

Gospel According to Luke
August 19, 2018
Reading: Luke 5:1-11

Sermon #15
Luke 5:1-11

Jesus Is Divine

I enjoy studying the early Church Fathers and the insights they give. We begin this morning by reading a short but concise statement written in 381_{A.D.} by Gregory of Nazianzus the 4th-century Archbishop of Constantinople. It is amazingly simple, yet profoundly true.

Jesus began His ministry by being hungry, yet He is the Bread of Life.
Jesus ended His earthly ministry by being thirsty, yet He is the Living Water.
Jesus was weary, yet He is our rest.
Jesus paid tribute, yet He is the King.
Jesus was accused of having a demon, yet He cast out demons.
Jesus wept, yet He wipes away our tears.
Jesus was sold for thirty pieces of silver, yet He redeemed the world.
Jesus was brought as a lamb to the slaughter, yet He is the Good Shepherd.
Jesus died, yet by His death He destroyed the power of death.

As we saw last week there are angels and demons, good and evil – the battle for souls rages and will continue to intensify until Jesus returns. The prince of this world spends enormous energy to keep people in sin and the result is chaos. Matthew chapter 24 speaks to the condition of the world prior to Jesus’s return. Jesus addressed the disciples on the Mount of Olives, he told them, “**See that no one leads you astray. ⁵ For many will come in my name, saying, ‘I am the Christ,’ and they will lead many astray.** The true path is narrow and is found only in the Written and Living Word of God. Jesus said the condition of the world would continue to worsen. Continuing in verse 6, Jesus said, “**And you will hear of wars and rumors of wars. See that you are not alarmed, for this must take place, but the end is not yet. ⁷ For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom, and there will be famines and earthquakes in various places. ⁸ All these are but the**

beginning of the birth pains.” (Matthew 24:4-8) The books of Matthew, Daniel, and 1 and 2 Thessalonians combine to give a fuller list of what is referred to as the “signs of the time” leading to Jesus’ return, most have been fulfilled, but that is another study for another time. Even though we are shocked by the things going on in the world, our nation, our state and in the East Mountains; we can take comfort for Jesus said it would be this way and God is in control and we are traveling towards Jesus’ return.

The 20th century, with the industrial revolution, materialism and mankind’s self-sufficiency, saw an ever-increasing effort, massive amounts of time and money spent by intellectuals to disprove the Bible and when that did not work the efforts shifted to changing who Jesus is. This has had some success and the result is many believe in a Jesus who is not the Christ of the Bible or who is a Christ of man’s invention. An obvious example would be The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints or Mormons. However, there are many examples that are not so obvious. Since the Bible could not be disproved, this has led to Satan leading many in the **effort to change the Bible into what man desires and no longer what God inspired**. The result is corrupt and heretical churches that believe the board road they have chosen to please mankind and society will lead to salvation, but the truth is they are heading to eternal destruction and taking millions with them. This is the world that the remnant church must live in and beyond living do daily battle to show the glory of God to the world.

As hard as Satan works and blinds people to the truth - evidence of God’s truth always emerges to bring those who will critically evaluate what is true back to God and his Bible. This is our passage this morning – like Gregory’s overview of Jesus, this passage is simple yet contains amazing truth. Those who observed not only with their eyes, but with their spirit saw through the smoke of the world, the

religious establishment and saw truth in Jesus' teaching and they chose to be obedient to God and follow Jesus Christ.

Jesus is Truth

Luke the historian begins by giving us background for this event. “On one occasion” this phrase indicates that some time may have passed since Jesus had cast out the demon in the synagogue at Capernaum and healed Simon Peter’s mother-in-law. Jesus had been teaching throughout the region and the crowds were growing as Jesus taught the truth of God. We learn from John chapter 7 the officers of the temple guard testified to the chief priests and Pharisees that “No one ever spoke like this man!” (John 7:46) People were hungry for God’s truth not the religiosity of men and not the religious organizational structure in Israel that was devoid of relationship with God. This is why in verse 1, “the crowd was pressing in on him Jesus to hear the word of God, for these crowds the “word of God” was soul penetrating truth and these truths were being taught by the Living Word of God – Jesus the Messiah as “he was standing by the lake of Gennesaret” [ghen·nay·sar·et]. (Meaning Harp – possible referring to the shape of the lake.) This name is found in the O.T., here in Luke and in Matthew chapter 14. This lake is also called the *Sea of Galilee* as found in the N.T. or *Sea of Tiberias* found in the Gospel of John and named after the Roman Emperor. The crowds had backed Jesus to the very edge of the lake, everyone wanting to get closer – closer to God’s truth - back to verse 2, “and he saw two boats by the lake, but the fishermen had gone out of them and were washing their nets.” It was the common practice on the Sea of Galilee to fish during the night with large nets and come ashore by daybreak. In the early morning the fish were sold to people for their day’s food and time was spend cleaning the boats and nets.

