

LAUNCH OUT ... LET DOWN

LUKE 5:1-11

Text: Luke 5:4

Introduction:

When I was growing up one of our favorite things to do was go fishing. I would find some worms and go down on that bank of a creek or river and fish. There were times when I caught stringers full of fish, and other times when I didn't catch much at all. Of course, we would always talk about "*the one that got away.*"

Those fishing trips from my youth are worth remembering now because they were a good time for our family.

In our text, we read about some fellows who had been on a fishing trip they would have liked to have forgotten about. They didn't talk about the one that got away, because they had all gotten away! Then the Lord showed up and He took them on *A Fishing Trip To Remember.*

Today, I want us to consider a few things from this story that relate to us and the church today.

1. THE VESSEL

Luke 5:1-3

And it came to pass, that, as the people pressed upon him to hear the word of God, he stood by the lake of Gennesaret, [2] And saw two ships standing by the lake: but the fishermen were gone out of them, and were washing their nets. [3] And he entered into one of the ships, which was Simon's, and prayed him that he would thrust out a little from the land. And he sat down, and taught the people out of the ship.

A. Place of Instruction

1. Christ taught the people

B. Place of Irritation

Luke 5:5

And Simon answering said unto him, Master, we have toiled all the night, and have taken nothing: nevertheless at thy word I will let down the net.

1. Peter had fished all night and caught nothing.

2. THE VOYAGE

Luke 5:4-5

Now when he had left speaking, he said unto Simon, Launch out into the deep, and let down your nets for a draught. [5] And Simon answering said unto him,

Master, we have toiled all the night, and have taken nothing: nevertheless at thy word I will let down the net.

A. A Command

Christ issued a two part command. He commands them to launch out and let down.

1. The vessel needed to go where the fish were.

- Jesus knew that the fish were not where the boat was. If those men expected to catch any fish, they would have to go where the fish were swimming; and during the heat of the day, that meant moving out into deeper waters. The fish were not in the shallows, and they certainly were not in the boat. They were out there in the deep.
- The same is true when we speak of reaching lost people with the Gospel. We are casting our nets, but we are fishing too near the shore. The fish are out there in the deep waters of the world and if we are going to throw the net over them, we are going to have to get out there where they are! We can pray and ask God to save souls; but until we go to where the souls are, we will see very few saved. Listen to what Jesus said, *“Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature,”* Mark 16:15. The operative word there is *“Go!”* We cannot fish until we go to where the fish are waiting!

2. The net will never be filled with fish until it is first let down.

- Those fellows could have washed those nets, mended those nets and hauled those nets all over that lake; but they would have never caught a fish until those nets were first let down. They could have bought the finest nets money could buy, and still they wouldn't have caught any fish until the nets were let down. They could have studied all the newest ways for casting and drawing nets; but until they let the nets down into the deep water, they would have caught no fish. They could have talked about fishing with other fisherman and discussed various ways of casting the nets, but they would have had no success until they let down their nets.
- Do you get the picture? We seem to think that as long as we have the right Bible, the right kind of preaching, the right kind of music, the right kind of standards, wear the right kind of clothes, and say the right things, then fish are guaranteed. Friends, nothing could be farther from the truth! Church folk talk about witnessing; learn new methods of witnessing; develop services and build aquarium where any fish would be happy and comfortable and we wait for them to swim in. The truth is: they don't! And, they aren't going to!
- Just as it was that day, Jesus knows where the fish are. He sends us to where they are, and He tells us to fish. And, just as it was in that day, when we

obey His commands, He will fill the nets. Listen, our plans, our programs, and our efforts, are all useless unless they are designed and directed by the Lord. But, when the church goes to where He sends her and she lets down here nets; He will fill them for His glory!

B. A Concern

- Peter responded “We’ve already tried that and it didn’t work. We’re fisherman, you’re a carpenter. Leave the fishing to us.
- It is sad, but Peter sounds like the typical Baptist. We look at the programs we have tried in the past and see very little, if any, success and we say, “There’s no use to try that again! We know how to do it, and we tried it but it didn’t work.”
- Maybe we are like the disciples.
- Maybe we have always tried in our own power.
- Maybe we didn’t go when He commanded to where He commanded.
- Maybe He wasn’t even included in the things we did then. I would just remind you that without Him, all our efforts are doomed to fail.

John 15:5

I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing.

3. THE VICTORY

Luke 5:6-11

And when they had this done, they inclosed a great multitude of fishes: and their net brake. [7] And they beckoned unto their partners, which were in the other ship, that they should come and help them. And they came, and filled both the ships, so that they began to sink. [8] 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 was astonished, and all that were with him, at the draught of the fishes which they had taken: [10] And so was also James, and John, the sons of Zebedee, which were partners with Simon. And Jesus said unto Simon, Fear not; from henceforth thou shalt catch men. [11] And when they had brought their ships to land, they forsook all, and followed him.

A. A Miracle Involving Fish

- When Peter and the other men obeyed Jesus, they enclosed so many fish that their nets threatened to break.
- One of these days, the Lord Jesus is going to say to Temple Baptist Church, “Launch out into the deep and let down your nets for a draught.” When He

does, I am sure some will want to argue about what happened when we tried that back then. But, a few are going to say, “We’ve tried that before and it didn’t work too well. But, nevertheless at thy word I will let down the net.” Those who do that are going to see the Lord do a great work!

- There are plenty of fish out there today; more than enough to fill this vessel and many more like it. If we want to see the Lord grant us a miracle; if we want to see Him save souls; if we want to see Him fill our vessel to overflowing; then we must learn to let down the nets when, where and how He says. That is the secret to success!

B. The Miracle Involving the Fisherman

- When Peter and the others saw what Jesus had done, those rough, crude fishermen fell at the feet of Jesus and worship Him! They were amazed at His power and they glorified Him for what He had done.

C. A Miracle Involving the Future

Jesus says, “Peter, and you men, you haven’t seen anything yet! You think this was something? Just wait until you see souls getting caught in the Gospel net!”

The Bible tells us that these men left their fishing nets behind and went after Jesus. Because they did, you and I are here tonight! Think about it! Old Peter, who

bowed at Jesus' feet on that ship, later stood at Jerusalem on Pentecost and preached the Word of God.

When He did 3,000 souls were saved! Those people picked up the Gospel net and cast it far and wide.

Others picked it up after them, and others, and others, until one day, someone cast the net and you and I were enclosed within it.

That is how this thing has always worked, "And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also," 2 Tim. 2:2.

2 Tim. 2:2

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Close:

Sometimes, I think back on those days when I was growing up. I think it would be nice to take a rod, a few worms and a stringer and go sit on the river bank all night and try to catch a big catfish. But, do you know what I think would be better than that? I think it would be better to invite Jesus to get on our vessel and ask Him where He would have us let down our nets; and then watch Him fill them to overflowing for His glory.