

Sunday, February 19, 2023 | Onward

Week 6 | Luke 5:1-11 | "The First Disciples of Jesus"

On January 1, Pastor Bob kicked off the first sermon series of 2023 entitled "Onward." This series will explore the so-called "firsts" of Jesus' life and how he pressed *onward* into new and unexplored territories. And Jesus' first words tell us that wherever we are and whatever we're doing, we ought to "be about [our] Father's business."

In the second week, we moved from Jesus' *first words* to the *first steps* of his earthly ministry. As we read, God even showed up to mark that magnanimous moment by declaring to all that Jesus was his actual "Son." And just so that Luke's readers do not miss the importance of that declaration, he immediately provides a lineage that proves that Jesus was, in fact, directly descended from God and not only Adam. Through his *mother's* side, Jesus identifies with the *human* race. But through his *Father's* side, Jesus identifies with the *divine* race. And by being the true heir of God, Jesus can transform sons and daughters of Adam into sons and daughters of God.

We discussed Jesus' first recorded run-in with temptation in the third week. And this temptation is a result of Jesus being declared to be God's Son. A claim of that magnitude had to be real-world tested. And, as we saw, Satan didn't pull any punches. He tempted the Lord to turn stone into bread, to worship him, and to cast himself down from a lofty height. Ultimately, Jesus did not succumb to the Devil. And so, when the Son of God overcame temptation, he made temptation something to be overcome. What does that mean for us? Through the Messiah's victory, we can be victorious over temptation.

In the fourth week, we unpacked Jesus' first sermon. In that message, the Lord laid out his life's purpose: *he is the bringer of "good news."* He came to fulfill God's promises and liberate God's people. And while his words were initially met with overwhelming enthusiasm, the Lord ended up being driven from his hometown and nearly thrown off a cliff. Why? Jesus revealed that the "good news" wasn't only for his friends but also for their enemies, which proved too much for them to swallow. And so, a congregation that had just been applauding Jesus nearly killed him. Ultimately, Jesus never did do a great work in his own hometown. And though that is sad, their failings taught us a valuable lesson: **prejudice keeps us from experiencing the wonders of God.** If we think God has only come for "our camp," we can rest assured he will leave us behind and find those who love the stranger as much as the friend.

Last week, we studied Jesus' first few miracles. We saw him not only cast out demons but heal the diseased. And those demonstrations of power further legitimized Jesus' claims and began

establishing his authority in the people's consciousness. But, as Jesus pointed out, he did not come merely to do good works; he was a preacher of the good news. Thus, the Lord's miracles were always subordinate to his message.

Today, we'll be introduced to the first disciples of Jesus. And among those first few followers is a man called Simon. He's a fisherman by trade, so it is not a surprise that we'll find him on the shores of a lake, cleaning his nets. What is surprising is that, apparently, he hadn't caught anything the night before. In fact, he was just about to head home when he allowed Jesus to commandeer his ship so that the Lord could use it as a floating pulpit.

Interestingly, this interaction will forever change the trajectory of not only Simon's life but also the lives of his business partners: Andrew, James, and John (cf. Mat. 4:18). And though they will start that day as master fishermen, they will end it as novice fishers of men under the tutelage of an itinerate preacher from Nazareth. Hunters of fish become rescuers of men because they recognize they can have a more extraordinary life following Jesus than trying to eke out a living on the sea. Additionally, they realize there is much more to this Jesus than first meets the eye. Simon and his friends get a glimpse of the spectacular in today's passage, and they will not miss their opportunity to see more.

Now, although other disciples are mentioned, we'll focus on Peter. After all, aside from Jesus, Simon plays the most prominent role in this scene. Therefore, I want you to notice how Peter's knowledge of Jesus grows in **three** ways:

i. Peter recognizes Jesus' priority (vs. 1-3).

READ: Luke 5:1-3 (ESV)

¹ As the crowd was pressing in on Jesus to hear God's word, he was standing by Lake Gennesaret. ² He saw two boats at the edge of the lake; the **fishermen** had left them and were washing their nets. ³ He got into one of the boats, which belonged to **Simon**, and asked him to put out a little from the land. Then he sat down and was teaching the crowds from the boat.

