

Sermon Series: Difference-Maker

**January 10th by Pastor Cesar Hernandez.
“Called” Luke 5:1-5.**

When I remember about the year 2020, I definitely begin to think in all the things that I had in mind to do; everything that I had on my calendar, week by week, month by month and it looked an amazing year for me, my family and the ministries that I usually lead here at church.

Everything looked well the first three months of 2020, until abruptly we were forced to be at our homes because the global pandemic. It was a drastic change in my life and for sure in your life as well.

2020 was a year of more than 350k deaths because of the pandemic here in U.S.; violence in our country; peaceful protest or riots all over because all the racism; it was a year of mental health issues in the lives of people; it was a year of political division; it was a year of a lot of changes and re-accommodations in our homes and lives.

2020 was a year in which we were forced to learn to keep social distance (6ft away), that was a terrible fact, especially for people like me/us that love to say HI to one another, hug and shake hands...you know. 2020 was a year in which we didn't see each other every weekend here at church, in the worship services, or just simple eating donuts or drinking coffee at Wesley Café.

It was so hard to accommodate most of our lives to login into our computers, iPad or cellphone to see or attend virtually to our bible studies, meetings or worship services.... It was so hard for our children to keep them at home taking classes online practically the whole day. It was so hard to re-accommodate all that we were doing in a different way. Some of us continue struggling with some of those changes; 2020 was a year in which some felt the terrible feeling of losing a love one; some of us got sick, some of us felt isolated at home or just simply felt lonely or not connected.

And when I looked at those facts, I pray to God that hopefully not all was negative.

If we seat together to talk about all the memories from last year, for sure we are going to spend a lot of time. How about if I ask you how many masks do you have in your closet? did all your masks match with your outfits? Did you have a mask to go to the gym? Or to go to buy groceries? Or, did you get a mask for special occasions? One of the amazing decorations that I began to see in the cars was the masks hanging in the mirror... just a collection of masks... I can show you few of those that I have.

However, 2020 is part of our past; the bible says in the book of 2 Corinthians 5:17 that “The old has gone, the new is here!!”, which means that God continually makes us new. Every moment of every day brings a fresh beginning. Therefore, for us this year 2021, it is the year in which we all need to see our future days with God's lenses, in a very positive.

Today, we are starting a new sermon series call “Difference-Maker”, and for the next five weeks, I want to invite you to stay connected as much as possible to find together how God wants us to be a difference-maker in this 2021. Which means that God is challenging us this year to create new ways to reach out to others and to share the message of salvation of Jesus Christ our Lord and Savior. God is calling us to be difference makers in our community and in this

country, so let us study together the life of one of the best examples from the Bible who was a Difference-Maker, “The Apostle Peter”.

Who was the Apostle Peter? The Apostle Peter was a Galilean, he was married and he came from the Village of Bethsaida (John 1:43, 12:21). He owned small business and his occupation was fisherman. As a fisherman, Peter was very impatient, poorly dressed, and I can imagine he often used rough language. Peter as probably you already know, had an energetic temper, he was very impulsive, possessive and maybe somewhat violent. But I would say that Peter also took a great deal of faith because of the courage and determination to work on the sea. But something happened to Peter when he met Jesus, something changed in Peter’s life, YES, Jesus called Peter to become a Difference-Maker; let’s see what the Bible says today.

In the **Gospel of Luke 5:1-5**: *“One day as Jesus was standing by the Lake of Gennesaret,¹ 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.”*

Jesus was concerned about individuals like you and I. Jesus preached to huge crowds, but His message was always focus to the individual, and He took the time to help and call people personally. His purpose was to call and transform individuals and then send them out to share His message of forgiveness with others. The writer Luke describes in this chapter the encounter that Peter had with Jesus, his call and the changes he experienced because Peter began to trust in Jesus.

In the verses before if you read at home, we saw that Jesus went away “to a solitary place” and the following morning He was standing by the lake and He saw two boats at the shore. Then, in verse 3 says that *“He got into one of the boats, the one belonging to Simon Peter”* and ask the owner of that boat (Peter) to move out from the shore. I don’t know what you think about this but seems to me that was not normal and maybe very strange. How come a person standing by the lake, for one moment to another jumps into a boat that do not belongs to him. This is not normal right?