Let me give you some more background to help us build a mental picture, the Sea of Galilee is really not a sea, but a fresh water lake, 13 miles long by 8 miles wide and 141 feet deep. In comparison, Navajo Lake here in New Mexico is about 25 miles long, 10 miles wide and over 400 feet deep. The northern shore of the Sea of Galilee is a fertile area fed by the Jordan River. The lake lies 702 feet below sea level, making it the lowest freshwater lake in the world and it is the 2nd lowest lake on earth, with the lowest lake to its south, known as the Dead Sea (31 miles long and 9 miles wide), which like America's Great Salt Lake (75 miles long by up to 27 miles wide) is highly saline. The Dead Sea is 1412 feet below sea level.

Back to Luke's story, the crowd has Jesus backed up to the water's edge. So, to give himself some breathing room in verse 3 Jesus gets **“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.”** Jesus taught so very differently than the rabbis and Pharisees – I am not just talking about because he taught from a boat on the lake. Jesus did not derive his authority by quoting other rabbis, but from God his Father and his teaching and eternal truth touched their souls. People had been waiting for centuries to hear God's kingdom was now present and that they could have a relationship with God the Creator of the universe. Jesus' teaching of God's truth hit home, in Mark we read how the people reacted to Jesus' teaching, **“they were all amazed, so that they questioned among themselves, saying, ‘What is this? A new teaching with authority! He commands even the unclean spirits, and they obey him.’ ”** (Mark 1:27) The people were amazed because Jesus' teaching had authority that was beyond human. Jesus is God incarnate, God is truth and Jesus is the expression of the Triune God's truth.

One of the things I have learned as I have studied the Bible is Jesus did not do anything without a purpose. Jesus chose Simon Peter's boat not only to use it to teach, but he would now intensely move into Simon Peter's life and he would bring all of the teachings heard and miracles seen into a defining moment.

When the Lord had first encountered Simon Peter as found in John chapter 1, we learn it was his brother Andrew who brought Simon to Jesus. John the brother of James was a disciple of John the Baptist and these three men became interested in the teachings of Jesus and began to follow him from place to place to listen. Now Jesus gives the final call, targeting Simon Peter for he would become the leader of the twelve disciples of Jesus.

Jesus is Omniscient

Reading at verse 4, “And when ~~he~~ *Jesus* 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.”

The problem for fishermen at this time and all they way to today is finding fish. Even with the best gear, including sonar it is not easy. Simon, his brother Andrew and partners had tried all night without success. Jesus, as God incarnate knows all, including something as small and simple as where the fish were in the Sea of Galilee. As the One who created all, as John wrote, “All things were made through ~~him~~ *Jesus*, and without him was not any thing made that was made.” (John 1:3) Jesus was aware of every creature on planet earth, which is mind blowing to think about. Jesus explained his omniscience in a simple way saying, “Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? And not one of them will fall to the ground apart from

your Father. ³⁰ But even the hairs of your head are all numbered.” (Matthew 10:29-30) Now as the story unfolds Jesus also reveals his all knowing nature for he is God.

Simon may have thought Jesus is a great teacher of truth, but what does he know about fishing. Simon may have said to himself, “I am the expert, this is my business and we have already given it a good try – there are no fish in this area.” So, Simon says, “Master, we toiled all night and took nothing!” Here Simon uses the title “Master” a title of respect but one with **no** acknowledgement of Jesus’ deity. Out of respect for this teacher who he had been following and listening to Simon continues by saying, “But at your word I will let down the nets.” So, Simon takes the boat to where Jesus indicates and Jesus gives the word and the nets are lowered. The result is in verse 6, “And when they had done this, they enclosed a large number of fish, and their nets were breaking.”

As experienced fishermen they could not have been prepared for this. First, this catch is during the day, which is not normal, on the Sea of Galilee night is the best fishing. The volume of fish was beyond anything they had experienced. Jesus knew and may have commanded the fish to gather into a large school. Jesus would demonstrate his all knowing nature again later on in his ministry. He told Peter where to find one specific fish. Back at Capernaum, the guards demand Jesus and Peter pay the temple tax. Jesus tells Peter, “go to the sea and cast a hook and take the first fish that comes up, and when you open its mouth you will find a shekel. Take that and give it to them for me and for yourself.” (Matthew 17:27) It happen just as Jesus said it would. After his resurrection, once again, Jesus would again demonstrate his ability to know all by telling the disciples to let down their nets to catch a large amount of fish in John chapter 21. Jesus chose to use fishing to demonstrate his power because fishing is what Peter, Andrew and their partners

James and John understood. Jesus comes to each of us on a level we can understand, he is a personal Savior and yet he is the Savior of the world and has control of all that is in it.

Jesus often demonstrated his omniscience in the scriptures; for example, when he told Peter and James exactly what the man looked like and where he would be that would lead them to the upper room for the Last Supper in Luke chapter 22. He knew Judas' heart long before the betrayal. Jesus told Nathanael where he was when Philip had told he to come to Jesus. The list could go on. There were times Jesus limited his knowledge in submission to God his Father, for example, at the end of Matthew chapter 24 when he spoke of his second coming.

