't it? They fill up two ships so full, they begin to sink. Great things for you to consider.

God blesses even when I just start obeying. You know, when you just start obeying, he'll start blessing. He's looking for obedience. He really isn't causing us, calling us to do something so major.

He just wants us to start doing little things. I don't know how many people have said to me, I don't want to surrender the will of God.

[19:55] I'm afraid he might want me to be a missionary to Africa. I mean, you jump from, I don't do nothing from God, I'm going to be a missionary to Africa. That's like, that's like jumping the whole Grand Canyon. Can I get an amen?

I mean, it's like you're saying, I know I don't even go to church right now, but if I ever went to church, he'd probably make me be a missionary to Africa, and I don't want to do that. He isn't really calling you to do something so big.

He wants to astound you with his blessings on your obedience. Go with me if you would to Luke 5, 9. Seeing Jesus as God and who he is brings compelling conviction.

Peter had heard Jesus preaching and teaching the word. He knew that Jesus was more than your ordinary rabbi. But now with this miracle, he realizes that Jesus even controls fish.

The carpenter can call fish. And Peter's like, this is no ordinary man.

[21:02] Look at chapter 5 and verse 9. He was astonished. And all that were with him, everybody's shocked. I mean, all the professional fishermen, you know, you can imagine those guys.

They told me that we do, we do tournaments all the time. And you can imagine when they're all in there, and it's like, I won last week, and you won last week. I know what a good catch of fish is, and they don't even weigh in my fish.

And then when they got that fish, every fisherman in there is going, what in the world? We have never seen that many fish ever get caught like that.

It just doesn't happen. They were in shock. And it caused Peter to see his sinfulness in God's holiness.

Look at verse 8. And Simon Peter, when he saw it, fell down at Jesus' knees. You don't fall at another person's feet.

[22:01] You don't fall at another person's feet. None of you, this morning when I walked in, some of you shook my hand.

I've hugged a couple of people. I didn't see anybody on their knees at my feet. You just don't do that. But Peter knows, this is no carpenter.

This is no rabbi. And he says, depart from me, for I am a sinful man. Oh, Lord.

I want you to know what he called him. Oh, Lord, I know who you are. A demon's already been figuring it out. They know. But Peter Violet goes, you're God.

I'm sinful. You're almighty God. Wow. And he falls at his feet.

[23:04] As we get into the word of God, and the word of God gets into us, we'll see Jesus. And when you see Jesus, you'll see your sinfulness like I see my sinfulness.

You can't live in the presence of the bright light of holiness that is Jesus without seeing how sinful you are.

Light shows stains and sin. You know, I was raised in country, and we didn't have a whole lot of clothes, and when I'd go play, my mother would see, when I get them clothes dirty, I was 15, 16 years old, and I was like, I don't care.

I can go out and play. Ride the horse out, and I'd go out, and we had a pine thicket, and I'd go out in the deepest woods. I'd go out in the woods, man, you couldn't even see the sun. And I'd be out there messing around all day long, and I'd be doing stuff.

I built forts, and I just did everything, and I'd be like, yeah, look, I'm in good shape. I'd get on my little horse, and say, boy, ride out into the light, and I'd look down, and I'd say, oh boy, I'm dead.

Because when you get close to light, you see where you messed up. Because that's what Jesus said in John chapter 3. They didn't want their sins to be shown, and they ran.

The word of God will show us who we are, and we will either want to be helped, or we'll want to hide. We know that he knows, and we know it's real.

And we all got to come to a point of conviction. I'd like to just, before I finish up, I'd just like to say to you, church probably won't show you your sin, because we're just a bunch of messed up people ourselves.

So you just feel right at home with us. Everybody in this room, we're all just kind of messed up people. In fact, the only thing that's happened is, we've been forgiven for all that stuff, but we're just people. But when you know Jesus, you'll realize you've sinned.

When you realize God's perfect holiness, when you realize that the creator God that owns you because he created you, owns you because you belong to him, and when you realize who he is, you're going to be like Peter and say, oh God, I need help.

[25:25] And if you haven't done that, today's the day to do that. See, the Bible's real clear that all have sinned. All have sinned. All have fallen short of what God wants.

The Bible's very clear that there's not one righteous person, not one perfect person. And you're not righteous, and you're not perfect. None of us are. But we've got to realize it in our pride and our arrogance.

And I'm a very arrogant person. I like to think I'm pretty good. And God likes to say, no, you're not. He has to bring me to a point of brokenness and a point of realizing I've failed a holy God.

You need to understand he is real. There is a heaven and there is a hell and this isn't a game. And Peter that day was like, nobody can do what you just did.

You must be him. Today, I challenge you to believe that Jesus is God and is at work in your life and you can be saved. Just know this.

[26:25] I don't care where you are, where you've been, what you've done. He loves you. And he'll forgive you. His love is greater than every mess you've ever made. If you're thinking, I could never be a Christian.

I could never go to a church like this. I don't belong with those kind of people. No, you don't. Nor do I. But when he saves us, we all belong here because we're not here because of our goodness. We're because of our good Savior.

And if you're not saved today, you can be saved. Did you know that God showed his love, manifested his love, demonstrated his love while we were still sinners?

He didn't wait for you to clean up. He didn't wait for you to quit doing the junk you were doing. He said, I love you. For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son.

Trust Jesus. I go with me, if you would, down to the verse 10. Peter is now finally ready to accept God's calling on his life. James and John were also convicted of their sin.

[27:31] Look at verse, look at 510. And so was also James and John the sons of Zebedee. And Jesus said unto Simon, fear not, buddy.

You're going to catch men. I love that phrase. You think I can bring fish to a boat? Watch this.

