

Talks – Fish – myfishbites.com

Fishing

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Bible – Luke 5.1-11

One day as Jesus was standing by the Lake of Gennesaret, the people were crowding round him and listening to the word of God. He saw at the water's edge two boats, left there by the fishermen, who were washing their nets. He got into one of the boats, the one belonging to Simon, and asked him to put out a little from the shore. Then he sat down and taught the people from the boat.

When he had finished speaking, he said to Simon, 'Put out into deep water, and let down the nets for a catch.'

Simon answered, 'Master, we've worked hard all night and haven't caught anything. But because you say so, I will let down the nets.'

When they had done so, they caught such a large number of fish that their nets began to break. So they signalled to their partners in the other boat to come and help them, and they came and filled both boats so full that they began to sink.

When Simon Peter saw this, he fell at Jesus' knees and said, 'Go away from me, Lord; I am a sinful man!' For he and all his companions were astonished at the catch of fish they had taken, and so were James and John, the sons of Zebedee, Simon's partners.

Then Jesus said to Simon, 'Don't be afraid; from now on you will fish for people.' So they pulled their boats up on shore, left everything and followed him.

Talk Summary

OK so let's put everything under 'in one net'. The summary of this talk is simply that when we seek God's presence, everything else falls into place.

But let's break things down a little bit into five points. Each bit of the talk may talk to different people and may well need some time to think, reflect, pray and respond to God.

1. Impacted by the Word of God

What kind of impact does the Bible have on you? What kind of impact does it have when you hear God speak to you personally?

When Jesus spoke in Luke 5, the Bible tells us that people crowded around him to listen to and hear the word of God. If you have ever seen evangelists go into places around Africa or places like India, Pakistan etc you may have seen stories of people who have walked miles to come to hear the word of God. Some have travelled for days. In one book, an

African man told how when he went around preaching the Gospel, he would sleep overnight in the bush and anywhere he could find to sleep. Through the Bible and in the lives of many people, when they hear the Word of God, they are changed and immediately have a burning passion to obey God and tell others about Jesus. In Luke 5, we see that Simon was happy to let Jesus preach from his boat and then he went and followed Jesus.

So what about you and me? Have you got that burning passion to hear from God? Do you have a fire inside you that burns for Jesus? Maybe this is something you can ask God to re-ignite, or get someone else to pray for you.

2. At the waters edge or into the deep?

Jesus asked Simon to push the boat out from the shore a little bit so he could teach the people. I do like the fact that Jesus went out to the water's edge. This tells me a little bit of how much God has a love for people 'on the edges' and on the 'fringes' of life and society. At my church, we have a varied range of people from some pretty diverse and interesting backgrounds which is awesome!

But then in Luke 5, we see that Jesus turned to Simon and asked him to push the boat out into deeper waters. We'll come to Simon's reaction in a moment, but let's just know that sometimes when Jesus wants to speak to you deeply or individually, he may well turn to you and want to speak to you specifically, just as he did to Simon. He also asked him to push out away from the shore into 'deeper waters'. Sometimes when God wants to do something unique or amazing with you, he will ask you to separate yourself away from the crowds and to go deeper with him.

Maybe you're in a time when God is calling to you and asking you to separate yourself from the crowds and from others for a season while he speaks to you specifically. If this is you, then again why not just say yes to Jesus or ask friends or youth leaders to pray for you.

3. Why do you want me to do that Lord?

In Luke 5, Jesus asked Simon to do something that was a bit strange. Simon and his mates had obviously already been out fishing and hadn't been very successful! So along comes this teacher, this 'Rabbi' (we'd maybe call him a visiting evangelist or pastor) and he tells someone who is a fisherman and who knows his business, to go back out onto the lake, to drop down his nets and promises him that he will catch some fish! I wonder what the guys all thought about this!

But amazingly, Simon must have seen something in Jesus that was unique and special because while he made the point they'd already been out fishing, he said 'but I'll do this because you say this Master'. So Simon did something a bit unusual in obeying God.

Sometimes God may ask you to do something small or slightly unusual. I remember once I felt like I had to kneel down in my hall and just pray 'Father, your kingdom come, your will be done.' I didn't really care if anyone saw me, I just strongly felt I had to do this. At other times, God has spoken to me with what's like an 'impression inside of me' to do something – it could be give some money, go buy a Big Issue or speak to a road sweeper which I felt to do once, thanking the guy for the job he was doing.