I mean, Jesus didn’t ask Simon Peter if he could get into the boat, no conversation at all, no lease agreement... what in the world was that? Am I right or not? **(Metaphor: If you don’t think this is weird, I invite you after the service is done to go to the Lake Michigan or go to the mall parking lot and...)** because this is essentially what Jesus did... He walked into the boat without asking anything and sat down, he sat down in the one that belong to Simon Peter.

Why Jesus chose Peter... have you think about that before? Well, I think about that!! why Jesus chose Peter, I don’t know but and I can tell you a lot of reasons why I wouldn’t choose Peter. As I said, Peter was impulsive, despicable, he used to speak a rough language, Peter was violent...I mean, you don’t cut out people’s ears if you have a normal upbringing, you know.

Remember that Jesus needed a lot to accomplished in a short period of time. He needed to get the Word out, and how can He could get the Word out? remember no Facebook in those times, no Instagram, no YouTube, no TikTok, no Twitter...so I came with the conclusion that

Jesus chose Peter because of his boat. Am I right? Really... think about that for a second and I think that was the reason why Jesus chose Peter, just kidding.

Jesus, the creator was partnering with the creation (Simon Peter), a good team. Remember that Jesus, the creator of everything could easily speak a word and walk on the waters if He desired. In the Gospel of John 1:1 says that the *“in the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God and the Word was God”* and the Word who was Jesus, who has the ability to perform miracles just by His touch or His words; He had something else in mind. He decided to call Peter, His own creation to become partners for the healing of the world, to become the team who overcome any obstacle, to become a team that will make the difference.

Why? Because Jesus wants us to be a Difference-Maker in this year 2021.

Jesus said, I want Peter’s boat... and today Jesus is telling us, I want your boat, I want to use your life, I want to use your weakness and your strengths.

Jesus is building the church with us and He is calling us from different areas of this country and the world to be here today building the church and God’s Kingdom.

Jesus is bringing people together who own their own businesses, people who have a successful career in their lives; Jesus is bringing people who are unemployed and broke; Jesus is bringing people in our community from different backgrounds, ethnicities, and races to build His church.

In conclusion, Jesus want to use your boat.

This could be difficult for us to understand because why the one who can perfectly walk on water or perform any other kind of miracle wants to use your boat, He is calling you directly, right there, right now.

You know as humans we have the tendency to question Jesus... why do you want to use my boat? Please don’t use my boat! My boat is not as big as his...my boat is not enough, my boat is unclean, my boat needs to be fix and on and on and on... However, I realize that in order to be a Difference-Maker on this year 2021, we have and need to leave what’s belong in the past, in the past.

Why? because all what we need is Jesus blessing in our boats, in our lives.

Jesus didn’t need Peter’s boat or our boats. But, as Jesus chose and call Peter that day to blessed his boat; Jesus is calling us today to begin this New Year with the blessings of His. Jesus does not have to use us; He chose us to use us.

In verse 3, Jesus get into the Peter’s boat, He chose to use Peter’s boat, as I said, He doesn’t have to, but JESUS wants to use our success, our boldness, our brokenness, and He wants to borrow your boat and my boat.

Jesus is calling us, because He wants to borrow our lives (boats), to become a Difference-Maker, He chose us to use our boats and perform miracles through us, He is extending an invitation for us today to *“put out a little from shore”* our lives because His blessings are coming upon us.

It’s a great thing to have Jesus in our boats, it’s a great thing when Jesus becomes partner into our lives because He knows where is the best part to catch. It’s a great thing when you don’t have to fish alone, it’s a great thing when we accept Jesus calling again on this year.

In conclusion, when we accept the freedom to become partners with Jesus and allow Him to use our boats and be ready to listen and obey His calling; He will help us to depend on Him, He will equip and charge and transform us into the Difference- Makers for the healing of the world.

What you and I have to do is to give a little push to your boat, to my boat, because Jesus is already on the boat. You know, Peter was thinking that Jesus would borrow his boat just for an

hour or so; but he didn't know that Jesus will used his boat for next three years. He didn't know that the deaf ears will be open after they got out of his boat, he didn't know that blind eyes will see because Jesus arrived in his boat, he didn't know anything about this crazy miracle worker, and you never know what Jesus will do until you let him go into your boat.

Lastly, what is being call from Jesus? It is pushing out your boat into the deep when you don't know the result. Being call by Jesus in this new year 2021 is letting down the nets for the catch. Being call by Jesus is leaving everything behind and be ready to be a Difference-Maker.