

“CHANGE THE WORLD”

– Luke 5:1-11

by Pastor Tim Dodson
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Luke 5:1 *So it was, as the multitude pressed about Him to hear the word of God, that He*

stood by the Lake of Gennesaret, 2 and saw two boats standing by the lake; but the fishermen had gone from them and were washing their nets. 3 Then He got into one of the boats, which was Simon's, and asked him to put out a little from the land. And He sat down and taught the multitudes from the boat. 4 When He had stopped speaking, He said to Simon, "Launch out into the deep and let down your nets for a catch." 5 But Simon answered and said to Him, "Master, we have toiled all night and caught nothing; nevertheless at Your word I will let down the net." 6 And when they had done this, they caught a great number of fish, and their net was breaking. 7 So 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 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 which they had taken; 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." 11 So when they had brought their boats to land, they forsook all and followed Him.

Having pursued the historical storyline of our Lord thus far in our eventual quite long series on the “Life and Times of Jesus Christ,” we know that this event does not represent the first time that Peter had contact with Jesus. He and a few of the other boys were with Jesus when He was at the wedding in Cana of Galilee where He turned the water in to wine. We know Jesus had actually spent time in their homes. At this point, they knew who Jesus was. They had experienced Him in some capacity and had come to know Him to some degree.

They were there with Jesus in that first cleansing of the temple and the driving out of the money changers, so you know they must have by now gathered at least some rudimentary idea of what it would mean to tie their lives to this “man.” Here was a guy who had only begun to ‘tell them what to do.’ And even now they perhaps were wondering...after what they had thus far seen, just exactly what they had gotten themselves into. For there was no rush to pack their bags and hit the road with this traveling minstrel. Peter, no matter what he had decided to do in his spare time hobby's, had definitely not quit his ‘day job.’ And this would not be the last time that Peter would go back to fishing for fish.

A lot of us today are fishing for fish. In fact, allegorically speaking, we kind of have to. I mean, the store doesn't give us groceries for free, so working for “room and board” is sort of a necessity! However, we have no record that the apostles figured out how to live without eating, so we can therefore expect that they did indeed keep eating while serving ‘king and kingdom.’ But we would miss much of the reality of the cost of following Jesus if we were to paint a rosy picture of luxury hotels and candle-lit 5 course meals while “on mission” with



the Savior of the world! No, these guys faced a huge decision, and one that most of us will never face because we will never ask the question to begin with. We don't and we won't because we don't want to hear the answer. **What would it cost us to "change the world?"**

Notice that one thing has to be acknowledged before we even get out of the gate on this subject, and that is that Jesus knows more about everything than you. That's right...he can do what you do for a living better than you. No matter what your skill level is, He is better. He can do it half asleep and before His first cup of morning coffee.

We see that a little further along in the story when all the boys began to freak out because of the 'storm and waves' and they woke Him up...*because He was calmly sleeping of course*, to handle this 'catastrophic event' that was occurring. I picture Jesus yawning a little, slowly rubbing His eyes as the boat was rocking back and forth in the storm, and then saying it: "*Peace, be still.*" Can you imagine the scene? In 3 seconds the stage went from chaos to perfect calm and quiet. I imagine the apostles standing in front of Him in stunned silence with rain water still dripping off their noses, and Jesus yawning and going back to bed. Because whatever it is, He can do it, and can do it better than you.

Now imagine Peter. **Fisherman** Peter. He had spent a lifetime spent fishing and was for sure at least a second generation fisherman, maybe third or fourth! I mean, I would bet that if Peter could do anything really well, *it was fish*. And yet now this Jesus fella climbs into his boat and tries to tell him how to fish. **Jesus**. Who at best was a journeyman *carpenter*! So what could *HE* know about fishing?

It would be all so funny if we couldn't all find ourselves so often in those "Peter shoes." I mean, we admire Jesus and yes we might even be able to say we truly love Him, but come on, how can he possibly understand my life and my situation? I mean, He is *deity*. He can't grasp my earthly life dynamic. I would serve Him more, and commit more of myself to Him, but I got responsibilities! I have to make a living and mow the lawn!

