

From Now On...

Luke 5:1-11



Voice from the past

A young theologian living in Nazi Germany sounded a message to a church he did not believe was following Christ. He accused the church of practicing “cheap grace,” the notion that one can count him or her self a christian without counting the cost of discipleship. As a result Dietrich Bonhoeffer wrote the book “Cost of Discipleship.” Many would argue the same is true for American Christianity as well. Would you agree? What does it take for a person to give up everything and follow Jesus? Bonhoeffer was executed for his resistance to the Nazi movement.

The Text

Luke 5:1 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, 2 and he saw two boats by the lake, but the fishermen had gone out of them and were washing their nets. 3 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. 4 And when he had finished speaking, he said to Simon, “Put out into the deep and let down your nets for a catch.” 5 And Simon answered, “Master, we toiled all night and took nothing! But at your word I will let down the nets.” 6 And when they had done this, they enclosed a large number of fish, and their nets were breaking. 7 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. 8 But when Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus’ knees, saying, “Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord.” 9 For he and all who were with him were astonished at the catch of fish that they had taken, 10 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.” 11 And when they had brought their boats to land, they left everything and followed him.

Gennesaret... another name for the Sea of Galilee.

washing their nets... Fishermen would wash, check and mend their nets after each use.

all night... the preferred time for fishing was during the night.

he fell down... cf. Isaiah 6:5

Ancient Fishing

The restoration project of a 2000 year old fishing boat found in Israel. The dimension were approximately 21 feet long by 7 feet wide. Fishing was an industry at that time and two boats this size full of fish would have been the biggest catch of their lives.



Understanding the Text

1. By this time Jesus' popularity was on the rise. In verses 1-4, notice the locative description. What does the level of detail indicate? Why this level of locative detail?
2. Luke is not interested in recording the message Jesus gives, but rather the encounter with Peter. Is there evidence that they knew each other previously?
3. Why would Peter refer to Jesus as "Master"?
4. Peter submits to Jesus' words and sets out to the deep. What might he be thinking?
5. Do you think there would have been some embarrassment to doing so?
6. Peter has no idea what is about to happen. Read Hebrews 11:4-16 and see others who took God at His word. According to Heb. 11:16, what was there motive?
7. Imagine being on the shore watching the event. What would have gone through your mind?
8. Notice the change in titles for Jesus in verse 8 to "Lord". Why the accompanying self designation of "I am a sinful man."?
9. At the end of the scene, Peter and his business partners leave everything to follow Jesus. As a bystander, what would your conversation with the person next to you entailed?
10. What drives Peter and the others to leave everything and follow Christ? Does he fully understand the cost of discipleship?
11. If you were a learned rabbi, when choosing potential disciples to follow you, what qualities would you be looking for? What qualities was Jesus looking for?

12. When looking for people to serve in the church, what criteria should we be using?
13. Jesus says that they will catch men. Literally “to bring under the control of someone else.” What does this imply about following Christ?

Take it personally

Have you had a “from now on” moment with Christ? If so, what did it look like?

Has that become a distant memory or is it still fresh?

If not, what would it take to come under control of Jesus? Is there anything hindering you?

Peter takes a small step of faith and is blown away by the power of Jesus. It changed his life. Is there a small step of faith that God is asking you to take?

Christ gets in the boat with Peter after his long night of toil with no results. What does this say about serving in the Kingdom of God?