

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 6, 2022

Luke 5:1-11

TRADITIONAL

EVERY FISHERMAN WORTH HIS SALT KNEW THAT TO CATCH FISH, YOU CAST YOUR NETS AT NIGHT – IN THE SHALLOWS, WHERE THE FISH CAME IN TO FEED

BUT IT'S DAWN – QUITTING TIME – AND THIS JESUS IS ASKING SIMON TO DO SOMETHING STRANGE – CAST OUT INTO THE DEEP – IN THE DAY TIME – IT JUST DOESN'T MAKE ANY SENSE

PETER IS JUST DOING HIS JOB – THE CROWD IS ON THE SHORE LISTENING AND HAVING THEIR LUNCH

BUT FOR PETER – A NIGHT OF FRUSTRATION – I'VE TRIED, I'M SORE, IT'S TIME TO GO HOME AND GO TO BED

WHEN YOU'RE TIRED AND FRUSTRATED AND ON THE BRINK OF PACKING IT ALL IN – YOU MIGHT JUST BE ON THE BRINK OF SOMETHING MIRACULOUS –

THERE'S SOMETHING ABOUT THE LACK OF SUCCESS, MOMENTS OF FRUSTRATION, AND PERCEIVED FAILURE WHEN BREAKTHROUGH HAPPENS – WHEN JESUS TURNS THOSE MOMENTS OF HELPLESSNESS AROUND

WHEN WE FEEL WE HAVE NOTHING TO GIVE – HE TURNS US FROM SELF RELIANCE TO HIM

A PLACE OF DEPENDENCE ON JESUS ALONE

TRUST GOD MORE FULLY THAN WE HAVE EVER BEFORE – OBEY GOD IN THE NEXT STEPS THAT HE HAS FOR US, AND THE ONES THAT WE KNOW SO FAR, IT MEANS TO BASICALLY GO DEEPER IN OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD.

FAITH MEANS TAKING RISKS.

IN LUKE 5, SIMON IS WASHING HIS NETS AND JESUS IS TEACHING THE CROWDS, AND THE FIRST BIG DECISION SIMON MAKES IS TO LET JESUS ONTO HIS BOAT

AND HERE'S STEP ONE – JESUS IS MOVING CLOSER INTO SIMON'S LIFE – REMEMBER JUST LAST WEEK WE READ THAT JESUS HEALED SIMON'S MOTHER-IN-LAW OF A FEVER, WELL NOW HE GETS CLOSER AND IS UP IN SIMON'S BUSINESS – UP ON HIS BOAT – IN HIS VERY LIVELIHOOD

THIS IS A MATTER OF AVAILABILITY, AN SIMON SAYS, YES, LORD, COME.

SECOND BIG MOMENT COMES AFTER SIMON AND HIS FRIENDS HAVE BEEN OUT FISHING ALL NIGHT AND ITS BEEN A FRUSTRATING AND FRUITLESS NIGHT WITH NOTHING TO SHOW FOR THEIR GRUELLING EFFORTS, AND JESUS SAYS “HEY SIMON, LET’S GO OUT AGAIN – ONLY THIS TIME – LET’S NOT STAY IN THE SHALLOW END, LET’S GO DEEPER. AND CAST OUT YOUR NETS AGAIN.” AND THIS IS THE MOMENT OF OBEDIENCE – AND HE TAKES ANOTHER STEP – MAYBE FROM BEING JUST ONE OF THE CROWD, TO BEING PART OF THE CONGREGATION WHO FOLLOW JESUS – AT LEAST PART TIME – WHO WOULD SHOW UP IF HE WAS AROUND, HEAR HIM TALK

WHAT RESULTS FROM THESE DECISIONS IS WHAT BECOMES THE TURNING POINT IN THE STORY WHERE SIMON CATCHES MORE FISH THAN HE AND HIS FRIENDS HAD EVER SEEN - AND THEIR FLOPPING ALL AROUND THE BOAT AND IT’S SUCH A BIG HUGE BLESSING – A BOON FOR SIMON’S BUSINESS – THAT YOU’D THINK HE’D BE JUMPING UP AND DOWN, RIGHT? BUT THAT’S NOT WHAT HAPPENS, IS IT?

LET’S JUST SLOW DOWN FOR A MINUTE AND LOOK AT THIS SPIRITUAL TURNING POINT FOR SIMON . I’VE ALWAYS ZIPPED PAST THESE FEW WORDS BEFORE, BUT TODAY WANT TO TAKE A CLOSER LOOK – “WHEN SIMON PETER SAW THIS” ...

