

Sermon: Luke 5:1-11 So it was, as the multitude pressed about Him to hear the word of God, that He stood by the Lake of Gennesaret, ² and saw two boats standing by the lake; but the fishermen had gone from them and were washing their nets. ³ Then He got into one of the boats, which was Simon's, and asked him to put out a little from the land. And He sat down and taught the multitudes from the boat. ⁴ When He had stopped speaking, He said to Simon, "Launch out into the deep and let down your nets for a catch." ⁵ But Simon answered and said to Him, "Master, we have toiled all night and caught nothing; nevertheless at Your word I will let down the net." ⁶ And when they had done this, they caught a great number of fish, and their net was breaking. ⁷ So 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 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 which they had taken; ¹⁰ and so also were James and John, the sons of Zebedee, who were partners with Simon. And Jesus said to Simon, "Do not be afraid. From now on you will catch men." ¹¹ So when they had brought their boats to land, they forsook all and followed Him.

Sermon Theme: We Respond to the Glory of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ

- 1. By treasuring above all the blessings of our Lord and Savior God,**
- 2. By looking to Him confidently also for earthly blessings,**
- 3. By receiving all His blessings in humble faith and thankful service.**

In the name of our Savior Jesus Christ, who greatly desires to bless us through His precious Word, dear fellow redeemed;

In last Sunday's gospel lesson from Luke, we read of Jesus returning to His hometown of Nazareth in order to share with them a much needed message. He came back to these familiar surroundings where He had grown up in order to reveal His glory as the promised Lord and Christ. Out of loving concern for these well known acquaintances Jesus wanted to bless them with God's gift of forgiveness and salvation through Him. But this was a sad homecoming, because the town's people not only rejected Jesus as their Savior God, but they also tried to kill Him by throwing Him over a cliff.

Certainly, anytime anyone refuses Jesus' beckoning call to receive Him and His teachings in faith and to follow Him in love, this deeply grieves the Lord. For what they are doing is frustrating His redeeming love for them and depriving themselves of His gracious blessings.

In the events of today's Scripture text, Jesus received a God-pleasing response to His ministry. For on this occasion many were eager to hear Jesus preach and to be richly blessed by Him. As we meditate on this Word of God, let us join in spirit those people of old who responded to the glory of the Lord in Christ Jesus by treasuring His precious

teachings of salvation, looking to Him with confidence to give needed earthly blessings, and responding to His gracious ways with a thankful life of service and devotion.

Already by this time word had spread in Galilee of Jesus' amazing teachings on the kingdom of God. And so, when He came to Lake of Gennesaret, which was also known as the Sea of Galilee, there was a vast number of people gathered there who crowded in close in order to hear Jesus preach. Surely they were spiritually hungry to feed upon Jesus' nourishing, life-giving teachings.

Last week we heard Jesus speak in Nazareth of fulfilling Isaiah's prophecy by His ministry in preaching the gospel to the poor in spirit and healing the brokenhearted and proclaiming liberty to captives and the recovery of sight to the blind and setting at liberty those who are oppressed.

We are the ones who are poor in spirit, because we have no righteousness of our own that avails before God. By realizing this about ourselves, we rejoice in hearing the good news that tells us God gives us Jesus' righteousness that covers all our sins and imperfections. We are comforted by God binding up, healing, and soothing our sin-wounded spirits with the soothing balm of the gospel in which God pronounces us forgiven and free of any guilt or blame for our many transgressions. We are set free from the hellish prison house and slavery to sin, and delivered from its cruel oppression through the gospel of God's saving grace. And we see what is truly good, right, and beneficial for us, because

the light of God's gracious truths gives spiritual sight to our otherwise sin-blinded eyes.

Would that the gospel of Christ also reach the ears and penetrate the hearts of our fellow sinners in the world. For we see so much evidence of countless souls who are controlled by the sin of greed, lust, pride, and hatred, and who are distressed and depressed by the guilt of sin, and who violently strike out against those around them.

Among the crowd of Jews assembled to hear Jesus that day were Peter, James, and John. We know these men as fishermen who had already confessed Jesus as their Lord. They had just completed a fruitless night of fishing. When Jesus came to the water's edge, they were washing their nets, getting them ready for the next fishing outing.

Since it became difficult for Jesus to preach on account of the press of the crowd, Jesus asked Peter to take Him out on the boat a short distance from shore so that He could preach from that vantage point. Even though it was important at this time for Peter to attend to matters of earning a living by fishing, yet because he treasured the words and teachings of God so highly, he was willing to take off time from his job to do this for Jesus and for the crowd, as well as for himself. While on the one hand Peter's job of catching fish brought in financial gain, on the other hand he realized it was far more important for him to obtain spiritual gain through the teachings of Christ.

As we witness Peter's example, we are reminded how important it is for us to take advantage of various opportunities to learn of God and His precious truths. Also, Peter's actions impress us with making this a priority in our lives so that we don't let the affairs of this life stand in the way of our growth in the Word of God. We are moved to make this a priority and make time for it, because we recognize and appreciate how great a

treasure God's Word is, for it richly blesses us with countless gifts of grace that endure throughout life and on into eternity.

