

St. Luke Ev. Lutheran Church-WELS
Sermon by Pastor Anthony E. Schultz
Epiphany 5 Series C. February 7, 2010 Luke 5:5-11



When he had finished speaking, he said to Simon, "Put out into deep water, and let down the nets for a catch." Simon answered, "Master, we've worked hard all night and haven't caught anything. But because you say so, I will let down the nets." When they had done so, they caught such a large number of fish that their nets began to break. So they signaled their partners in the other boat to come and help them, and they came and filled both boats so full that they began to sink. When Simon Peter saw this, he fell at Jesus' knees and said, "Go away from me, Lord; I am a sinful man!" For he and all his companions were astonished at the catch of fish they had taken, and so were James and John, the sons of Zebedee, Simon's partners. Then Jesus said to Simon, "Don't be afraid; from now on you will catch men." So they pulled their boats up on shore, left everything and followed him.

People of God – rescued from the flaming lake of fire in hell by the innocent blood of the very Lamb of God:

I was having my breakfast the other day – my orange juice with lots of pulp, my egg bagel with the spread that's supposed to be good for your heart – and just a little bit of raspberry jam – with all those little seeds – and my cup of Highlander Grogg Coffee – ground from the whole beans – caramel, butterscotch and just a hint of hazelnut. I was watching the news – when they showed a dog – a big dog – a black lab – going back and forth in this really swirling really muddy water. I thought – I don't want to watch this – when this helicopter came into shot – a fireman hanging from the helicopter – trying to call the dog. The fireman reached down – grabbed a hold of that great big dog – and held on for dear life – as the helicopter lifted them both to safety! The next thing you know – they are interviewing that fireman and he's saying – because the dog was afraid – it bit him – bit his thumb – actually broke it! Ouch! That's got to hurt! Why would the dog bite the guy who's saving it? It's what dogs do when they are afraid. Dogs bite! They are dogs. If you love them – you understand. You have to love dogs – to get bit – and still hold them tight and save them. How much did Jesus love us – that he endured being crucified – slapped, scourged, punched and battered, bruised, spit upon, mocked, ridiculed and taunted and *more*. Jesus endured all that and worse – from the very people he was saving. Jesus was nailed to the cross – because of your sins and mine! That's how much Jesus loves us! It is because of Jesus' forgiving love – that we are here – this hour of worship – in God's House! We are here – because of God's *Amazing Grace*.

Jesus Comes Looking For Us!

- 1. That's why Jesus doesn't go away**
- 2. That's why we are called to fish for people!**

The part of God's Word we are concentrating on today is from the Gospel of the Physician Luke. Luke chapter 5 – Jesus' public ministry is just beginning. We heard last Sunday – Jesus was in the synagogue – the Bible School in Nazareth where he grew up. Jesus read from Isaiah 61. **"The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to release the oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor."** Jesus was talking about the Old Testament law from Leviticus chapter 25 – the year of Jubilee! Remember that? It only happened once every 50 years. The year of Jubilee meant slaves were to be set free, debts were to be forgiven, ancestral property was to be restored to its historical owner. That would mean our family would get farm land back – in Coon Valley and Mondovi – by Mormon Cooley near LaCrosse! We would get the homestead back! We wouldn't have to pay the last seven years on our mortgage! How wonderful would that be? This is – of course – assuming that everyone celebrates – everyone observes the year of Jubilee. It would be a once or twice in your lifetime celebration. It would be a very powerful exceedingly practical celebration of the grace and goodness of God. A powerful reminder that Jesus has forgiven us the

crushing debt of our sins. That Jesus had set us free from our slavery to fear. That Jesus had set us free from our slavery to sin and death—so that we might serve him with joy and faithfulness—doing very practical and concrete things—that glorify God and reflect his love!

Jesus went from Nazareth to Capernaum—where the foundation of that synagogue still stands—the massive creamy stones of the foundation stained and scarred from being burned. Do you know how hot a fire has to be—to literally burn stones? Jesus taught God’s Word—called the people to repent of their sins. Taught them about the Kingdom of God—at the synagogue at Capernaum—right by the Sea of Galilee. Jesus read the Old Testament Scriptures—explained them—and applied them to himself! Jesus showed that what Moses and Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum and more was all about Him! Jesus read and reread the Old Testament Scriptures? Do we? Do we read our Bibles? The 27 verses we read in Church—doesn’t seem enough—for a whole week of struggles against the devil himself? The more we read God’s Word—the more and more our faith will grow. We will be better prepared for the troubles that are sure to come in this sin infected world!

When he had finished speaking, he said to Simon, “Put out into deep water, and let down the nets for a catch.” Simon answered, “Master, we’ve worked hard all night and haven’t caught anything. But because you say so, I will let down the nets.” Sometimes you catch fish. Sometimes you don’t. It’s kind of discouraging when you fish for a long time—and don’t catch *anything*—especially when you are a professional fisherman! The fishing advice from the Carpenter—went against common sense. The best *time* to fish was during the night. The best *place* to fish was in the shallows—where the big fish came to eat the smaller fish. To go now—to the deep waters was illogical in many ways. But because that’s what the Master said—that’s what they did!