SAW WHAT? THE FISH FLOPPING AROUND THE BOAT? MAYBE... BUT I’M THINKING WHEN HE SAW THE DEEPER MEANING OF THE FISH FLOPPING AROUND THE BOAT... WHEN HE SAW THAT THE GOD OF THE UNIVERSE LOVED HIM, CARED FOR HIM AND WANTED TO BLESS HIM BEYOND MEASURE - THE LORD OF THE UNIVERSE –

I JUST WANT TO ASK YOU – DO YOU SEE JESUS IN YOUR EVERYDAY LIFE? I MEAN YOU’RE HERE THIS MORNING AND THAT’S GREAT – YOU’LL GIVE HIM AN HOUR NOW, AND MAYBE SOME TIME BEFORE YOU GO TO BED, AND TOMORROW, DEPENDING ON YOUR ROUTINE, MAYBE A BIT OF TIME IN THE MORNING, AND THEN WHAT? AS YOU GO THROUGH EACH DAY, THE GOOD THE BAD, THE HIGHS AND LOWS, ARE YOU LOOKING FOR JESUS... ARE YOU LOOKING FOR THE LORD OF THE UNIVERSE WHO WALKS WITH YOU?

DO YOU RECOGNIZE THAT WHATEVER IT IS THAT YOURE GOING THROUGH, THAT JESUS WALKS WITH YOU? THAT HE WANTS TO BLESS YOU? THAT HE WANTS TO BRING HOPE OUT OF DISAPPOINTMENT, THAT HE WANTS TO BRING VICTORY OUT OF DEFEAT AND DESPAIR. DO YOU SEE? SIMON PETER SAW THIS.

AND THIS IS THE KINGDOM OF GOD BREAKING INTO A DARK WORLD. AND ISN’T THAT WHAT WE PRAY FOR? WE PRAY THY KINGDOM COME, THY WILL BE DONE, ON EARTH, AS IT IS IN HEAVEN – WE’RE ALWAYS PRAYING FOR THE KINGDOM TO BREAK IN INSOME VERY TANGIBLE, VERY VISIBLE SIGN . JESUS TAUGHT, AND THEN THERE’S A VISIBLE DEMONSTRATION OF THE WORD OF GOD TO GIVE CREDENCE TO THE WORD OF TRUTH JESUS JUST PREACHED – ALMOST

ALWAYS, THERE'S A DEED OF POWER WHERE THE KINGDOM BREAKS THROUGH – WHERE SOMEONE IS HEALED, OR SOMEONE IS RAISED FROM THE DEAD, IT HAPPENS ALL THE TIME IN THE SCRIPTURES.

AND WHAT SIMON SAW WAS THE KINGDOM OF GOD BREAKING INTO HIS BOAT, HIS WORLD, HIS BUSINESS, HIS VERY LIFE, HE SAW GOD'S POWER CONFIRMING THE TRUTH OF WHO JESUS WAS – JESUS IS GOD – AND THIS GOD LOVES ME - AND THAT CHANGED SIMON FOREVER. HOW DO I KNOW THAT? WELL LUKE IS THE GUY WHO IS WRITING THIS – AND UP TO THIS POINT IN THE STORY, SIMON IS REFERRED TO AS – SIMON – THAT'S HIS NAME – BUT LOOK AT VERSE 8 – WHEN SIMON PETER SAW THIS – WHERE DOES PETER COME FROM? THE WORD PETER MEANS ROCK – AND ELSEWHERE IN THE NEW TESTAMENT JESUS CALLS PETER THE ROCK – THE SOLID ONE – THE ONE WHO KNOWS WHO I AM – AND CONFESSES IT. THE ONE WHO UNDERSTANDS THAT I AM THE SON OF GOD. SO PETER'S NAME IS CHANGED, HIS IDENTITY IS CHANGED, HIS HEART IS CHANGED, AND SO HERE'S WHAT HE DOES – HE FALLS AT JESUS KNEES – HE CAN'T FALL AT HIS FEET – BECAUSE OF ALL THE FISH – SO HE FALLS AT HIS KNEES –

NOW IT'S INTERESTING – SOME THINGS CHANGE WITH HOW PETER'S RELATIONSHIP WITH JESUS IS IN THIS PASSAGE, TOO – SIMON STARTS OUT CALLING JESUS TEACHER – KIND OF A SAFE TERM – YES, I CAN LEARN SOME THINGS FROM YOU, AND THEN HE GRADUATES TO CALLING HIM MASTER, WHICH IS LIKE A BOSS. SO THINK ABOUT TEACHERS AND BOSSES THAT YOU'VE HAD – TEACHERS – WHAT DO THEY DO? THEY GIVE YOU ASSIGNMENTS – SOME YOU DON'T LIKE BUT YOU HAVE TO DO THEM ANYWAY – AND A BOSS, YOU MAY OR MAY NOT GET ALONG WITH THEM, - HE GRADUATES FROM BEING OBEDIENT AND RESPONSIBLE TO THIS "LIST" THAT THIS PERSON GIVES HIM TO DO, BECAUSE IF I DON'T THERE WILL BE CONSEQUENCES. KIND OF A "HAVE TO" - AND HE GRADUATES FROM THAT TO THE WORD "LORD" – LORD!

AND HERE'S WHAT HE SAYS IN VERSE 8 – GO AWAY FROM ME LORD – NOW WE HEAR THAT AND WE THINK HE'S TELLING JESUS TO GO AWAY, BUT WHAT HE'S SAYING IN REALITY IS - I'M NOT WORTHY – AND HE CALLS JESUS LORD, WHICH MEANS GOD – GO AWAY FROM ME BECAUSE IM A SINFUL MAN – IN LIGHT OF WHO JESUS IS, PETER RECOGNIZES WHO HE IS.

