

Luke 5A

- Jesus is teaching and moving around within the land of the Galilee
 - He's been teaching, healing, casting out demons and declaring the kingdom of God
 - At the end of Chap 4, Luke shows Jesus healing Peter's mother-in-law of fever
 - Mark shows Peter, Andrew & James, John were with Jesus at that time
- As Jesus has been teaching, as you would expect, he's begun to attract crowds, and followers that go with him everywhere He goes
 - But those crowds included all sorts of people – good, bad, ugly
 - And Jesus is intent on gathering around Himself a few specific individuals who He intends to train up for ministry after His death
 - Now in Chap 5 Luke begins to show us how Jesus began to gather His followers

[Luke 5:1](#) ¶ Now it happened that while the crowd was pressing around Him and listening to the word of God, He was standing by the lake of Gennesaret;

[Luke 5:2](#) and He saw two boats lying at the edge of the lake; but the fishermen had gotten out of them and were washing their nets.

[Luke 5:3](#) And He got into one of the boats, which was Simon's, and asked him to put out a little way from the land. And He sat down and *began* teaching the people from the boat.

[Luke 5:4](#) When He had finished speaking, He said to Simon, "Put out into the deep water and let down your nets for a catch."

[Luke 5:5](#) Simon answered and said, "Master, we worked hard all night and caught nothing, but I will do as You say *and* let down the nets."

[Luke 5:6](#) When they had done this, they enclosed a great quantity of fish, and their nets *began* to break;

[Luke 5:7](#) so they signaled to their partners in the other boat for them to come and help them. And they came and filled both of the boats, so that they began to sink.

[Luke 5:8](#) But when Simon Peter saw *that*, he fell down at Jesus' feet, saying, "Go away from me Lord, for I am a sinful man, O Lord!"

[Luke 5:9](#) For amazement had seized him and all his companions because of the catch of fish which they had taken;

[Luke 5:10](#) and so also *were* James and John, sons of Zebedee, who were partners with Simon. And Jesus said to Simon, "Do not fear, from now on you will be catching men."

- Let me set the scene a little for you
 - Jesus is still in Galilee at the shores of the Sea of Galilee
 - He is in the plain of Gennesaret on the NW side of the lake
 - On the NW shore is a town that gets its name from the plain
 - Its morning, probably soon after sunrise
 - The air is still and cool, the heat of the day only a few hours away
 - Luke says there are two boats on the shore, fisherman standing nearby mending and cleaning their nets
 - And Jesus approaches the scene with a sizable crowd trailing behind
 - Jesus has been teaching the Word to establish the authority of His ministry
 - And he has been healing to establish His credibility
 - Naturally people have become attracted to Him
 - Some for the teaching
 - Some for the healing
 - Others for the spectacle of it all
 - And many in this group are desperate
 - And they come upon these fishermen
 - And Jesus asks one of the fishermen to allow him to go out on the boat
- Now remember, this is the same Peter who sometime earlier had hosted Jesus in his home and watched as He healed His mother in law
 - Perhaps he was surprised to see Jesus again, perhaps not
 - Maybe he had become accustomed to seeing Jesus wandering around the region and simply accepted him as the local rabbi

- When Jesus asks to be taken out in the boat, I bet Peter knew immediately why
 - It wasn't so Jesus could join in the fishing
 - Watching these crowds press in upon Jesus must have been somewhat amusing to Peter and his brother Andrew
 - So Jesus was looking for a chance to put some distance between Himself and the crowd
 - By sitting in the boat and floating a short distance from the shore, Jesus gave himself a platform from which to speak without having people pressing against Him
 - Peter accompanied Jesus as did Peter's brother Andrew
- Jesus, Luke tells us, teaches from this vantage point for some time.
 - Isn't it interesting that Jesus felt it was so important that He be able to teach these people that He took the step of distancing Himself from the people
 - When He was there in their midst, completely accessible to their touch, they apparently made every effort to reach Him physically
 - They pressed against Him, we're told
 - They wanted to touch Him – most likely because they sought healing or some other supposed blessing
 - Today you see this with followers of religious movements centered on a single person
 - Even in the Catholic faith, people want to touch the pope, kiss his ring
 - They bring back trinkets blessed by the pope
 - It becomes a faith and worship focused on the material, physical – something that can be touched and seen
 - But scripture tells us that faith is trust in things unseen – specifically in the Word of God
 - Now, no doubt Jesus felt love and compassion for these people