Imagine being Peter for a moment. He had worked all night, and, as we'll later learn, he had caught nothing. He had already pulled his boat from the waters and was cleaning his nets from all the debris that might've gotten trapped as he pulled his trammel net behind his ship. In short, he was about to go home wearied from his labors and empty-handed. But then Jesus *commandeers* his boat. Doubtless, Simon didn't mind. After all, this was the same man who

had healed his mother-in-law (cf. Lu. 4:38-39). But still, if anyone else had asked Peter to get back in the water at that moment, he likely would've told that person no or charged him an exorbitant sum.

What we see at this moment is that Peter prioritized Jesus' needs above his own. Jesus needed a better place to preach, so he utilized Peter's boat as a floating pulpit. Jesus could've done something else. But he chose to engage with Peter. And, because of Peter's willingness to serve, Jesus' message was better heard by the masses. Peter helped fill a legitimate need in the Savior's life by ensuring the Lord's needs were met before his own.

Likewise, we should also place God's needs above our own. We may be tired. We may have had a bad work day. We might want to do nothing else but go home and start the day anew tomorrow. But however we might be feeling in the moment, we ought to prioritize God's will for our life over our own (i.e., J.O.Y. = Jesus First, Others Second, Yourself Last).

ii. Peter recognizes Jesus' authority (vs. 4-7).

READ: Luke 5:4-7 (ESV)

⁴ When he had finished speaking, he said to Simon, "Put out into deep water and let down your nets for a catch."⁵ "Master," Simon replied, "we've worked hard all night long and caught nothing. But if you say so, I'll let down the nets."⁶ When they did this, they caught a great number of fish, and their nets began to tear. ⁷ So they signaled to their partners in the other boat to come and help them; they came and filled both boats so full that they began to sink.

Now, again, imagine you're Peter. Peter was a fisherman. And not just someone who fished on the side as a hobby, but a professional. His livelihood was dependent upon the sea. Not only that, Peter is a business owner. He didn't work for anyone but himself. He doesn't rent out a boat; Luke tells us the boat that Jesus got into was *owned* by Peter. It "belonged to Simon" (cf. Lu. 5:3). Also, he and his brother Andrew were in a *business* partnership with the sons of Zebedee (Lu. 5:10; cf., "partners" is *κοινωνία* and same as that of Phil. 1:7 where it describes Pauls' financial partners.). So, we can safely assume that Peter knew his craft. Like someone who builds houses for a living, Peter knew the ins and out of angling. He was a professional in every sense of the word.

So, in light of that, think about how it must've felt when the sun rose, and Peter had caught nothing the night before. Why they were fishing at night is somewhat perplexing. Most scholars believe it was so that the fish wouldn't see the nets. However, it's just as likely that temperatures were low during the night and/or fishing at night would ensure their catch is

fresh for the early morning markets. The point here is that this wasn't a good day for his business. It was a loss.

Then Jesus turns to Peter and tells him to go fishing again. Peter is doubtful but obedient. Why? Because Peter recognized Jesus' authority. He had witnessed it in the Lord's preaching. He perceived it when he cast out demons. And he had seen it first-hand when the Lord healed his mother-in-law. And so, ignoring his sailor's intuition, he cast off again to go fishing because he believed more in Jesus' authority than his experience. In short, he took a step of faith.

Likewise, we, too, ought to walk by faith. We ought to look to the Author and Finisher of our faith for guidance in every area of our life, especially those where we feel confident and will feel like professionals. Because no matter how proficient we may become at a specific task and no matter how much better we become than our peers, we will always be but a novice compared to the Master (cf. Prov. 3:5-6). Peter, a master fisherman, relinquished his boat to an itinerate preacher from Nazareth who grew up the son of a carpenter.

iii. Peter recognizes Jesus' superiority (vs. 8-11).

