

WHAT JESUS SAID – THEN AND NOW

Let Down Your Nets

TEXT: Luke 5:1-11

INTRODUCTION: I love the story told in Luke 5:1-11.

Jesus said a single sentence to Simon that would change his life, his eternity.

Lk. 5:4 When He had stopped speaking, He said to Simon, “Launch out into the deep and let down your nets for a catch.”

This one sentence will change your life and mine as well if we allow it too.

You may be thinking, but it cannot change my eternity because I have already been saved. Let me tell you something. It can still change your eternity, and if you will listen, I will tell you how.

We need to notice three things about what Jesus said for His command to impact our lives and our eternity.

I. OBEDIENCE IS REQUIRED

Simon may well have been the most expert fisherman on the lake.

- A. Quite honestly, I suspect the command of Jesus made Simon very uncomfortable.
- If Jesus were wrong (and Simon thought He was) it would be embarrassing for the Master, and Simon did not want that.
 - If Jesus were right, it would be embarrassing for Simon, having fished all night with no results. I’ve been on the end of an unproductive fishing trip. You’re loading the boat while other fishermen pull into dock asking, “How did you do?” And you often share each other’s misery with the consolation that nobody caught anything.

And then the guy pulls in and says, “We killed them!” He opens the ice chest and it is filled with speckled trout and red fish and flounder. And it really tests your Christianity to try to be happy for him!

- In fact, just giving a fisherman advice can make him very uncomfortable. I remember my early days in learning how to fish the marsh of South Louisiana. I was fishing with a friend in my church named Chet who was raised fishing the area around Venice. Fishing with Chet was like going with a guide. He caught fish when and where nobody else did.

But one day, when I was still a neophyte at fishing for redfish in the marsh, Chet and I were casting toward some canes sticking up out of

the water. We had caught a couple, but had not had a hit in about 15 minutes and Chet said, "Time to go." I said, "I've been trying to get my jigs right off of that point of the canes, and I just cast there. "Give me just a second to pop the cork a few times." To which Chet replied, "that spot's no good. If you catch a redfish there, I'll lick the dot on his tail." (See, for you non-fishermen, redfish have one or more big beautiful dots on their tails.

Well, Chet no more than said those words, "If you catch a redfish there, I'll lick the dot on his tail" and my cork went under the water. I set the hook, and you guessed it, I caught a nice, big redfish! And no, Chet did not lick his tail, and I never let him forget it!

There is a sequel to this story I will save for another day, but the point is that we fishermen are not real keen on having people tell us a better place to fish!

So for Simon to say, "**Nevertheless at Your word, I will**" was a big deal.

- B. Sometimes we feel the same way about things the Lord tells us to do.
1. Someone really hurts our feelings, offends us. Jesus says, "Forgive as you've been forgiven." And we think, but Lord, do you know what she said? Do you know what he did? And it just doesn't make sense to us.

We have to say, "Nevertheless, at Your word, I will."

2. Jesus says, "You shall be a witness to me." But Lord You know I am shy; I am scared."

Nevertheless at Your word I will.

3. Jesus said that even He came not to be served but to serve others, and He commands us to do likewise. But Lord, I am too busy to serve you or others...

Nevertheless at Your word, I will.

- C. When God gives you a task, the Devil will always provide excuses.

That is the time to say, "At thy word, I will."

II. OWNERSHIP IS TRANSFERRED

Jesus said, "Let down your nets."

- A. If Simon had known he would have gotten

Best nets
 Biggest nets
 Most nets

But Jesus wanted his net.

Jesus wants our net to become His net. Not to take it from us but for us to use it for His purpose.

- B. Shamgar lived in the days of the Judges when the Philistines were tormenting Israel. They so dominated God's people that they would not allow the blacksmiths to produce any weapons – no swords, shields, spears, arrows.
 Jude 5:6ff

Even the National Sword Association could not get things loosened up.

Shamgar was just keeping the farm when a messenger came warning him that the Philistines were coming. He asked how many. About 600. He said, "That's about right!" He took his goad with which he often prodded his stubborn ox, made it the goad of the Lord, and slew the 600 Philistines.