- No doubt He wanted to reach out and contend with their infirmities
 - No doubt he wished to take away all their pain and suffering
 - But instead, he separates himself just enough that they can't get what they think they want but close enough to keep them by the shore
 - And while they stand there waiting for Him to come back to the shore, He speaks the Word of God to them
- Now I ask you, do you think they came for the Word of God?
 - Perhaps some did, but I'm willing to bet most didn't
 - I'm willing to bet that many came for the immediate relief from suffering that Jesus offered
 - They wanted healing, they wanted their needs met
 - What they received was the Word of God
 - What would have happened if Jesus had healed all of them?
 - Certainly the news would have produced even greater crowds as more streamed to receive what they wanted as well
 - But what would have happened to the ones who were healed?
 - They would have left...gone home celebrating their healing
 - And how many of them would have stayed to hear the Word of God?
 - How many therefore would have left as healed and content unbelievers, destined for destruction
 - Would that have been love, in the truest sense?
 - Rather than give them what they want, Jesus left them wanting while he taught them the Word
 - In fact, we know He must have withheld healing in many more cases than He actually healed
 - He left many more with infirmities, with trials, with demons than He chose to heal

- Partly because of time and opportunity, I supposed
- But also because His real interest was in healing their hearts and souls
- And He knew that a man satisfied in his flesh will not seek for the Spirit
 - Nor will he feel a need nor a desire to sit for the Word of God
- Jesus does the same for us today, of course
 - We will not be spared all trials and difficulties
 - We will not have all our desires granted
 - We will not find satisfaction in this world
 - Because Jesus isn't primarily concerned that we achieve everything we want in this world
 - Nor if we receive everything we want
 - Nor that we lead a trouble-free life – though He has the power to grant us all those things
 - No, He is primarily concerned with our spiritual development, - our sanctification – our godliness, our knowledge of and obedience to His word
- And those things comes by only one way – by time spent in study of God's Word
 - And just as Jesus held the crowd at bay – literally – then delivered His Word to them
 - Similarly, if we find some of our prayers for our physical and material needs unanswered,
 - Perhaps Jesus is simply holding us at bay
 - Perhaps He knows that if He were to grant us those things, we would merely walk away to our own life leaving Him alone in the boat

- But because He loves us – just as He loved those in Galilee that day, Jesus has distanced Himself just enough to leave us seeking Him
 - And then He has sent His Word – washing us with the word as Paul says in Ephesians
- Now if you go without attending to the one thing He has made available, then you will have nothing
 - God has really impressed upon me the singular importance of His Word
 - We should seek after it like we seek after food
 - How often do our daily thoughts revolve around food, yet how often do we make the Word of God our emphasis
 - It is not one of many spiritual choices we have as a Christian,
 - It is the only thing – nothing else compares, nothing else has its power, nothing else deserves
- After teaching the people, in verse 4 we see Jesus turn to Peter in the boat and ask him to put his nets back into the sea
 - This must have been a strange request to Peter
 - Luke makes the point that these men were halieus – fishermen
 - They are the experts in fishing,
 - If anyone would have known when to let out the nets, it would them
 - Peter says, respectfully, that there is no point in letting the nets out
 - He’s fished all night and caught nothing
 - The type of net he’s using is a diktau – a large dragnet
 - James and John were evidently fishing from the shore using an amphibleston - a smaller, round casting net
 - So Peter was skeptical - to say the least - when Jesus said to let down their drag net now

