



"Net Results"

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Luke 5: 1-11

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9:15 AM Service

This morning we're going to talk about fishing. We're going to talk about fishing because our text for today assumes we know a little bit about fishing. Which is great for me - I like fishing, and I know a few things about it. But I thought that maybe you didn't know very much, or at least some of you don't know very much, about fishing.

So, we're starting off with Tyler's Fun Fish Facts (which probably aren't facts)

1. If they jumpin', they ain't bitin.'
2. There's a direct relationship between how much fun fishing is, and how much fish you're catching. No fish = no fun.
3. If anyone tells you that fishing is fun even if you don't catch fish, they are lying. That's just a thing you say when you don't want to admit to how much time you just wasted.
4. There is an inverse proportion of the amount of fish you can catch to the number of children that are present and fishing with you.
5. Speaking of children, it's impossible to convince a child that fishing is more fun than just throwing rocks in the water. And maybe they're onto something.
6. Yelling and screaming doesn't really scare fish away. That just something my grandpa used to tell me to get some peace and quiet.
7. The more \$ you spent on that lure, the less effective it will be. The more impressive & expensive looking the lure, the more likely that you are actually the fish.
8. If someone accidentally casts their line into a bush or tree, someone must say "well looks like you caught a tree bass."

Now that your head is full of new fish-knowledge, let's dive into our text.

Our text for today is Luke 5:1-11 and we're all going to take a look at it together. If you'd grab a blue Bible there in front of you, let's open it to page 949.

¹ One day as Jesus was standing by the Lake of Gennesaret, [a] the people were crowding around him and listening to the word of God. ² He saw at the water's edge two boats, left there by the fishermen, who were washing their nets. ³ He got into one of the boats, the one belonging to Simon, and asked him to put out a little from shore. Then he sat down and taught the people from the boat.

⁴ When he had finished speaking, he said to Simon, "Put out into deep water, and let down the nets for a catch."

⁵ 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."

⁶ When they had done so, they caught such a large number of fish that their nets began to break. ⁷ 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.

⁸ When Simon Peter saw this, he fell at Jesus' knees and said, "Go away from me, Lord; I am a sinful man!" ⁹ For he and all his companions were astonished at the catch of fish they had taken, ¹⁰ 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 fish for people." ¹¹ So they pulled their boats up on shore, left everything and followed him.

Picture Jesus, the teacher, the rabbi, with a crowd of people pressing in around him. He's preaching the Word of God by the water, and they are captivated by what he's got to say.

This is a picture of Tom Brady from last Sunday's Super Bowl, which wasn't a terribly exciting game by most standards, but after the game, the press slammed into Brady who was busy trying to congratulate his teammates. It may not have been this dramatic, but I like to think that Jesus' teaching is compelling the people to draw near to hear. What's he teaching? No clue - Luke doesn't even mention it. Though we do know Jesus as one who would go around saying things like:

"The Kingdom of God is at hand" ...or...

"Blessed are you who are poor, for yours is the Kingdom of God.

"The blind receive sight, the lame walk, those who have leprosy are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the good news is proclaimed to the poor."

"Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives; the one who seeks finds; and to the one who knocks, the door will be opened."

"Do not be afraid, little flock, for your Father has been pleased to give you the kingdom."

Jesus is new on the scene, he's gaining popularity as a teacher, and miracle worker, and he's got good news - that the kingdom of God was now accessible to everyone. God's promise of redemption through a messiah had finally come. And in a glorious show of power he'd been performing miracles - casting out demons and healing the sick. And people are pressing in on him to get every last drop of whatever it is that he's teaching.

And it is by no accident that he's found himself near the water, by some boats owned by fishermen. This is a setup - an object lesson - for what he's really after. And it all makes sense if you know a thing or two about fishing.

So, Jesus climbs into a fishing boat, with fishermen whom text says were cleaning their nets. They are done. It's clean up time. No more fishing. Why?

Basic Fish Fact #1: Because you don't fish during the day. You fish during the night.

So, Jesus goes out in the boat and uses it as a makeshift pulpit. And he's preaching Jesus-ey things. And the text says, when he finished speaking, he asked Peter to go where the water was deep.

Basic Fish Fact #2 - you don't fish where it's deep. You fish where it's shallow.

And then there's this exchange, and you can sense a hint of incredulity in Simon's response. Jesus asks him to put down the nets and Simon says, we've been fishing all night and haven't caught a thing. To be clear, Simon and his friends are professionals. They KNOW how to catch fish and they've been at it all night. One last drop of the nets isn't going to change anything. And besides, what does Jesus know about fishing anyway? He was a carpenter! Still, out of respect, Simon does what Jesus asks, and then the unthinkable happens.

