

## THE PRAYER OF THE DAY

People (in Unison) Holy God, Your throne is surrounded by heavenly beings who continually sing Your praises. Join our voices with theirs, and fill us with Your Spirit, that we may praise You with our lips and in our lives, that others may be brought to know your love and mercy in Jesus Christ, for all honor and glory are Yours, now and forever.

## THE GOSPEL LESSON

Luke 5: 1-11

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*(Jesus tells a fisherman where to fish and then calls him to follow Him.)*

<sup>1</sup> One day as Jesus was standing by the Lake of Gennesaret, with the people crowding around him and listening to the word of God, <sup>2</sup> he saw at the water's edge two boats, left there by the fishermen, who were washing their nets. <sup>3</sup> 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.

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

<sup>5</sup> 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."

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

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

INTRO - Yesterday we had a Fellowship Board Meeting. It was sort of a beginning of the year meeting to plan ministry - to plan work and activities to serve God and his people here at St. John. Three of the members of the board were able to attend, and 3 were unable to attend, for the most part for good reasons. The board looked at the job description of their work, to promote Christian love and fellowship through planned activities, to take care of the kitchen, and greeters, and other chores. They thought of the work of past events and activities, they thought of some failures, they looked at the 3 people in the room, and for a while it looked overwhelming.

I'm not sure that I was much help. This was my first week back in the office after being gone 3 week for school and church business, and my first week back after the Christmas holidays. The stack on my desk, the people to call, the problems to deal with, the jobs that needed doing were overwhelming me too. It seemed too much. In fact, I had shared my frustration with my wife on Friday night before the Saturday morning meeting. I was wondering what I had to offer the Lord, the congregation. Then, on top of the frustrations of the Board, I shared my frustrated state with them.

I. I want you to see the frustration, and Peter's feeling of lacking anything to offer Jesus.

A. We know from the first chapter of the Gospel of John that Peter and his brother Andrew, John and James, had met Jesus before.

1. So, when Jesus showed up along the shore where their boats were, they knew something about him. John the Baptist had said, 'Behold, the lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world.' 'There is one coming after me who is greater than I.'

2. When Jesus told Peter, 'Put out from shore,' so he could teach, it was an honor.

B. But, then Jesus went from teaching to 'meddling.'

1. The carpenter told the fishermen where to fish.

2. Let me tell you, that fishermen in this time did not fish in the middle of the day.

3. Fishermen in this time, did not fish in the deep water.

4. But, Peter had respect for Jesus and did what he said.

5. However, when they cast their nets in the wrong place, at the wrong time of day, and had so many fish their nets were ripping, so many fish that when two boats loaded the fish they almost sank, Peter was amazed and overwhelmed.

6. Not only were John's words about Jesus true, Jesus was surely a man of God.

C. You hear the words of Peter.

1. **"Go away from me, Lord; I am a sinful man!"**

A. Jesus was a man from God, and Peter knew his selfishness, his profanity, his lack of faith, his lack of obedience and faithfulness.

B. Surely Peter did not belong with Jesus, a man of God.

2. But please realize even more how Peter might have felt he had absolutely nothing to offer Jesus.

A. Not only was Peter a sinner, but this fisherman, who couldn't catch fish himself, was out-fished by a carpenter who didn't know fishing.

B. Even the skills and knowledge Peter thought he had, looked useless.

C. Peter knew his sin separated him from God, and he felt he had nothing to offer.

D. Then, when Peter was reminded of his sin, when Peter felt he had nothing to offer, Jesus called him to do something he had no training for.

1. **"Don't be afraid; from now on you will catch men." 11 So they pulled their boats up on shore, left everything and followed him.**

2. Peter's confession of sin was true, and his inadequacy was true also.

3. Perhaps Peter was just as overwhelmed by the job of **catching men**. But, he followed Jesus.

II. So yesterday, we started a meeting with reasons the work we had was difficult, and hard. And, I chimed in with my own woes.

A. When do you feel overwhelmed?

1. Does it seem like life has given you more than you can bear? It probably has.

2. Do you feel like a sinful failure in the face of God. Unfortunately, we are.

3. Do you sometimes think the jobs God gives our church, and you as a Christian, are more than you are equipped for? They are indeed.

B. But, you see, with Peter it was not him, but Jesus.

1. It was not Peter's holiness, he was a sinner. But **Jesus** called Peter, and **Jesus** died to take away His sins. Jesus, God, loved Peter and in grace called for His service.

2. Jesus did not call Peter to follow because of fishing skill or theological knowledge. It was by grace that Jesus called. Jesus gave life training, and Jesus gave the Holy Spirit.

3. Think how overwhelmed and frustrated Peter could have felt, not just by his failures, but by the job of catching me. But, because Jesus called, **So they pulled their boats up on shore, left everything and followed him.**

III. The same is true for you.

A. When you are overwhelmed by life, or by the call of God, it is not you, it is God.

1. God calls sinners, and forgives them in Jesus, in His life, and death, and resurrection. Today God forgives us in the Lord's Supper

2. Paul says, God calls the foolish of the world, to proclaim the cross of Christ.

B. But, knowing our inadequacies, God does Call!

1. Today, God calls us to be fishers of men, to share Jesus with others, and you may not know the Scripture well, but God called. Trust His call, and His equipping.

2. God calls us to lives of faith, and love, and being His people, doing his work.

3. I can't give you a formula, I can just tell you, when the job is overwhelming and frustrating, **GOD HAS THE WAY FOR YOU IN HIS LOVE AND IN HIS SAVIOR.**

CONCLUSION - So, the rest of the story of yesterday's meeting is unspectacular, but joyful. We shared our frustrations at the beginning of the meeting, and then we prayed for God's guidance and help- a little late for the prayer. As we talked frustrations we were honest about the job. Being honest we came up with a plan for the Greeters, a plan for the Kitchen, and an exciting list of events. Having come a little overwhelmed, we left with a plan to do the job and energized and excited about the opportunity for God to use us. I started the day frustrated and ended the day blessed in the grace of God. I like the saying, 'God doesn't call the qualified. He qualifies the called.' May God use you in holy ways to do Jesus' work and share Jesus' love. Amen.