When they had done so, they caught such a large number of fish that their nets began to break. So they signaled their partners in the other boat to come and help them, and they came and filled both boats so full that they began to sink. When Jesus helped them catch fish—when Jesus filled their nets—they were so full—the nets couldn’t hold all the fish. Their boat—and the boat of their partners couldn’t hold all the fish! That’s a lot of fish! **When Simon Peter saw this, he fell at Jesus’ knees and said, “Go away from me, Lord; I am a sinful man!”** It has been said before—sometimes you are painfully conscious of your sins when things go wrong! You get a flat tire—when you are all dressed up and in a hurry to get to a wedding—and it’s raining! You end up a muddy mess--smashing your hands and wrecking your clothes—trying to change a tire in the downpour! Or you get sick—and it’s painful and disfiguring—and you think of how you used that part of your body for sin—and now it’s causing you almost unbearable pain! Sometimes you make a sinful mistake—and everyone knows it. Your cheeks are beet red—and you feel so embarrassed you wish you could crawl under the nearest piece of furniture. Do you know how that feels? You just want to run away and never see anyone ever again! **“Go away from me, Lord; I am a sinful man!”** Sometimes though—you feel guilty when things go exceedingly well—and you are painfully aware—I don’t deserve any of these good things! Sometimes you feel guilty when things go very very well!

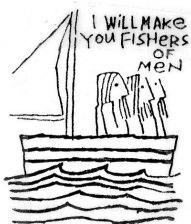
Jesus said to Simon, “Don’t be afraid; from now on you will catch men.” Fishers of men—telling people about their Savior from sin and guilt and eternal death. We need to tell people about Jesus—before it’s too late. We need to tell people about Jesus—because what’s at stake is where their immortal soul will spend *eternity!* We say that all the time. Do we really believe it? Do we really believe that there is a very real place called Hell—a place of unspeakable suffering and horror—that words cannot express? Do we really believe that? Or do we think—sure Hell isn’t pleasant—far from it—but it’s tolerable—like a really bad headache—or a really bad toothache! Just don’t think about it—it’s kind of a dull pain—you sort of get used to? It’s not! The eternal destruction of hell is unbearable pain—and it will last forever! It will never ever end! We need to talk to the people we love about Jesus’ love—so they will be in Heaven, too!

Then Jesus said to Simon, “Don’t be afraid; from now on you will catch men.” So they pulled their boats up on shore, left everything and followed him. They left *everything!* It’s easy, I think—to get caught up in the rat race chasing after *things and stuff!* If I just had more money—lots of money—I could buy really wonderful things and stuff—like art! Now there’s an investment—a hedge against the ups and downs of the stock market—art! They sold a piece of art the other day—it’s of course something French—intentionally

impossible to pronounce – that translates into *Walking Man I* – as in *walking man – me!* It's life-size – made of bronze – but it's not shiny brass – it's kind of lumpy black. It's this really skinny guy – that is walking – taking a pretty big stride – with these really scrawny legs – and really scrawny feet – and really scrawny arms and hands – he's really frozen. This *walking man I* – was sold at auction out of Southeby's. The bidding only lasted 8 minutes – *walking man I* – was sold to an anonymous collector – over the phone – for the most money ever paid for a single piece of art – sold at auction – a cool \$104 million! If you had \$104 million would you spend it to buy a statue by a Swiss artist named **Alberto Giacometti**? What would you do with a life size bronze stick figure of a guy walking? Where would you put it? How would you keep it safe – so somebody didn't come and hit you over the head and steal it? Jesus' disciples left everything! They left everything – because they realized the things and the stuff of this world don't matter! There was a guy a little while ago that won \$31 million in the Florida Lottery. He had to go into hiding because all his friends and relatives – practically *all* his friends and relatives kept bothering him – asking for money! For a little while nobody knew where he was – then *really nobody* knew where he was. The police started looking for him and they couldn't find him. Then somebody called the police and told them to look under a concrete slab! And sure enough – buried under an 5 foot thick slab of concrete – was this guy. What good did that \$31 million do him? Absolutely nothing! What is a person profited – if you gain the whole world – if you lose your immortal soul? What can you give – in exchange for your soul? It matters nothing – if your breakfast dishes – cereal bowls with a quarter of an inch of warm milk and a cup with a half an inch of cold coffee are still on your table – or in the sink – or in the dishwasher? What does it matter if your bed is made – or still a tangled mess of sheets and blankets and quilts and pillows? What does it matter if there are dirty clothes on the floor – or they are all neatly folded and put away? All that matters is that Jesus lived a life without sin – then died a torturous death – to pay for all my sins and mistakes. Jesus died and rose again – to save us forever!

Jesus said to Simon, "Don't be afraid; from now on you will catch men." There was a little grandma up in Vermont, the other day – driving down a busy highway – when she saw a cat – out in the median! This little grandma was afraid for that little cat – so very quickly and very carefully she pulled off the road. *Somebody* had to do *something* – so she got out of her car – to try and catch and pick up the cat. That's when something went terribly wrong. It was sunset – and there was a solar glare. You know what that is? The sun is shining – right in your eyes. There's a curve in the road – right by where the cat was loose. Here came somebody – not going too fast – not under the influence of drugs and alcohol – but somebody coming around the corner – didn't see – *couldn't* see the grandma in time and hit her and she died! She died – trying to save a cat – that apparently got away safely by its' self! Again – what a dim reflection of Jesus' forgiving love. Jesus sacrificed his life – to save sinners – who would never escape eternal punishment on our own! Jesus died and rose again – to save us from forever death! Jesus died to save us – because he loves us so much! That's the kind of forgiving love – that you just have to share! God bless us as we fish for people – for Jesus' sake. Amen!

To God alone all glory!



Rev. Anthony E. Schmitt