THE LIGHT OF JESUS SHINES ON HIM – AND SUDDENLY HE SEES THINGS ABOUT HIMSELF THAT HE HADN'T PERHAPS SEEN BEFORE, HE CAN SEE HIS PRIDE, AND SELFISHNESS, AND JUST THE THINGS THAT ARE STANDING IN THE WAY BETWEEN HIM AN A RELATIONSHIP WITH JESUS.

AND HERE'S WHAT I LOVE ABOUT PETER – HE TAKES THE RISK OF CONFESSING TO JESUS WHAT HE'S DISCOVERED ABOUT HIMSELF AND WHO HE REALLY IS ON THE INSIDE, AND THAT'S EXACTLY WHERE JESUS NEEDS US TO BE. TO BE VULNERABLE, AND THAT'S A PERFECTLY LOGICAL RISK TO TAKE, BECAUSE JESUS DIDN'T COME FOR THOSE WHO THINK

THEY ARE PERFECT ALREADY. JESUS SAID, I DIDN'T COME FOR THE RIGHTEOUS, I CAME FOR SINNERS.

WHERE IS GOD CALLING YOU TO GO DEEPER IN YOUR OWN LIFE?

THIS GUY PETER – HE WAS AN ORDINARY GUY LIKE YOU AND ME – A FISHERMAN – ONE OF THOSE ROUGH AND TUMBLE GUYS WHO WORKED THE NETS FOR A LIVING – PROBABLY HUNG OUT WITH THE GUYS AFTER WORK – THIS IS THE GUY THAT JESUS PICKS TO PREACH THE VERY FIRST SERMON ON THE DAY OF PENTECOST – AND HE WASN'T A TERRIBLY EDUCATED MAN – HE WAS A FISHERMAN - - WHICH MEANS HE ONLY GOT SO FAR IN HIS RABINICAL STUDIES BEFORE THE LOCAL RABBI TOLD HIS FATHER HE WAS NOT SCHOLAR MATERIAL. OTHERWISE HE WOULD HAVE ALREADY BEEN SOMEONE'S DISCIPLE...

BUT GET THIS – 3000 PEOPLE ARE SAVED THE VERY FIRST TIME THE GOSPEL COMES OUT OF PETER'S MOUTH AT PENTECOST!

YOU SEE WHY THE POWER ISN'T IN THE MESSENGER – THE POWER IS IN THE MESSAGE – GOD USED PETER AND HIS FRIENDS TO CHANGE THE WORLD

JESUS GOT THESE FISHERMEN TO FOLLOW BY GOING TO THE PLACE WHERE THEY WERE AND GETTING THEM TO DO THE THING THEY LOVED – HE SAID LET'S GO FISH – LET'S GO DEEPER – LET'S CAST NETS WHERE THEY'VE NEVER BEEN CAST BEFORE.

AND THEN HE DID FOR THEM SOMETHING THEY COULDN'T DO FOR THEMSELVES – THAT'S EXACTLY WHAT JESUS DOES FOR US – HE FORGIVES US, HE CHANGES US, HE GIVES US ETERNAL LIFE

SO, THEY PULLED THEIR BOATS UP ON SHORE AND LEFT EVERYTHING AND FOLLOWED HIM.

THEY LEFT THE BOATS, THE NETS, THE FISH – THEY LEFT EVERYTHING THAT HAD SEEMED IMPORTANT JUST NOT TOO LONG AGO THE THINGS THEY HAD BEEN DEPENDENT ON - THEY JUST WALKED AWAY FROM THE BIGGEST HAUL OF THEIR LIVES – A SERIOUS LOTTERY. THEY LEFT IT ALL ON THE SHORE...

THAT'S THE CHALLENGE FOR US TODAY: TO VENTURE BEYOND OUR COMFORT ZONES AND PUT OUT INTO THE DEEP WATER IN LIVES OF CHRISTIAN DISCIPLESHIP. TOO OFTEN WE STAY CLOSE TO SHORE, SAFE AND COMFORTABLE, WHEN JESUS IS CALLING US TO BE ACTIVE, ADVENTUROUS AND WILLING TO EXPLORE NEW TERRITORY. THAT'S WHERE THE FISH ARE. THAT'S WHERE THE GROWTH HAPPENS. THAT'S WHERE WE CAN MAKE SURPRISING DISCOVERIES ABOUT OURSELVES AND THE WORLD AROUND US.

THE LORD ASKS ISAIAH – WHOM SHALL I SEND AND HE RESPONDS – HERE I AM SEND ME –

THE CALL IS THE SAME TODAY – WHOM SHALL I SEND IN TO THE DEEP – ARE YOU WILLING TO RESPOND – TO GO DEEPER – TO RISK BEING VULNERABLE? IN JESUS' NAME. AMEN.