The nets are filled. Miraculously filled, filled past capacity.

This is Basic Fish Fact #3 - your gear should match your fish.

This was not luck, this was not just an anomaly, this was beyond anything they'd ever fished up before. It was far beyond expectation. How do I know that? Because the text says the nets were breaking and when they finally hauled in the fish, the boats were sinking.

One time my father and I were fishing and I snagged my line on something and it wouldn't move. We were in a canoe, so we rowed over to where it was caught, and pull as I might, I couldn't get the hook unstuck. So, my father reached down into the water, grabbed the line and pulled hard. Up out of the water and only inches from my father's hand was a massive snapping turtle that I had "caught." When it was about 1/2 out of the water, my dad shouted, the line snapped, and we both breathed a sigh of relief. There was an extreme mismatch between the gear we had and the thing we caught.

Think about Simon's catch. Nets that are specifically designed to pull in fish could not handle the abundance of this catch. And the boats that were designed, again specifically, to haul in the night's catch are sinking. The multitude of fish was beyond what their gear capable of, which means they could never have expected to have this sort of catch. So, Jesus goes out in the boat and uses it as a makeshift pulpit. And he's preaching Jesus-ey things. And the text says, when he finished speaking, he asked Peter to go where the water was deep.

So, what's the point of this miracle? Is Jesus trying to prove to Simon that he's the real deal? That he is the messiah? That he has power? I don't think so.

In Luke 4..

38 Jesus left the synagogue and went to the home of Simon. Now Simon's mother-in-law was suffering from a high fever, and they asked Jesus to help her. 39 So he bent over her and rebuked the fever, and it left her. She got up at once and began to wait on them.

And it goes on to say that the people were shouting to Jesus "you are the son of God" and when they try to get him to stay, he says, "I have to spread this good news to the other towns."

So, Simon already knows that Jesus is gaining popularity as an authoritative teacher, that he has the power to heal and drive out demons, and that he's on a mission to spread the Gospel to the surrounding communities.

Jesus isn't out there, knee deep in mackerel to prove to Simon that he has power and authority over creation. Simon already knows! Jesus grants this miraculous catch (I think) as if to say, "Simon, here's how you are going to be a part of this mission."

And then the part you are familiar with, Jesus says to Simon Peter, from now on you will be "fishers of men" as the old saying goes. You are familiar with the nursery song "fishers of men?" I grew up singing this kind of thing in Sunday School class.

And honestly, that's a little cute. It's not really what Jesus said. Jesus really said was, "from now on you will catch (zogrown) men."

"Zogrown" literally means to capture, or to take alive. Which I am kind of excited about because it clears up (for me) a bit of confusion about what it actually means to be a fisher of men.

Let me break it down to you this way: Jesus intentionally teaches the crowd near these fishermen and their boats with the expectation that he's going to recruit them as his first disciples. He then performs this miracle again, not as proof that he's legit, but as a way to show these guys, here's what you can expect if you follow me.

And it's not just for them, but for you and me too. You just gotta' know a few things about fishing.

Zogrown Fact #1: Jesus is the one who brings the fish.

Jesus made it abundantly clear that He and He alone is responsible for bringing in the fish. He did this by going at the wrong time of day, to the wrong spot in the lake, after an evening of catching nothing, and filling the nets with an absurd amount of fish - an amount so great, the text says they were seized with awe and Jesus actually tells them not to be afraid.

For you and me, it's the same thing. Jesus is going to bring in the fish. We can work and toil and jump through all the religious hoops and get creative with our outreach and post all the best Christian memes on our social media, but it is still God that puts the longing for Himself in the hearts of his people.

John 6:

44 "No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws them, and I will raise them up at the last day. 45 It is written in the Prophets: 'They will all be taught by God.' [d] Everyone who has heard the Father and learned from him comes to me.

That doesn't mean that we're off the hook! (I'm sorry for that bad joke)

Zogrown Fact #2: We have to be willing to put down the nets

I think maybe Jesus could've simply rolled up his sleeves and rubbed his hands together and said, "watch this!" And at that very moment the multitude of fish would just jump right in the boat. Be he doesn't do that. He involves Simon Peter. He shows that while it's by his power and influence that people are seeking the Father, we must cast our nets - to participate in bringing the good news, that God is the God of love, that sins are forgiven, that the kingdom of God is here, that there is healing for the world in Jesus' name. We don't just stand by and gawk at the mysterious work of Christ but we are invited to be missional partners and it's always been that way. I don't know why, but God has ALWAYS

relied on fickle and frail humanity to bring about his will in our world. And still, today, we are participants in this mission.

