

Talks – More Fishing – myfishbites.com

More Fishing!

We've got one talk on Luke 5 but this has so much, we thought we'd add another talk with new points in it to challenge us all. Enjoy!

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.

1. Do you want Jesus in your 'boat' ?

We read in Luke 5 that Jesus got into one of the boats – it was Simon's boat. I wonder what Simon thought?! Imagine you're sat there next to your car and Jesus comes along and gets in, opens up the sunroof and starts speaking to a crowd around the car! Would you be willing to let Jesus do this? Are you willing to let Jesus use what you have (think about the fact that everything that is good comes from him anyway!)

When I got my new laptop, I actually knelt down and dedicated it to God. I did the same with my iPad. It's not that I'm pointing at myself as some amazing example but it's something I felt was important.

So – do you want Jesus 'in your boat'? The incredible thing was that when Jesus got into Simon's boat, the boat turned from being a simple fishing vessel into being a boat that would land the catch of a lifetime! This was extreme fishing!

Jesus takes what we have and what we offer him and he multiplies it many times over. That's why you'll never lose out giving to God!

Ephesians 3.20 (NLT) – Now all glory to God, who is able, through his mighty power at work within us, to accomplish infinitely more than we might ask or think.

2. Jesus moves towards us

We also read that Jesus moved towards Simon first. In 1 John 4.19 it says something very short but very deep:

1 John 4.19 – We love because he first loved us.

It is Jesus who draws our hearts towards him. But we have a choice whether to respond to him. That same choice is yours in every decision in life! As we draw closer to Jesus, he draws closer to us and helps us make good decisions as he cares for us and loves us to involve him in everything we do so he can help us be all we can be!

3. Deep water and letting down the nets

Jesus told Simon to 'Put out into deep water and let the nets down for a catch.'

Here's something that we all need to know, believe and keep on repeating – God is true to his Word and God's Word is true (see John 17.17)

When Jesus said get out there into the deep water and get fishing, something happened – they caught masses of fish and probably all kinds of fish. If God tells you to do something, God will always come through and do what he promises (see Isaiah 55.10-11).

Our part is that we have to fully obey God. You know, sometimes God tests us. He's said stuff to me like 'pick up that litter' or 'put that top back on the shelf' as you're walking through a shop and see a top on the floor that someone else knocked down. He's also called me to put stuff back in the right place in Sainsburys when a friend put it in the wrong place. It's like a strong impression inside me which I know is God. You may get the same kinds of God tests but maybe in different ways! God doesn't expect me to pick up the piece of litter and throw it somewhere else – or pick up the top and put it in the wrong place. No, he wants me to put the litter in the bin and put the top back on the right shelf in the right place. It's called complete obedience – doing everything exactly as God says. And often we mess up!

But Simon did exactly what Jesus said – he took the boat out, he went into deep water and he threw the nets in. He did everything Jesus said as he said it. We should try to do the same!

4. Simon's motivation?

Here's a thought... Simon and his mates had been fishing all night. They had cleaned their nets which were obviously messy. By going out fishing again, the nets would be messed up. They hadn't caught any fish earlier, they were tired and were maybe even feeling a bit down about the whole thing.

Simon said to Jesus, "We've worked hard all night and haven't caught anything. But because you say so, I will let down the nets."

Have you ever thought about how Simon said this? Was he tired out? Weary? Reluctant? Fed up?

Or maybe he reacted in faith to the words of Jesus. When he said they'd worked hard all night and caught nothing, maybe there was something in Simon that said, "Hey, we've caught nothing but this is Jesus talking – so I'm going back out and doing what he says. Jesus is someone who can be trusted. I can't wait to see what happens..."

I wonder how we'd react. Hebrews 11.6 says that without faith it is impossible to please God. In Luke 10.22-24 we read about how we should have faith in God and believe. I think Simon believed Jesus – even if he was feeling tired! Maybe he knew that as he obeyed God, something astonishing would happen! And it did...

But what about us? Do we believe God? Do we have expectation? When we pray, do we expect God to answer? When children are around their dad, they will really trust their dad. We have a perfect heavenly father who we can totally trust – so let's just believe what God says and act on it, just like Simon!

5. The 'fear of God'

There is something in the Bible called the fear of God. This is not like fear of getting beaten up by the local gang. It's about honouring God for who he is. It's saying to God, 'You are God, I'm not, so I'm going to obey you and live the life you want me to live'.

The Bible tells us that when Simon and his mates brought in the nets, there were so many fish that the boats began to sink. This got me thinking about the 'weightiness' of God. This isn't a heavy weight that means we feel like we've got a heavy load on our back, it's just that sometimes there is a 'weight' of God's presence in a room or in our lives.

Have you every been in worship and the music stops and people are just standing in the presence of God. It's like no-one speaks or sings and the whole place is quiet, standing in God's presence, sensing him really powerfully. This is the 'weightiness' of God and this is when God shows up so powerfully that we can only stand in awe. In the Bible there are many times when the presence of God was so powerful that people were unable to stand or speak! (See 1 Kings 8.11).

This is the fear of God and it's something we need to be aware o. God is holy, pure and awesome. Yes he's our friend, a loving Father and closer than a brother but he's also God! We should never forget that. A healthy respect and love of God opens doors, gives us wisdom and can be the key to promotion and God using us.

Nehemiah 7.2 – I put in charge of Jerusalem my brother Hanani, along with Hananiah the commander of the citadel, because he was a man of integrity and feared God more than most people do

6. God's ways (not man's ways) of reaching people

When people talk about preaching the gospel ('evangelism'), many people only seem to think there is one way to do it. I've heard people say some silly things, insisting that God can only work in one way or another! We have to realise that there are many ways to reach people with the truth about Jesus and many ways we've used before don't work as well today. We don't change the truth but we do what Paul says and we become all things to all people so all people can hear the gospel. This just means relating to people relevantly – talking their language!

But God is much bigger than our closed ideas about what evangelism is and through the Bible we see all kinds of ways that people came to faith – the testimony of a woman (John 4), God using a blinding light and asking someone who he was persecuting (Paul in Acts), hearing from a criminal telling another criminal not to mock Jesus (Jesus on the cross).

And here in Luke 5, Simon followed Jesus not because he was told he was going to hell or because he'd been given a five point plan about who Jesus was, the Bible says Simon recognised his own sinfulness (and then was in fear of him) because Simon and his companions were astonished at the catch of fish they had taken! So Jesus was revealed to Simon through amazement and abundance!

Romans 2.4 – Don't you see how wonderfully kind, tolerant, and patient God is with you? Does this mean nothing to you? Can't you see that his kindness is intended to turn you from your sin?

The goodness of God meant that Simon's life was changed and this is something we can learn today as God reveals himself to people in all kinds of ways! Are we willing to be people that don't get all religious about God connecting with people but just allow him to use us as he wants?!

God is doing incredible things around the world and the 'fear of God' means letting God be the one who changes people in his ways and timing!

Prayer

Father, I thank you for your Word. Thank you that your Word is truth and a truth that is above everything else. You say that you've put your Word and your Name above all things (Psalm 138.2) so I choose to believe you and your Word in all things. Lord, I know that as I believe and trust in you and follow you, obeying you, that you will do amazing things in my life and in the lives of others. Thank you Lord that as I seek you and put you first, even if I don't do things perfectly, you see my heart and love me totally. Thank you for loving me, choosing me and allowing me to be part of your amazing work in the earth! Show me your will for my life and open up doors so I can share your good news with other people. Amen!