

Sunday, January 23, 2022 | Reset

Week 4 | Luke 5:1-11 | "New Year, Different Way"

Announcements:

We'll be having Bob's ordination on Sunday, January 30th, 2022. The examination will be on Saturday, January 29th.

John is meeting with potential security help next Sunday after service.

Last week, we dove into Jesus' first recorded words on earth. They came after he had been away from Mary and Joseph for nearly a week. Mary took the Lord's absence personally and demanded from him an explanation. Jesus responded by saying, "[Why were you looking for me? Did you not know that I must be in my Father's house?](#)" Essentially, his words not only explained his location (i.e., Where else would he have been if not at his dad's place?), but they also explained his vocation (i.e., What else would he be doing if not the work of his father?). Likewise, to reset our lives in this new year, we too must **embrace God's plan for our lives and reject all others.**

In week 2, we asked the question, "What happens when we make the old mistakes in a new year?" And the answer is the same that John the Baptist gave his audience: repent. John didn't advise extremism. Instead, he calls them to repentance; specifically, repentance expressed in everyday actions. Because **repentance without the fruits of repentance isn't really repentance.** A change of behavior is evidence of a changed heart (cf. Mat. 7:24-26; Lu. 3:7-14; 1 Jn. 2:3-4). What's more, repentance is the only way to salvage a fresh start. If you still have breath, there is still time to change.

Last week, saw how the people began thinking that John the Baptist was the Messiah. This prompted John to distinguish himself from "the Christ" in three distinct ways. He explained that the One who would come after him had a superior position, a greater baptism, and a better judgment. But just because John was humble did not mean he was timid. John the Baptist spoke truth to commoners and kings alike. And, likewise, any who want a fresh new start to their new year must start **speaking truth into the lives of those around them.**

Today, we dive into the famous passage where Jesus called a bunch of fishermen to be his disciples.

READ: Luke 5:1-11 (ESV)

¹ On one occasion, while the crowd was pressing in on him to hear the word of God, he was standing by the lake of Gennesaret, ² and he saw two boats by the lake, but the fishermen had gone out of them and were washing their nets. ³ Getting into one of the boats, which was Simon's, he asked him to put out a little from the land. And he sat down and **taught** the people from the boat.

⁴ And when he had finished speaking, he said to Simon, "Put out into the deep and let down your nets for a catch." ⁵ And Simon answered, "**Master**, we toiled all night and took nothing! But at your word I will let down the nets." ⁶ And when they had done this, they enclosed a large number of fish, and their nets were breaking. ⁷ 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 But 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 that they had taken, ¹⁰ and so also were James and John, sons of Zebedee, who were partners with Simon. And Jesus said to Simon, "Do not be afraid; from now on you will be catching men." ¹¹ And when they had brought their boats to land, they left everything and followed him.

Luke characterizes the Messiah in **three** ways:

i. Jesus, the Teacher

We are only a few chapters into the life of Jesus, and, amazingly, he already has crowds following him. And while they might be following him because he rescued a man from demon possession, the main reason Luke gives us for Jesus' notoriety is that they wanted to "hear the word of God." The things Jesus said were unlike anything the people had heard before. And they couldn't get enough of it. Even today, Jesus' words have a way of drawing a crowd.

There were so many people pressing him to hear what he had to say that Jesus needed a better way to speak to everyone. And so, seeing a group of fishermen cleaning their nets, he approaches Peter and asks to be set out away from the shoreline. Meaning one of the first pulpits was a boat. This would help project his voice as shorelines are nature's amphitheatres. As anyone who's been on the side of calm waters can tell you, the human voice has a way of carrying itself a fair distance when there's no obstruction or competing sounds.

Importantly, we aren't told what Jesus taught. I wish we were. But the point of Luke's story isn't to relay some discourse; it was to highlight who was listening. And who was in the boat with Jesus as he taught? Peter.

Now, this isn't the first time we've been introduced to Peter. Cleverly, before Luke tells us Peter's profession, we know he's a family man. One chapter before, we're told of Jesus' temptation in the wilderness, how those of his own hometown rejected him. Then, interestingly, we're given a short scene where Jesus enters the home of a man called Simon, where Jesus heals that man's mother-in-law from a high fever (cf. 4:38-39).