My encouragement to you today is this - if you want to capture people, you have to be captivating. Captivate people. Zogrown! How do we do it? Live in such a way that people detect the Spirit of God inside of you. I don't mean you have to be super outgoing or obnoxiously charismatic; I mean live in such a way that people want to know more about what it is that clicked into place in your life. One preacher I heard a few years ago said it this way - live a questionable life. Live in such a way that people simply want to know more. So that when Jesus brings the fish, your life is a net, cast out with the intent to captivate people for the kingdom of God.

Here's an example: Before I met Michele, I lived in a house in Naperville with 4 other guys. I was the only one who was Christian. The other guys knew this about me and it was never an issue and rarely did we talk about any of that. I didn't try to actively convert anyone or get them to behave in a certain way. We just sort of kept to ourselves in that regard. Anyway, when Michele and I started dating, we decided early on, even though it was a pain because she lived in West Dundee, that in the interest of purity, we'd never sleep at each other's' place. So, if Michele came over on a Saturday and we hung out, we'd make sure to wrap things up a little early to accommodate for the ride home. One night after I said goodbye, one of my roommates, out of pure curiosity asks, "Hey, how come Michele never spends the night here?"

Right there. That's the moment! That's what I'm talking about. I think if you live to follow Jesus in the best way you know how, you will be a fisher of people because they'll be captivated by your story - who you are, and why you do what you do.

When Jesus brings the fish - the people in your life that he loves and wants to save - they aren't going to be impressed with your religious activity, they won't be won over by your sound apologetics, they'll be captivated by YOU and the story of how your relationship with Jesus has changed things.

Zogrown Fact #3: You don't need new gear.

I find it interesting that Jesus didn't just go to Peter's house and wow him with a miracle and say, now come follow me. No, Jesus showed up where Peter worked and used what Peter knew best - fishing - to impress upon him the role he'd take as a partner in mission. Peter just had to agree to do what he'd been doing all along but this time in obedience to Jesus.

Jesus wants to infuse his power into the rhythms of your life, so the things you already know, your work, your hobbies, your conversations become vehicles for the spreading the Gospel. You don't need new gear. You don't need to learn more about the Bible, or have all the right arguments in favor of Christian belief, and you certainly don't have your life in order.

Peter told Jesus - *"Go away from me, Lord; I am a sinful man!"* Jesus didn't even acknowledge that statement! He doesn't say, "yeah you're right. Look me up when you get your act together." No, he says, "c'mon, let's go. Right now. It's time."

Isn't that just the lie we tell ourselves all the time? We're scared and we think we aren't worthy - that somehow, we'll mess it up because we're sinners too and we don't have the answers and we're not that great at following Jesus to begin with. Jesus says "c'mon, let's go. Right now. It's time. You don't need new gear - use what you got."

Friends, be encouraged that partnering with God in his mission to redeem the world only requires that you claim your life for him. Jesus will bring the people. We just have to be ready to catch them.

Zogrown Fact #4: If you aren't catching anything, you might not be fishing.

Religion is kind of a funny thing. You can devote so much time and energy and resources toward religious activity that the mission is forgotten in favor of all the *stuff* we can do.

Getting ready for a fishing trip can be a haul. You sort out your equipment. You check your reel, make sure it's functioning. Sharpen your hooks. Make that trip to Walmart to get some rubber worms. Watch a YouTube video about how to set your bait. Pack a cooler with your favorite foods. You lay out your clothes and look for your hat and set your alarm. And NONE of that is fishing. It puts you in a great position to fish...but it ain't fishing.

I don't mean to shoot down religious activity - its where many of us have found faith, found each other, and continue to find encouragement and blessing. But if in all that activity, we aren't captivating people - then maybe we've forgotten mission in favor of doing religious stuff. If we aren't catching anything, we might not be fishing.

Friends, all of this can be a little intimidating. It's no wonder Peter's reaction was to fall on his knees in fear and reverence of Jesus. But I hope your takeaway from this morning is that we're ready, right now, to jump in on the Jesus mission. Jesus is the one who does the hard work, we just have to be ready for our part. And it's not so bad, as long as you know a few things about fishing.

Let's pray.