It's also amazing that God used the example of catching loads of fish to illustrate something that he was going to use Simon and his brother Andrew to do in the future – to see loads of people come into the kingdom of God.

So is there something God has put on your heart recently? Something he's asked you to do? Is God speaking to you through this bit of the Bible? If so, it's time to say yes and react to what Jesus is asking you to do. Check it out with leaders, family, the Bible and pray, asking God for the next step.

4. Obedience leads to happenings!

Just look at the reaction as Simon obeyed Jesus and pushed out the boat into the deep and let down the nets... What happened? Things started to happen – that's what happened!! They caught a few fish, then more fish, then so much fish they had to call out to their mates to get another boat!

What happened was that others got 'caught up' in what was happening. As we obey God, things start to happen. Notice how the fish didn't voluntarily swim up and jump into Simon's net where he was! No, he had to push out, let down the net and then the fish came into the net.

But something more happened – as Simon obeyed Jesus and followed what Jesus was saying, others started to be drawn into what was happening. As we say yes to God and step out in faith, it has an impact on others. If Simon hadn't obeyed, other people wouldn't have seen Jesus in action and seen the power of God. Simon's obedience and stepping out in faith led to provision, to food, to a miracle, to an amazing testimony and to an impact on a whole group of people and then beyond to others.

Just remember that as you obey God and step out doing good things for him, you will have an impact on many others who will see your example, follow along and be encouraged. How many times have you heard amazing stories of what God has done through people? It fires you up and inspires you, right? So be someone who obeys and inspires others just simply because you have said yes to God!

Again, is there anything God may be calling you to do? Share the idea with some people you trust, get them to pray for you, stand with you in support and then step out in what God is calling you to do. Even if you are wrong, God loves the fact that you want to obey him and step out in faith for him. So never get discouraged!

5. In His Presence is everything

The last point is that God's presence changes everything and it is everything.

Let's explain... In Luke 5 we read this...

When Simon Peter saw this, he fell at Jesus' knees and said, 'Go away from me, Lord; I am a sinful man!' For he and all his companions were astonished at the catch of fish they had taken, and so were James and John, the sons of Zebedee, Simon's partners.

Then Jesus said to Simon, 'Don't be afraid; from now on you will fish for people.' So they pulled their boats up on shore, left everything and followed him.

First of all, when Simon began to understand a bit of who Jesus really was, something changed inside him. He saw himself as he truly was. If you look in a mirror, you see yourself as you are and not as you may think you are. (Don't worry, God loves you the way you are!) Or maybe you've heard your voice on a recording. I know I have and have thought, 'that voice doesn't sound like me!' But it is me. It recorded my voice as it really is.

The same happened with Simon who realised he was a sinful man. Many millions and millions of people have had this same experience. When they have encountered Jesus, their hearts have been changed. Notice what caused this reaction in Simon and his companions... It was the amazement at the miraculous level of fish they caught. Jesus got their attention with a miracle. Jesus is the same – yesterday, today and forever (Hebrews 13.8). He is still doing the same today across the whole earth – miracles and healings are causing millions to come to know Jesus. Jesus is also appearing to Muslims in dreams. I know of one woman into the new age who Jesus spoke to in her dream and she gave her life to Jesus. The days of miracles haven't ended – they're getting even greater across the earth as God reveals himself to a desperate world!

But another amazing thing happened to Simon. They'd just pulled up a couple of boats full of fish and yet we read in Luke 5.11 that "they pulled up their boats on shore, left everything and followed Jesus."

They left their fish; they left their boats; they left their livelihood. Why? Because of the encounter with Jesus and the fact that they saw that all their provisions, needs and desires would be met in Jesus. Who needs fish when you are following the one who made the fish?!

This may be a challenge to many of us today. Are we prepared to lay down our 'boats' – our things? Or let's put it in a better way. Are we willing to follow Jesus, knowing that in his presence all of our needs will not just be met, but that he will blow us away with what he does?

There's a famous old song that tells us to turn our face on Jesus and look into his wonderful face... And the things of this world grow strangely dim in the light of his glory and grace.'

The presence and person of Jesus changes everything. Are you ready for this presence of Jesus to fill you up, consume you, wash over you and transform you?

Prayer

Lord Jesus, I ask that by the power of your Holy Spirit you would make me more aware of your presence. Fill me up by the power of your Holy Spirit. I want to obey you and follow you. I know that everything is found in your presence. You are the one who changes everything and everyone. You are the God of miracles, new things, amazing signs and wonders, the God of healings and blowing us away with how great you are. Come Holy Spirit...