- But he doesn't argue...he obeys
- I like this scene because it's so typical of all of us
 - Even when we are prepared to obey, we still feel the need to let Jesus know that His direction is pointless and bound to fail
 - We feel Him direct us to do the thing we are sure won't work
 - And even when we are willing to obey, which isn't always the case,
 - We still want Him to know that we want to go on record as having been against it from the beginning
 - It's as though we're distancing ourselves from the coming failure in advance

Bible teacher Donald Grey Barnhouse (1895-1960) told the following story: A young son of a missionary couple in Zaire was playing in the yard. Suddenly the voice of the boy's father rang out from the porch, "Philip, obey me instantly! Drop to your stomach!" Immediately the youngster did as his father commanded. "Now crawl toward me as fast as you can!" The boy obeyed. "Stand up and run to me!" Philip responded unquestioningly and ran to his father's arms.

As the youngster turned to look at the tree by which he had been playing, he saw a large deadly snake hanging from one of the branches! At the first command of his father, Philip could have hesitated and asked, "Why do you want me to do that?" Or he could have casually replied, "In a minute." But his instant obedience without questioning saved his life!

- Obedience is a sign of our love for our Lord
 - But there is a very practical, common sense reason for obedience too
 - We simply don't have as much information as God has
 - Like the story with the boy
 - He didn't know what His father knew
 - So he was right not to second guess his father's directive
 - Likewise, Peter didn't know what the Lord could know

- For example, Peter hadn't considered that his failure to catch anything earlier that night was actually a part of God's plan
 - God has intended that Peter wouldn't catch anything prior to Jesus' arrival
 - So that now as cast his net upon Christ's direction, it would be filled miraculously, giving glory to Jesus in front of the apostles and crowd
- But instead, Peter rested on his own knowledge
 - He was the expert fisherman here
 - Christ was just a teacher
 - If an expert like himself couldn't catch a thing in an entire night, there simply wasn't a fish to be found in this part of the lake
- We are so much like Peter
 - How often have we experienced failure in some task, then heard God tell us to do it again
 - We hesitate to obey because we can't bear the thought of facing failure another time
 - And because we think we know better – we're the experts in our own lives
 - And because God's direction can so often seem completely counter to good thinking
 - But of course, God's ways are not man's ways
 - And because God can control all things, He can do the impossible and regularly does
 - We forget so easily that both our successes and failures rest with God
 - So it's in His control whether and when we succeed and when we fail,
 - So that even our failures may ultimately be His plan to bring Himself glory in some way

- And as the story tells us in verse 6, Peter immediately finds his net holding so many fish that the net nears the breaking point
 - James and John are probably watching this from the shore wondering why Peter is being so stupid as to lower his net in the morning hours
 - But almost immediately, it becomes apparent this was a good idea
 - And Peter calls for them to get in their own boat and come help
 - Luke calls them partners of Peter and Andrew, which means they were in business together – fishing for a living
 - Eventually the two teams fill both boats with this extraordinary catch
 - Peter's reaction is quite natural
 - Peter knows immediately that he's just witnessed a miracle
 - After all he's a professional fisherman
 - Nothing like this happens to fishermen naturally
 - This is a supernatural event
 - This would be like having a major road construction project in Austin finishing on time and on budget
 - Things like this just don't happen naturally
 - And at the moment Peter recognizes that he has witnessed God at work in his presence
 - Peter has that unique experience of coming face to face with the power of God
 - And it has the natural effect of reminding him of his own inadequacies and sinfulness
 - This is the natural unavoidable consequence of fallen, sinful man having a personal encounter with his creator
 - This is why Adam and Eve hid in the garden at the approach of God after they had sinned

- The holiness of God and the sinfulness of man are so wide apart, so opposed to one another
- There is no force in the universe more powerful than the convicting power of God's holiness upon the conscience of a sinful man
- And Peter does what every man in his place would have done – he asks Jesus to leave him alone
 - Why would he do that?
 - Because he can't imagine any other way for him to avoid this uncomfortable reminder of his unworthiness
 - This is what the Bible means when it talks about the Word of God being a two edged sword
 - It cuts us away from our the self-delusions we hold
 - Of how great and wonderful we are
 - How powerful we are
 - How capable we are
 - How much we have to be proud of
 - In it's place, we see our sinfulness, our inadequacies, our pride
 - This same moment is necessary for every man or woman who would follow Jesus
 - Today we experience this through the power of the Word of God
 - It reveals to us God's glory and power, just as Peter saw it in the person of Jesus
 - But it must also convicts us of our sin and show us for who we really are
 - And we don't like what we see – that's why it's called conviction – we have been shown how guilty we truly are
 - If a person says they have come to know Jesus – to be a believer

- But they have never had this experience
 - The experience of becoming aware of their own unrelenting sinfulness,
 - So they have never repented of anything – at least not of what matters
- And until they recognize their true sinful nature and repent of that nature
 - Then they will never truly received salvation – they are merely playing Christian
- And here's Peter, very aware of his sinfulness and without a solution except to ask for Jesus to leave
 - But as we expect, Jesus offers a better deal
 - Jesus says rather than demand he leaves, He will ask Peter to follow him – to fish for men
 - Christ' offer carried a certain amount of irony
 - Rather than catch live fish in their power so they may die
 - Now they were to fish for spiritually dead men so they may know true life
 - Can you imagine Peter's first thoughts?
 - Here's Jesus - this man of God – did Peter know he was God?
 - Probably not yet, but he certainly knew he held the power of God
 - So here's this man of God with the power of God asking Peter to follow with him
 - And consider that Peter may have just received a small fortune in fish –
 - He was walking away from life at the point where it was at its height in terms of success and blessing
 - Peter must have been astounded at the suggestion – and look how he responded in verse 11

[Luke 5:11](#) When they had brought their boats to land, they left everything and followed Him.

- I can specifically remember reading the gospels as a young adult and without the benefit of the insight of the Holy Spirit wondering at this very verse
 - It seemed so improbably that men would walk away from their life so easily and so impulsively
 - Did they not give any thought to such a radical decision?
 - How could they leave everything so easily?
 - Wouldn't a decision of such magnitude deserve at least a modicum of thought and consideration
 - Wouldn't the responsible thing be to at least give such a radical change some careful thought
 - After all it was Jesus Himself who also said

[Luke 14:28](#) "For which one of you, when he wants to build a tower, does not first sit down and calculate the cost to see if he has enough to complete it?"

[Luke 14:29](#) "Otherwise, when he has laid a foundation and is not able to finish, all who observe it begin to ridicule him,

[Luke 14:30](#) saying, 'This man began to build and was not able to finish.'

- So shouldn't these fishermen have counted the cost before choosing to join Christ
 - The answer is they did
 - These men had seen and heard from Jesus back in Peter's house
 - They knew he was more than a mere man
 - They knew his power
 - And they counted the cost
 - Jesus goes on to add in Luke 14 this comment:

[Luke 14:33](#) "So then, none of you can be My disciple who does not give up all his own possessions.

- These men did exactly as Christ said would be required for a true follower
 - Their repentance is illustrated by their wiliness to turn from everything they valued in their life
 - And their faith is demonstrated by their willingness to follow Jesus as He asked them to do
 - Our following of Christ truly demands nothing less
 - In our culture there is probably nothing more difficult than leaving behind all our wealth and security for the sake of obeying Christ
- But if your life still feels like the a struggle for holiness, a struggle to overcome sin
 - If you can't find the comfort and peace Christ promises to those who know Him
 - If you begin to wonder if the Christian walk is merely slogans and false testimonies
 - Then perhaps you are still living the life of a fisherman
 - And that life provided some measure of comfort before Christ stepped into your boat
 - But after he's come and delivered his message to your heart,
 - You resisted leaving your boat and nets behind when He asked you to follow
 - You call yourself a disciple but there you are still fishing in your own power
 - Why not try what Peter did, as radical as it sounds
 - Leave behind the life you had when He found you and walk with him side by side
 - What does that look like for you?...it's different for each according to God's direction..