Now please don't hear me saying you should give up your job and get a body placard and tour the country passing out religious leaflets. After all, scripture clearly tells us that "*if you don't work, you don't eat.*" (2 Thess 3:10). I am NOT saying you should ignore the physical needs and responsibilities that come with life. 1 Timothy 5:8 tells us: "*But if anyone does not provide for his own, and especially for those of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.*" So don't misquote me here or practice selective hearing!

What I AM saying, is Jesus knows what you need before you even ask (Matthew 6:8), but we must also honestly "count the cost" of this journey, because to "change the world" is not going to happen without some sacrifice (Luke 14:25-34). It has been said that salvation is free, but discipleship will cost you everything. Coming to Him is without charge, but to follow Him will demand all you have and all you are! Peter would come to understand this premise. In Mark 10, verse 28 we hear him say it: "*See, we have left all and followed You...*" (Mark 10:28)

Jesus climbed into Peter's boat that day and instructed Peter on how to fish. For many of us, this is where our story ends. We don't believe He knows a thing about my situation, and even if He does, the cost of playing out His solution is undoubtedly going to be higher than we are willing to pay. So it begins and ends with Jesus giving us instructions beyond the classic "Thou shalt not" of ten commandments fame. Beyond the "be good and don't sin" framework that we want faith to encompass, and to only encompass! When Jesus starts asking us to leave the world that we hold so dear and find so comfortable and familiar, well that's just going too far! I mean, who does He think He is anyway, *GOD* or something?

After all, show me the chapter and verse that tells me that to be a Christian I have to surrender my whole world! ...that I must walk away from life as I know it, and give up my dreams and plans! And we then go on to treat Jesus like ketchup...just a 'condiment Christianity' where we add Jesus to the meal we already planned for ourselves, but it never really occurs to us that it is still just a hotdog in a restaurant that serves lobster! In one of my favorite quotes, C.S Lewis once said: "*It would seem that Our Lord finds our desires not too strong, but too weak. We are half-hearted creatures, fooling about with drink and sex and ambition when infinite joy is offered us, like an ignorant child who wants to go on making mud pies in a slum because he cannot imagine what is meant by the offer of a holiday at the sea. We are far too easily pleased.*"

Such a premise pushes faith, trust, belief, and love out much further into a realm many of us have never discovered. And yet there are a lot of people today who long to do something great with their lives and want to live out a supreme purpose with the breathe and time they have on this planet. Some folks want more than a big TV, a couple of kids and a trophy wife! We want our lives to really matter. We want our time here to count for something eternal. We want to change the world if only a little and if only in my corner of it. And I am here today to echo the message of Christ to Peter: *the door is open. But are you willing to pay the price?*

There are certainly some who will come along with that desire but with illicit motivations. These folks want to counsel and lead others but only in order to lift themselves up: in order to have people think they are more than they really are, ...in order to gain clout, power, and status. These folks become the 'arm-chair pastors' of our generation, and attempt to make end runs around any training, accountability, or real sacrifice but still gain position.

Such individuals are unwilling to be humble or accept preparational training. They want to give "fishing advice" when they have never really done any serious or successful fishing in their lives. They are golfers who have never moved off the mini-putt course, but give them a chance and they are usurping Arnold Palmer.

It's funny that the receivers of such advice never asks these guys to "show the money." See, I figure if I'm going to take someone's counsel I would want to first see that guy swallowing the same counsel himself and making it work. So folks, the way to weed out these guys is look real close and ask yourself if they are trying to teach you to drive and they have 6 traffic tickets, or teaching you plumbing and they don't own a wrench.