So, at the very least, we know that before Jesus steps onto his boat, Peter already knew Jesus personally. And, considering that Jesus had healed his wife's mother, Peter undoubtedly had a fair degree of admiration for this carpenter's son.

ii. **Jesus, the Master**

After Jesus got done teaching, he turned to Peter and said, "Put out into the deep and let down your nets for a catch." And Simon answered, "Master, we toiled all night and took nothing! But at your word, I will let down the nets." Now, before we judge Peter, it's important to remember that while Jesus had done some notable things already, the disciples were at the very beginning of their journey. They had not witnessed Jesus walk on water or calm the seas.

SIDE NOTE: It's extraordinary how many times the gospels point out when people of faith had their doubts (cf. Mat. 28:17; Mr. 9:23-24; Lu. 1:34, 38; 5:5; 7:19; etc.). We often think that doubting is synonymous with sin; this isn't true. It's okay to have doubts. It's okay even to voice those doubts. What we must never do is allow those doubts to cripple us. After all, we need only a little bit of faith to move a mountain of doubt (cf. Mat. 17:20). We either take our doubts to Jesus, or our doubts will take us away from Jesus.

Though Peter voiced his doubts, he still addressed Jesus by "Master." You didn't call just anyone master. This term showed how much respect Peter already had for Jesus. But, no doubt, when Peter used the word "master," he wasn't using it to say that Jesus was a master fisherman. No, at least in this, Peter thought of himself as more experienced than Jesus.

Before we go any further, we must understand what the first-century fishing boat looked like. **<INSERT PICTURE>** In 1986, the remains of an old fishing boat were found at the bottom of the Sea of Galilee by a few amateur archeologists. After running some tests, they discovered that the ship dated back to sometime around the first century. And while this was a significant find for the Jewish community, the Christian community quickly took note of the discovery. While its technical name is "The Ancient Galilee

Boat,” it is better known today as the “Jesus Boat.”¹ This is not to say that Jesus actually sailed on this boat. Instead, the ship represents what all fishing vessels looked like during the time of Jesus.

The dimensions for the Jesus boat are noteworthy. It's roughly 25ft long, 7.5ft wide, and 4.5ft deep with a flat bottom. It had sails, but it could also be driven with four oars. **<INSERT PICTURE>** A typical fishing vessel of this kind usually had a crew of 5, but it could also hold up to 10 passengers. Historians estimate that, in total, boats of this size could hold around 1,000lbs.² Remember those figures as they'll become crucial to understanding the story.

Bear in mind, Jesus told a bunch of seasoned fishermen to go out and fish who were done with fishing for the day. They had not only been unsuccessful the night before, but they had already cleaned their nets! Furthermore, Jesus asked them to go fishing during the worst part of the day. Fishing with nets during broad daylight wasn't the best because the fish could easily see and avoid the traps in the water. This is why they fished at night. Now, Jesus asks these weary professionals to set out on, what they must've thought, was a pointless venture.

It wasn't long after they let down their nets that there were so many fish that Luke tells us the nets themselves began to break. You can almost hear the straining of the cords as we read those words. What a surprise this must've been for these fishermen. There were so many fish, in fact, that they had to call another ship to come to assist them, or they'd risk losing the biggest catch of their life. But even when the second boat gets on the scene and they start heading back to the shore, the combined power of the two ships still isn't enough. They, together, began to sink. Remember, the capacity of each boat was around 1,000lbs. Even considering that the vessels likely had a crew of at least 4, this means, on a low estimate, each ship had to have had over 200lbs of fish for it to start sinking.

It seems this carpenter's son, teacher, and healer also knows a thing or two about fishing.

iii. Jesus, the Lord

Apparently, once they got back to shore with their haul, Peter comes before Jesus, bows at his knees, and says, “Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord.”

¹ General Editors, “Sea of Galilee Boat,” *Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia*, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sea_of_Galilee_Boat, [accessed, January 20, 2021].

² Garland, David E., *Luke, The Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament*, (Grand Rapids; Zondervan, 2011), p. 226.