- C. Gideon – 32,000/10,000/300 with trumpet, torch, and clay pot

- D. Moses – rod

- E. You and Me

1. Listen, we are as God made us. He picked our talents, our abilities, our spiritual gifts.
2. We look at someone really doing a good job at something and say, "Oh if I could be like him, like her." If God wanted you like him or her He would have made you that way!
3. He wants each of us as we are to let down the nets that we have and use them for Him!
4. And I tell you that doing that is one of the strengths of our church. A lot of you do let God have and use your nets, and you serve Him with who you are and what you have. And that is why we are able to have a Center of Hope with food, clothing, gospel, medical, and young mother care – because God has gifted you for this work and you use those gifts for Him.
5. But that is not to say that all are doing it, or that all of us doing it sometimes and in some ways don't have other nets to be used by the Lord. And we each should continue to seek to yield each and every net in our boat to the service of the Master.

Because when we do,

III. ORDINARY BECOMES EXTRAORDINARY

- A. Aaron and Hur in the Old Testament wonderfully illustrate this truth.

Most people know Aaron because he was the brother of Moses and the first High Priest. But that is about it. Moses is famous; Aaron, not so much.

Hardly anybody knows Hur. In fact when people hear the name mentioned they often ask if his first name was Ben. The answer is no.

But the Bible tells us that in the early days of the Exodus, even before Israel made it to Mt. Sinai that the children of God were ambushed by the Amalakites in the desert. Joshua led the men into battle, but these newly freed slaves were no match for the war-hardened sons of Amalek. It was apparent in the early hours of the fighting that victory for Israel could only come by the power of the Almighty.

So Moses went up on a mountain that overlooked the valley in which the battle was raging. And this man of God lifted his arms toward heaven and cried out in prayer. And as he entreated the Lord with arms outstretched, Israel began mysteriously to prevail. But when Moses became too weary to keep his arms up, after all he was 80 years old, the Amalakites began to win again.

So Aaron and Hur, Moses' little brother, not yet even named as future High Priest, just Moses' little brother, and an unknown Israelite man named Hur stood beside their elder leader and held his arms up as Moses prayed to God. And when Moses' legs began to give way, they rolled a big rock underneath him so he could sit semi-erect and with their help keep his arms pointed toward heaven. This they faithfully did until the going down of the sun and the battle was ended. And when it was all over the Lord and Israel had won!

Years later, when men told their young sons about the day they fought in that fierce battle, they no doubt told of their own exploits of valor and courage. They probably spoke of the noble leadership of Joshua and perhaps of some of the war heroes of Israel. Some might have even been spiritually minded enough to remember the roll of Moses who cried out for the arm to the Lord throughout the day.

But I dare say, hardly anybody mentioned Aaron and Hur. In the appraisals of men, they made no contribution to the battle. But the truth of it is that the battle would have been utterly lost without them.

God took the very ordinary work of very ordinary men and used it to accomplish an extraordinary task.

- B. Jesus did the same with Simon in giving them a catch so great they had to call for help. They netted so many fish that the catch threatened to sink two boats.

The purpose here was not so much to provide for the world's biggest fish fry. The purpose was to show Simon, and James and John, and us what an extraordinary catch the Lord can give to us

- when we are willing to obey,
- when we are willing to yield ownership
- when we will let down our nets at His Word

And Jesus made it clear that He wasn't just talking about fish. He was talking about people.

Lk. 5:10 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."

CONCLUSION: So how does this impact my eternity?

1. To move us to trust the Lord Jesus and be saved.
2. For those of us who are saved, to remind us that there is more to eternity than just being admitted into heaven and living forever.
 - We will be given our places of responsibility and authority in the Millennial Kingdom based on how we used the nets we were given.
 - There are other sayings of Jesus about this that I will bring to you in weeks to come, but let me tell you
 - Those that obey
 - Those that yield ownership
 - Those that let down their nets at the Word of the Lord
 - Shall not only see a harvest of souls beyond their greatest imagination
 - They shall reap the fruit of their obedience and labor forever and forever!