What we need to remember and take to heart is Jesus is God incarnate, the Creator of the universe, which takes my mind into overdrive trying to imagine, and at the same time recognizing Jesus is a personal Savior that comes to each person on their level and in a way that they can understand by regenerating their individual soul. This is what he did with Peter and this is what he continues to do with each person who becomes a child of God and his brother.

Jesus Is Omnipotent

Taking up our story in verse 6, “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.” Peter and the other men were shocked at the amount of fish. They realized there was no practical explanation – nothing like this had ever happened. They were witnessing the divine power of Jesus to gather a massive number of fish where there had been none. These fishing boats were typically 27 feet long by 8 feet wide. The capacity was several thousand pounds and easily 4 men could work in

the boat. So, for both boats to be on verge of sinking was a haul of fish beyond human possibility. The words of Nehemiah might well have come into Peter's mind, "You are the LORD, you alone. You have made heaven, the heaven of heavens, with all their host, the earth and all that is on it, the seas and all that is in them; and you preserve all of them; and the host of heaven worships you."

(Nehemiah 9:6) Overwhelmed in the presence of Jesus - Peter "fell down at Jesus' knees" in verse 8. Was this how it was for you when you realized Jesus was the Christ? When you think of the salvation given that you did not deserve and could not earn are you overwhelmed by the realization? Did you react as Peter reacted?

Jesus Is Holy

When Jesus not only opened the nets, but Peter's heart and revealed himself to be omniscient and omnipotent and Peter understood he was God and "he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, 'Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord.' " In verse 5 Peter used the title "Master" as sign of respect for a teacher of God's truth. Now suddenly Peter uses the title "Lord" meaning God. As a devout Jew, Peter knew the meaning of using this title. Peter would have known well the command and warning found in Deuteronomy, "It is the LORD your God you shall fear. Him you shall serve and by his name you shall swear. ¹⁴ You shall not go after other gods, the gods of the peoples who are around you— ¹⁵ for the LORD your God in your midst is a jealous God—lest the anger of the LORD your God be kindled against you, and he destroy you from off the face of the earth."

(Deuteronomy 6:13-15) This command and warning is still in effect. Do you understand that when you call yourself Christian you are to give your life fully to God forsaking the world and all it has to offer, living for God's glory only? For those who fain Christianity – take heed "God in your midst is a jealous God" and

he will not tolerate half-hearted worship! I did not say you would cease to sin, but that you should love and worship Jesus above all else.

Peter's response to the realization that Jesus was the Messiah was fear in the presence of the Holy God and a repentant attitude because he knew he was an undeserving sinner. This should be the response of all believers. The prophet Isaiah after seeing the vision of God in the temple cried out, "Woe is me! For I am lost; for I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; for my eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts!" (Isaiah 6:5) Everyone had told me that if I gave my life to Jesus I would know happiness and peace and my life would be beautiful. I remember these things were true eventually, but when Jesus saved me I felt like Simon Peter and Isaiah – I was undone, crushed in the presence of the Holy God. God must slay our fallen spirit in order to build the new spiritual person.

Jesus Is Merciful

At the realization of who Jesus was Peter wanted to escape or for Jesus to leave - the emotional pain was crushing, but Jesus gently says to Peter in verse 10, "Do not be afraid; from now on you will be catching men." Jesus is saying, "No, Peter! Now that you know who I am and that you are a sinner, I can use you and make you a new creation that will relate to other sinners their need for salvation." It is at this moment of being reconciled back to God we are most crushed by the realization of who we are and who Christ is. It is at the spiritual breaking point that Jesus rebuilds us anew and we begin our path of worshipping God and serving others. We must never lose the feeling of this moment for it helps to humble us throughout life.

Jesus is merciful and takes us from our self-seeking destruction to save us. We are to have a fear or awe of God and through this humble attitude God begins to build into us spiritual wisdom. It was this realization of Jesus' mercy and his instilling wisdom of God's truth into the disciples that made them fishermen of men for the kingdom.

When Jesus calls, regenerates ones souls to spiritual life what should the response be? The same as Peter, James and John, [“when they had brought their boats to land, they left everything and followed him.”](#) Have you surrendered to Jesus? Does he own your life? Are you willing to be whatever he asks you to be? Peter was at the pinnacle of his career – having caught the largest catch of fish in the history of Galilee he gave it all up to follow Jesus. He did not worry about who was going to clean this massive catch of fish or who would sell them and pocket the money or who would get his boat – he left it all to follow his Lord and Savior, Jesus. Jesus may ask a little or ask everything you have, he may tell you to stay or go, but whatever Jesus asks of those who follow him - he has a purpose. The question is are you all in or not? Will you be obedient or not? I pray for myself and for all of you that whatever the price to follow Jesus we will readily pay. Amen!