However, there are those out there that do indeed want to change the world and they are willing to step up to the plate. They grasp the significance of the gospel and the impact of the cross! They weren't suckers who took direction from one who had not proved his muster. Peter did not just hear this Jesus from a pew in church on Sunday. He *experienced* Jesus. He trusted and he *acted* on that trust! He "went deep" indeed and "cast his net" as instructed, and Jesus showed him what was possible.

Jesus didn't tell him, "Hey, good job! Here's the keys to your new church and flock!" Matthew and Marks record of this account shares His words as "*follow me....and I will make you a fisher of men.*" He told Matthew the tax collector "*follow me.*" And they left it *all* for this mission. And He is telling us today "*If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me.*" (Mathew 16:24)

In both of these New Testament cases they all literally set down their *world* to follow Him! They walked away from their safety, their familiar ground, their families, and their financial security in order to follow Christ. They were not just agreeing to *be a Christian* but were surrendering everything to *change the world!* They didn't know how it was going to happen anymore than Peter understood how all those fish ended up in his net. They didn't believe that *they* could do this, but that *He* could and if they followed Him He would calm the

storm and the waves in front of them, supply fish and bread for them to eat, and take care of all their needs. (Matthew 6:8). Not their *wants* but indeed their *needs*!

But following Him did not mean comfort, ease, or an earthly ‘hollywood ending.’ Jesus didn’t own a nice house or comfortable furniture...He had “no place to lay His head” (Luke 9:58). The fact was, it was hard out there! They were barely able to pay their taxes (Matthew 17:27) and besides all that, people were always trying to kill them. And ultimately each of these guys would die graphically terrible martyrs deaths except for John, and that wasn’t for the sake of not trying but the guy was apparently hard to put down!

I have no idea if Peter totally understood what he was getting into that day when he sat down his worldly nets to go with Jesus to change the world. I guess I would doubt very much whether he did. I don’t know that any of us do or whether we even *can* grasp such in advance. There would be bumps in the road. Times of fear and times of doubt. There would be failures on the part of these guys. There would be losses along with the gains. It will be the same with any of us who are so willing to follow Peter out of the safety of our own boats. But there would come a day...after a lot of experience and education, where Peter would literally step out of a boat *onto water* ...into the miracle, to go to Jesus! He would believe that much! He would come that far in his faith. Not perfect, but a faith which most often blows ours away.

I have lived long enough and pastored long enough to have known some guys like this. Men far from perfect, but who have agreed with Jim Elliot in that “*He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep to gain what he cannot lose.*” Men and women who have sat down their nets and followed Jesus, *wherever He might lead!* Men and woman who want to change the world. And **my** life and **this** church is the richer for such people! And there are those today He is still asking. Maybe you are one of them? But maybe your hands are clenched white-knuckled around your life today and fear or want of safety and surety is ruling the moment and you really do want to do something but unless you let go you never will.

God wants big things out of this church. For “*to whom much is given, much is required.*” (Luke 12:48) And there is no doubt that “much has been given to this church.” Much has been given to you too Christian. Come on...*let’s go change the world.*

These boys came out of the world as nothings...just children of God and followers of the Son. And they did indeed change the world! 2000 years later, we speak their names and read their words and admire their tenacity. The great 1600’s missionary John Eliot was once quoted as saying that “History shows us that people who end up changing the world are always nuts, until they are right and then they are genius’s.”

What will they say about **you** when **you** are gone?

Oswald Chambers in “His Utmost for His Highest” says this: *Where does Jesus Christ figure in when we have a concern about our natural relationships? Most of us will desert Him with this excuse— “Yes, Lord, I heard you call me, but my family needs me and I have my own interests. I just can’t go any further” (see Luke 9:57-62). “Then,” Jesus says, “you ‘cannot be My disciple’ ” (see Luke 14:26-33).*

True surrender will always go beyond natural devotion. If we will only give up, God will surrender Himself to embrace all those around us and will meet their needs, which were created by our surrender. Beware of stopping anywhere short of total surrender to God. Most of us have only a vision of what this really means, but have never truly experienced it.