After Jesus finished preaching to the crowd, He said to Simon Peter, "Launch out into the deep and let down your nets for a catch." To the experienced fishermen of the Sea of Galilee this kind of instruction would ordinarily sound rather foolish. Peter and his partners knew that the best time for fishing was during the evening hours and not during the day, and that the best place for fishing was a short distance from shore and not out in the deep waters. And yet, Jesus, who was telling Peter to go out at the seemingly wrong time of day and wrong place to fish, assured him that he would be catching fish. Even though this instruction went against human experience and human judgment, Peter was willing to follow the Lord's command.

Previously at the wedding feast in Cana, Jesus had displayed His divine power over nature by miraculously turning water into wine. So then, because Peter had seen the glory of God in the person of Jesus Christ, he confidently trusted in Jesus to powerfully bring success to this fishing venture. Peter had also learned of Jesus that His Word was ever true and that He was always faithful in bringing to pass what He promised.

Our text reports Peter's response to Jesus. He said, "'Master, we have toiled all night and caught nothing; nevertheless at Your word I will let down the net.' And when they had done this, they caught a great number of fish, and their net was breaking. So 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."

This was not the kind of fish story where a fisherman exaggerates on how big the fish were or how large a mess of fish was caught. Neither was this a case of what some would call a major stroke of luck. No, this is a true account, reporting the mighty hand of God at work, directing the forces of nature to do precisely as the Lord had commanded.

While Peter, James, and John had previously come up empty handed after toiling all night fishing, yet in the space of a short period of time the Lord Jesus bountifully blessed their fishing efforts. So great was the catch of fish that they would have an ample supply of earthly means to provide for those under their care. We might mention here that Peter for one had a wife and mother-in-law at home to provide for; and that right after this Peter would be leaving home for an extended period of time to receive training from Jesus for his future calling as a gospel minister. So, this large catch of fish would go far to sustain his family.

As children of God we like the fishermen Peter, James, and John recognize the need to diligently devote ourselves to our respective duties in life, and that we are to perform them to the best of our abilities. As to the hope for a good outcome from our earthly labors, above all we look to the Lord in confident trust that He will work His gracious blessings for the good of our earthly welfare. And while He ordinarily pours out His temporal blessings through natural means, yet we are reminded by this miraculous catch of fish that the Lord can also use supernatural means, if need be, to supply us with what is needed. Also remember this, just as the Lord kept His promise of providing fish for these fisherman, so also the Word of our Lord promises us He will never leave us or

forsake us and that everything will work out for our good, even for our eternal blessing.

The final feature of our text addresses the matter of children of God responding to the divine glory of Jesus by receiving God's blessings in humble faith and thankful service. When Peter beheld Jesus' glory in the miraculous catch of fish, he reacted by falling down at Jesus' feet and said, "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord." This great miracle which caused Jesus' glory to shine so brightly, made Peter conscious of his own sinful and unworthy condition. Being mindful of his deserved punishment and Jesus' divine power to execute that judgment, the feeling of fear caused Peter to say to Jesus, "Depart from me."

Many are the times in the Bible record where we read of sinners reacting with fear when in the presence of divine glory. But each time their fears were calmed by the heavenly message "Do not be afraid." The Lord Jesus spoke these words to Peter and would say the same to us when we are stricken with fear concerning our sinful and lost condition. He alone calms our fearful hearts, because we know Him as our Savior who has removed all our sins and deserved punishment. In the Lord's Supper, Jesus gives us the added assurance of God's forgiveness as He reminds us of His sacrifice on the cross for our sins, and gives us to eat and drink of His sacrificial body and blood that were given and shed for the remission of our sins. How greatly comforted we are and how truly thankful to be so richly blessed in this way.

The spirit of thankfulness is shown by the cheerful giving of ourselves in service to God in His kingdom. Consider if you will the response of Peter, James, and John when the Lord Jesus called on them to leave behind their fishing trade and become fishers of men. With this, Jesus was calling the three to become full time disciples who would later go out into the world to cast out the gospel net in order to gather precious souls into the kingdom of God.

The response of the three is quite remarkable. Listen to what our text reports, "So when they had brought their boats to land, they forsook all and followed Him." Strengthened in faith by Jesus' words and deeds not only did these disciples receive in humble faith all that God had blessed them with, but they also thankfully stood ready to immediately go into full time service in the Lord's kingdom. They left behind family and friends and possessions to follow Jesus in doing the Lord's bidding.

What a powerful and dramatic message this is of a humble faith and a thankful spirit moved to cheerful service of God. Would that the Lord fill all of us with this same attitude so that when He calls on us to serve Him in various ways, we will thankfully and cheerfully stand ready to take up the charge. In fact, when it comes right down to it all of our life and everything we do in this world ought quite fittingly be done out of a thankful heart in service to God.

May we then respond to the glory of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ by treasuring above all the blessings of His saving Word and by looking confidently to Him for earthly blessings, and by receiving all His blessings in humble faith and thankful service. Amen.