I'm going to do it with men. And one day, Peter will preach just about three years from this day, or maybe less, and 3,000 will get saved that day.

Jesus calls Peter, verse 10, fear not, I'm calling you. You see, what happened was, Peter started obeying God.

Now, I don't know what God wants to do in your life. And he definitely doesn't call everybody to preach. And he definitely doesn't call everybody to be a missionary. He definitely doesn't call everybody to be a pastor.

But he definitely calls everybody to daily obedience. Hey man, that's pretty simple. He calls me to wake up in the morning and say, I'm going to live like I always do.

I'm going to love my children. I'm going to love my husband. If I'm a woman, I'm going to do what, I'm going to do the right thing. I'm going to read the Bible. I'm going to pray. I'm going to obey God today. He's calling everybody that.

He really wants you to give up on all your stuff and take his stuff. In chapter 5 and verse 11, when Jesus called him, they were now ready to pay the price because they had seen Jesus.

The Bible says, they forsook all and followed him. That means they left everything. A conniving capitalist would have said, we got a good thing going here.

I'll run the boats and you call the fish. We about sunk two ships today. We do it tomorrow, two or three more days. We're going to be in real good shape. But Peter said, I didn't know that didn't value.

[29:47] The boats aren't valuable. The nets aren't valuable. You're valuable. You're valuable. And I want to follow you. And he left and followed him.

This is what happens when you practice daily obedience. You take small steps. By the way, sometimes God works in personal failure to motivate you to surrender and trust the Lord.

I have noticed over the years that many people get saved in crisis time. It's like you're so stubborn and hard-headed and as long as you got the world by the tail and you can do your own thing, you don't really need God.

And then some horrible crisis comes and shakes you to your foundation and you realize, boy, I need God. I want to trust Jesus as my Savior.

I don't know if Peter's fishing all night had anything to do with it at all. I can only guess. But I think that when Peter looks at it and says, I'm the guy who knows and I couldn't, he's a guy that doesn't know and he could and Peter was like, oh boy, you are.

[30 : 56] God always does what's best for us. Even if it feels foolish. You understand that when you have to say and admit that you're a sinner, I had a guy tell me one time, you need to quit telling people to say they're sinners.

They don't like that. I said, I don't like it either. That's what the Bible says. How foolish does it feel?

Launch out and drop your nets. And Peter's like, okay. So no matter what God's dealing with you about, obey God.

God's work always starts with him calling a man. God's will is always good, but it's not always comfortable. Everybody in the room needs to know that.

When he calls people, he calls them to a cross. He calls us to surrender. But there's several things I want you to know about God dealing in your life.

[32:01] If he's calling you, it'll be clear. You ain't got to be worried about it. He's not trying to hide anything. Just take the next step. Just take the next step.

God's will is always progressive. You know, he says, he goes, all right, now do another one. Next thing you know, you end up right over where he wants you to go.

Peter, can I use your boat? Peter, stick it out a little bit where I can preach from it. Peter, launch out there in the deep and see if you can catch any fish. And the next thing you know, God's will is always doable.

Not something above you or beyond you. God will do something in your life. Do you ever think about the fact that if you can't see it, it might not be as foolish as you think it is.

You're just wanting to argue with God. God might have a plan for you. Our last sentence. Knowing God's plan for tomorrow starts with following his plan for today.

You want to know what God wants tomorrow? I don't know what God wants tomorrow. I don't even know if I want to be alive tomorrow. Don't tell anybody. But all we got is today.

You don't know when you're going to die. You don't know when you're going to die. You don't know how long you're going to live. All you can do is obey God today. And do the right thing today.

And then sufficient to the day is the evil thereof. You know what? God will take care of tomorrow if I'll just obey him today. Father God in heaven I ask you to work. I believe with all my heart you might have some people here that are not really saved.

Not sure they'd go to heaven if they died. Need to be saved today. I want to ask you to save people. I want to ask you to save people. God help us see our sinfulness.

Help us see our need of you. And then God some of us aren't practicing daily obedience.

[34:10] And today's the day to practice daily obedience. Convict our hearts. Help us just surrender to do the right thing that you've laid before us today.

God help us to decide I'll just do what I know to do today till I know what else he wants done. God would you help us with that?

With every head bowed and every eye closed you may not be saved here. I want you to know he loves you and Jesus died on a cross for you and he wants you to go to heaven when you die.

And not one person will go to hell because he wants them to. He loves everybody. He wants the whole world to be saved. And you can be saved today. If you'd just let us help you we'll show you from the Bible how to go to heaven when you die.

If you're not sure you're saved and you'd hold your hand up I'll pray for you. I won't embarrass you. I'll get you some help. Would there be anybody that would say I'm not sure I'm saved. I'm not sure I'd go to heaven if I die. Would there be anybody like that in the room?

[35:08] Anybody? If you're watching online that's for you too. You can trust Christ. Would there be any Christians in the room who would say just to be honest I'm slacking off on daily obedience.

I'm not asking you to be a minister. I'm just asking you to do what you know to do today. Would there be anybody that said boy the Lord's really dealt my heart and that's one of my problems. Would there be anybody? Why don't you get out of your seat and just say God I'll obey in the little things I know to do today and I'll quit playing big mighty spiritual games.

I'll just do what you want me to do today. Would there be anybody else? Come on. Do whatever it is God's doing with your heart about. Obey God. Obey God. Do what God wants you to do.

Father God in heaven I love you and I praise you and I thank you for who you are and what you're doing and I pray you'd show your power in our lives. God save call let us obey and I'll give you praise.

With heads bowed and eyes closed you can pray there in your seat whenever you finish praying you can stand and sing with Chris as he leads us in his song. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

[36:41] Amen.