Lord is a term that can be used as a general honorific, similar to saying "sir." However, in Luke's account, Lord is almost always used as a designation of God. It is a term that Luke employs to talk about the sovereign power and authority of Jesus Christ. Furthermore, when Jesus got on the boat, Peter referred to Jesus as "Master." But by the time Jesus got off the ship, Peter addressed him as "Lord." Thus, there seems to be a progression even in this scene, and at least in Peter's heart. Interestingly, Peter is the first to call Jesus Lord in the Gospels. And all would-be followers of Jesus who come after Peter also call Jesus Lord.

Peter thought that Jesus needed to be told about fishing. It is only now that he realizes how naive he has been. Far from Jesus being the amateur fisherman, Peter was the amateur. In fact, this Jesus of Nazareth wasn't only a Master fisherman; he was Lord. He was so high above him that Peter didn't want Jesus to even be near him. He asks Jesus to depart. Why? Because Peter knew himself to be a "sinner." He knew that whatever power Jesus possessed, it also revealed Peter's unworthiness. Jesus was not only a teacher and master; he was also Lord. And what was Peter? Professionally, he wasn't only a failed fisherman, but, spiritually, he was also a sinner. Logically, at least in Peter's reasoning, these two men should not be seen together.

But the very reason that Peter tells Jesus to depart is the same reason that Jesus came in the first place. If the Lord knew where to cast the nets, he would also know the moral state of those who cast the net. Yet, despite their fallen state, Jesus deputizes them for the work of the ministry.

SO, WHAT'S THE TAKEAWAY?

But just as Peter did not know fishing as well as he thought he did, he didn't know Jesus very well. Peter felt his sinfulness should've disqualified him from being in Jesus' presence. In reality, it was precisely because Peter was a sinner that Jesus came to him.

Jesus recruits sinners to help him rescue sinners.

READ: Luke 5:10-11 (ESV)

"Do not be afraid; from now on you will be catching men." And when they had brought their boats to land, they left everything and followed him.

There's a pun in Jesus' words because, as any fisherman will tell you, fish don't usually survive the fishing process. But Jesus takes the approach of fishing and turns it into a metaphor for ministry. He sees humanity drowning in their sins. They're out there in the deep, treading water. And Jesus has come to the drowning masses with one purpose: to save. And once he

has saved a few, he commissions—charges, delegates, tasks—them to help him save others.
Jesus recruits sinners to help him rescue sinners.

Do you want to press the reset button on your life in 2022? Tell someone about Jesus. You do not need to be perfect to follow Jesus; you just need to follow Jesus. The only requirement he gives is that you leave everything behind. This might mean literally doing just that (i.e., missionaries). But, for others, this might mean witnessing to your neighbors and friends today. Either way, the point is Jesus saved us so that we might tell others about him.

Peter and his friends not only left the biggest catch of their life behind; they also left their very vocation behind. That day, they stopped being fishermen; instead, they became a search and rescue party with Jesus as their captain. Furthermore, Peter and the others ceased being business partners and turned into ministry partners. Just as they couldn't fish by themselves, they wouldn't be able to do ministry by themselves. The point is, when you meet Jesus, your priorities change. Anyone looking at this scene might think them crazy. But, as Jesus says in another place, "whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will find it" (cf. Mat. 16:25). Peter and the rest left the height of their careers because they answered a higher calling.

Video Description

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Peter and his friends not only left the biggest catch of their life behind; they also left their very vocation behind. That day, they stopped being fishermen; instead, they became a search and rescue party with Jesus as their captain. Furthermore, Peter and the others ceased being business partners and turned into ministry partners. Just as they couldn't fish by themselves, they wouldn't be able to do ministry by themselves. The point is, when you meet Jesus, your priorities change. Anyone looking at this scene might think them crazy. But, as Jesus says in another place, "whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will find it" (cf. Mat. 16:25). Peter and the rest left the height of their careers because they answered a higher calling. **Jesus recruits sinners to help him rescue sinners.** Do you want to press the reset button on your life in 2022? Tell someone about Jesus.

Pastor's manuscript can be found here: