

### It's Time To Catch People! (Luke 5:1-16)

*(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. (12) While he was in one of the cities, there came a man full of leprosy. And when he saw Jesus, he fell on his face and begged him, "Lord, if you will, you can make me clean." (13) And Jesus stretched out his hand and touched him, saying, "I will; be clean." And immediately the leprosy left him. (14) And he charged him to tell no one, but "go and show yourself to the priest, and make an offering for your cleansing, as Moses commanded, for a proof to them." (15) But now even more the report about him went abroad, and great crowds gathered to hear him and to be healed of their infirmities. (16) But he would withdraw to desolate places and pray.*

*(28) And God blessed them. And God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth." (Gen 1:28)*

*(2) Continue steadfastly in prayer, being watchful in it with thanksgiving. (3) At the same time, pray also for us, that God may open to us a door for the word, to declare the mystery of Christ, on account of which I am in prison-- (4) that I may make it clear, which is how I ought to speak. (5) Walk in wisdom toward outsiders, making the best use of the time. (6) Let your speech always be gracious, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how you ought to answer each person. (Col 4:2-6)*

*(3) ...God has done what the law, weakened by the flesh, could not do. By sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, he condemned sin in the flesh, (4) in order that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit. (5) For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit set their minds on the things of the Spirit. (Rom 8:3-5)*

1. Jesus taught and preached the "Word of God." This is what we are called to share, teach, and preach as well. Do you love the "Word of God?" Do you listen carefully to the "Word of God?" How are you sharing, and/or teaching, and/or preaching the "Word of God" to others?
2. The owners of the two boats had given up on catching fish for the night/day. But Jesus was pursuing Simon. Jesus had life, salvation, and a purpose for people that went beyond fishing and business. Jesus wanted the crowds and this individual named Simon to really hear the "Word of God." The "Word of God" brings salvation, life, and purpose.
3. Jesus, the former carpenter, tells Simon, the expert fisherman, to take the boat into deeper water so that he can catch fish. Simon had been fishing all night and caught nothing. It was now daytime, and Simon knew that normally you don't catch fish during the day. This instruction from Jesus went against everything Simon knew. Simon was an expert fisherman, but Jesus was showing Simon that He was more than just a great teacher and healer, more than just a prophet and miracle worker. Jesus was showing Simon that He was God the Son, and that He had authority and dominion over every part of the creation that He had made. Jesus was demonstrating that He could do what the first Adam (human) was intended to do, that is, have dominion over the fish of the sea (Gen. 1:28). Simon had worked as hard as he could, and it was not enough to catch fish. Now Jesus would do for him, what Simon could not do for himself. Simon listens to the "Word of Jesus" even when it goes against his own natural reason in this moment. Do you listen to the "Word of Jesus?" Do you obey God the Son in all that He has commanded, or are there areas in your life that you think you know better than He does?
4. When we listen to God, to Jesus, we get all that God wants us to have, which is sometimes great abundance now, but will certainly be all we need now to do His will and great abundance forever. Those people (partners) around us will also benefit both now and sometimes forever by our obedience to the "Word of Jesus." Are you living in God's fullness for you and for those around you? Are you eagerly obedient to the "Word of Jesus?"
5. When our eyes are open to who Jesus truly is we will recognize His holiness, our sin, our great need, and His great grace and love. When we recognize and surrender to the Lordship of Christ our lives will change from the inside out, and we will begin to see God, ourselves, and the world rightly. Jesus Christ is gloriously amazing, and when we see this we will want others to know Him and worship Him as well. Followers of Christ have the great privilege of being fishers of men and women. Followers of Christ give their lives so that others come to know Christ and give Him the glory He deserves. Whose salvation are you praying for? Who have you talk to about Christ in the last week? Are you praying for God to open doors for you to share the gospel? Are you inviting others to come worship with you or attend small group with you? How are you reaching out in evangelism?
6. Nothing should come between you and Christ, nothing. Being a Christian is about following Jesus. Christians are followers of Christ, disciples of Christ. Jesus takes first place over everything and everyone else.
7. Jesus spent time where the people were because He loved people. Jesus even loved the most outcast and unclean of society. Jesus was filled with compassion and mercy. Do you love people? Is your life characterized by compassion and mercy?

8. This man with leprosy had suffered for a long time. He as a social outcast. He lived a lonely life. He was an “untouchable.” He was considered “unclean” by people. His body was deformed and abnormal because of his disease. He was literally falling apart physically, emotionally, mentally, socially, and in every other way because of this infectious disease that had affected him through microscopic bacteria, things that can’t even be seen with the naked eye. This leper is a picture of us in our sin before God. Like Simon recognized before Jesus in the verses before this, we are unclean sinners. We are “full” of sin, and it affects the core of who we are. The “disease” of sin has infected us all. Just as Jesus has authority and dominion over the microscopic bacteria that cause leprosy, so He has authority over sin, to forgive it, free us from it, and eventually remove it completely from us forever.
9. The proper response to Jesus from us when we see our sin rightly is to fall before Him and beg Him for mercy, grace, forgiveness, and salvation. If a person responds this way to Jesus He will cleanse them, forgive them, and grant them His great salvation. The personal touch of Jesus, His compassionate reaching out toward unclean sinners is amazing. The clean and pure one touches the unclean and impure one in order that the unclean and impure one might be made clean and pure forever. Jesus cleaned this man immediately and restored to him all that he had lost. Jesus does the same for all those He saves, He cleanse us immediately and restores to us all that satan, demons, sin, the world, and evil has taken from us.
10. According to the law this man was unclean, but Jesus has now made Him clean. After He is made clean Jesus tells him to go and do what the law prescribed for him to do at that time under the Old Covenant. In the New Covenant Jesus not only forgives us, but He also empowers us to do what we could never do before we came to know Him as our Savior and Lord (Rom. 8:3-5). We are no longer slaves to sin, but can actually grow in obedience to the aspects of God’s law that are still binding today. This obedience does not bring us salvation, but is a natural outworking of the salvation that God has worked in our hearts.
11. Because of this great healing, and the fact that this man could not keep quit about it, Jesus becomes even more popular among the masses of people. The crowds that gathered to hear Him teach and heal got even larger. The ministry that Jesus was involved in was constant, and there were times when He had to get away to spend time with God the Father. There He would pray, acknowledging His need for the Father in His humanity, acknowledging His dependance upon the Father for strength, power, and wisdom, and loving the Father as He has been doing for all eternity. If Jesus needed the Father like this, how much more so do we? We need to make it our regular practice to spend time alone with God in prayer, praise, and worship privately and publicly.
12. Jesus was a perfect example of loving God and loving people. It’s easy for us to get out of balance. Some only spend time with people and never get alone with God. Others spend time alone with God and never get out where people are to show love, compassion, and to share the good news of Jesus with them. We need to do both. Love God and love people. It’s time to follow Jesus with all our heart and to catch people!