READ: Luke 5:8-11 (ESV)

⁸ When Simon Peter saw this, he fell at Jesus's knees and said, "Go away from me, because I'm a sinful man, Lord!" ⁹ For he and all those with him were amazed at the catch of fish they had taken, ¹⁰ and so were James and John, Zebedee's sons, who were Simon's partners. "Don't be afraid," Jesus told Simon. "From now on you will be catching people." ¹¹ Then they brought the boats to land, left everything, and followed him.

Once the chaos had subsided, Peter immediately worshipped at Jesus' feet. His response is in stark contrast to those who came before. With Nazareth, they wanted to kill Jesus. With Capernaum, they tried to use Jesus. But Peter wanted to distance himself from Jesus. Why? Because he didn't feel worthy. Whoever he may have been to others, to this man, he was but a "sinner."

And, so, Peter wasn't angry with Jesus. He didn't even want to use Jesus. Instead, Simon Peter was humbled by simply being in Jesus' presence. His entire view of this man had shifted. Doubtless, he already thought highly of him as he referred to Jesus as "Master" in verse 4 and allowed him easy access to his boat in verse 3. His opinion of this Jesus was pretty high already. But with Peter now referring to him as "Lord," his estimations of Jesus had skyrocketed. He recognized that whoever this man was, he was not worthy of being in his presence. Peter recognized Jesus' superiority.

But little did Peter know this is precisely the correct posture to take when standing before Jesus. He will not be forced into service. He is King, after all. But he will enlist the help of sinners to serve him if they will but be humble. If so, he will change the trajectory of their lives forever. Peter and his companions started their day as master fishermen but ended it as novice fishers of men. He calls ordinary men to an extraordinary purpose.

Likewise, Jesus is calling us to serve alongside him. But if we want to help, we do not come to Jesus with our ideas and plans. We must bow before his knees, fully realizing that he is worthy and we are not; only then will Jesus use us; only then will we be in the right mindset to enter his service.

So, what's the takeaway?

The greater our **knowledge** of Jesus, the greater our **devotion** to Jesus.

Sometimes our view of Jesus is far too small.

At worst, we think of him as little more than an accessory to our lives, something we tack on as an afterthought once we've made our decisions. Or, somewhat better, he's a wizened guru, a source of sage advice who helps us get out of a particularly tricky situation but is perched atop his mountain, caring little for the plight of mere mortals. Or, at best, we might consider him to be an old friend, someone we liked to hang out with years ago but has no lasting impact on our life today. Friends come and go, after all. He played a pivotal role when we were younger, but we're older now, and we've outgrown our childhood friends.

But the Messiah is so much more.

Rather than being a mere accessory, Jesus ought to be the principal thing in our lives. He's not just some old friend, the Son of God is our Commander and Chief. And he's not just some wizened sage; Christ is the Lord of our life.

A small view of Jesus inspires no great faith. Only when we see him for who he is will we want to follow him wherever he leads.

So, what's the takeaway?

The greater our **knowledge** of Jesus, the greater our **devotion** to Jesus.

Video Description

Onward | Week 6 | “The First Disciples of Jesus”

TEXT: Luke 5:1-11

Today, we'll be introduced to the first disciples of Jesus. And among those first few followers is a man called Simon. He's a fisherman by trade, so it is not a surprise that we'll find him on the shores of a lake, cleaning his nets. What is surprising is that, apparently, he hadn't caught anything the night before. In fact, he was just about to head home when he allowed Jesus to commandeer his ship so that the Lord could use it as a floating pulpit.

Interestingly, this interaction will forever change the trajectory of not only Simon's life but also the lives of his business partners: Andrew, James, and John (cf. Mat. 4:18). And though they will start that day as master fishermen, they will end it as novice fishers of men under the tutelage of an itinerate preacher from Nazareth. Hunters of fish become rescuers of men because they recognize they can have a more extraordinary life following Jesus than trying to eke out a living on the sea. Additionally, they realize there is much more to this Jesus than first meets the eye. Simon and his friends get a glimpse of the spectacular in today's passage, and they will not miss their opportunity to see more.

Pastor's manuscript can be found here: