

Luke Series #3

“Instructions For Fishermen” - Luke 5:1-11

I. INTRODUCTION

A. Fishing

1. Like to fish
 - a. first fishing experience - at uncle’s ranch; pond
 - b. salmon eggs - he casted out for me; showed how to reel it in
 - c. got one right away - too excited; ran backwards and dragged it on shore
 - d. covered with grass and dirt
 - e. sister felt sorry for it
 - f. “No - it likes it. Look it’s wagging its tail.”
2. Years later, same uncle took us fishing on a river in the Cascades
 - a. caught nothing
 - b. cousin came by, asked if I’d caught anything
 - c. “No! Really I’m not fishing. I’m just drowning worms.”
3. Thing about fishing, once you start, can’t stop
 - a. if you catch, want more
 - b. if you don’t, know that if you pull line out, a 10 lb’er that was just ready to strike
4. Fishermen aren’t known as being the most truthful people in the world - fish stories are proverbial
 - a. guys brag about how big the fish was they caught
 - b. but of course, they let them go and only brought home the little ones
5. Son once asked his father, “What’s the biggest fish you ever caught, Dad?”
 - a. “You’d better go and ask your mother.
 - b. I’ve forgotten what I told her.”

B. Today

1. A fishing story
2. And a miraculous catch

II. TEXT

A. Vs. 1-3

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.

1. Jesus popularity growing
 - a. words amazed people
 - b. most of all, the miracles
2. Though early morning, already a crowd has gathered
 - a. press so great, though he wants to preach, can't
 - b. so he takes advantage of one of two boats there on the shore
3. Belonged to Simon = Peter
 - a. a fisherman, along with his brother Andrew
 - b. in business with sons of Zebedee, James & John
 - c. all four there, with their 2 boats
4. Fishermen went out long before dawn
 - a. when larger fish rose from deeper, cooler water of lake to feed along the shore
 - b. always retreated to depths when sun rose
 - c. two boats worked together - more efficient
 - d. large nets they would drop into water 8 to 10 ft. deep
 - made a wall, formed a circle
 - draw bottom closed with rope, like a bag
 - then draw net in
5. *They* had caught nothing
6. Fishing difficult
 - a. up early
 - b. back breaking labor
 - hands callused
 - fatiguing for backs, legs, shoulders and arms
7. Then had to clean these huge nets
 - a. pull up on shore
 - b. pull out debris
 - c. hang up to dry, or they would rot
 - d. finally - mend any tears.
8. It was at this point, when cleaning their nets, Jesus steps into Peter's boat and tells him to push off shore a little way
9. Seems awful bold!
 - a. who is he to order Peter around?
 - b. while first mention in Luke, *not* first meeting between Jesus and Peter
 - c. in John, they had already met and Jesus had invited Peter to follow Him
 - d. he had for a while
 - e. but for whatever reason, he went back to fishing

- f. so Peter already knew Jesus
- 10. So they launch out into the shallows
 - a. just far enough to get some distance
 - b. Jesus sits down and begins to teach
- 11. Peter is a captive audience
 - a. probably sat their
 - b. listening to Jesus teach
 - c. he was reminded of Jesus' authority and power
 - d. and as he did, his faith was rekindled
 - e. Rom. 10 - Faith comes by hearing the word of God = Jesus, the living word

B. Vs. 4-7

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.

- 1. Jesus finished his message to the crowd
- 2. Then turned to Peter and said, "Go out further and drop your nets again."
- 3. Now, Jesus was a carpenter and Peter was the fisherman
 - a. so Peter subtly reminds him of this fact
 - b. "Master" - boss
 - c. ever had a supervisor, foreman, boss tell you to do something you knew wouldn't work?
 - regularly at one of my jobs
 - orders from "on high"
 - not at all practical
 - d. seemed like that here for Peter
 - e. so he says, "Master, we've been toiling all night and caught nothing - nada, zip, squelch, a big fat zero."
- 4. But Peter has listened to Jesus teaching; his faith has been re-kindled
- 5. So he says, "Nevertheless, at Your word, I will let down the nets."
- 6. That is the key to understanding the miracle about to happen
 - a. Peter knew you don't catch fish in the morning in deep water
 - b. they had already discovered from a long night that there were no fish in this area

- c. yet nevertheless, at Jesus' word they would drop the nets once more
 - not based on experience or human understanding
 - but based on Jesus' word alone
- 7. So they dropped the nets, and the catch was great
 - a. so great, had to call the other boat for help
 - b. filled both boats, water line rose to edge and began spilling into boat
- 8. You and I can live our lives by our own understanding, wisdom, and experience
 - a. and as we do, we will know at best, meager success
 - b. sometimes our nets will hold a few fish
 - c. but more often than not, they will be empty
- 9. Or, we can live by the Word of God and find our nets full
- 10. No where is this more true than in the task of evangelism - of which this story is meant to be a picture
 - a. easy for us to get locked in to a pattern, a mold
 - b. we think that we've figured out how God is moving
 - c. build forms and traditions around it
 - d. but long after He has moved on to other means, we are still using the old ways
 - e. example:
 - years ago = camp meetings
 - more recently = concerts
 - f. when Jesus came, religious leaders didn't accept Him because He did not fit into their traditions
 - Jesus said that you do not put new wine into old wineskins
 - even so, God often by-passes the old wineskins of church traditions because they are fixed and inflexible
 - g. as our culture changes, God is going to raise up new ways of reaching this generation
 - we must ever be ready to hear His voice telling us where to drop our nets
 - may it never be said of us that we would reject following the Lord because we had "never done it that way before"
- 11. Peter knew that you caught fish before dawn in the shallows
- 12. But Jesus said, "Let's try something different."
- 13. And because Peter was willing to submit his expertise to the word of Jesus, he experienced the biggest catch of his career
- 14. Notice Peter's response to this miracle . . .

C. Vs. 8-10

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.”

1. There was Peter
 - a. at first, excited by the huge catch
 - b. called other boat
 - c. took in nets, unloaded fish
 - d. knee and elbow deep in the miracle
 - e. it suddenly dawns on Peter what’s really going on here
 - f. it’s not at all about fish, it’s about the power of this man Jesus
2. Suddenly, Peter realizes how unworthy he is
 - a. Jesus had already demonstrated His authority over Peter in their first meeting
 - b. Jesus had already called Peter to follow Him
 - c. but Peter had gone back to fishing
 - d. he was unworthy of this tremendous blessing
 - e. so he throws himself at Jesus’ feet and cries out -
 - f. “Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord.”
 - g. Jesus is no longer merely, “boss”
 - h. now He’s “Lord!”
3. As Peter came to see more clearly who and what Jesus is, he became more aware of who and what he was
4. To see Christ is to see ourselves for what we are!
 - a. the way to self-awareness is not thru self-focus -
 - b. it is thru Christ awareness
 - c. there is so much emphasis on discovering ourselves today
 - d. we don’t need to seek to understand ourselves by concentrating on ourselves
 - e. rather, real self-understanding comes by fixing our gaze on Jesus
 - f. Job 42:5-6 “I have heard of You by the hearing of the ear, But now my eye sees You. Therefore I abhor myself, And repent in dust and ashes.”
 - g. Isa 6:5 So I said: “Woe is me, for I am undone! Because I am a man of unclean lips, And I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; For my eyes have seen the King, The LORD of hosts.”
 - h. both of these men were totally righteous dudes
 - i. yet when they came face to face with God, they realized how far short they fell
5. But once we see ourselves as we really are, God doesn’t abandon us and leave us in that state of utter despair
 - a. no - He come to us and speaks words of forgiveness and peace

- b. for Job, He restored to him all that he had lost
 - c. for Isaiah, He lifted him up and made him one of the greatest prophets in history
 - d. for Peter, rather than slapping him up side the head for having forsaken him before -
 - e. He eases His fears and renews the call to follow Him
 - f. from now on, Peter won't be catching fish, he'll be catching men for the kingdom of God
6. Friend, the acknowledgment of our sin brings God's grace
 7. It is only when we hide and cover it up that sin goes unforgiven
 8. We must learn to confess our sin and receive the forgiveness Jesus so gladly bestows
 9. Like Peter, it may be that you once heard the call of Christ to come follow Him.
 - a. like Peter, you did for a short time
 - b. but then you went back to your old way of life
 - c. you've been fishing in the night, and your boat is empty
 - d. you're tired, frustrated, and in despair
 - e. let Jesus into your boat this morning
 - f. let Him speak His words of truth to your heart
 - g. confess your sin, your unworthiness
 - h. and know this, like Peter, Jesus renews the call to you to follow Him.

D. V. 11

11 So when they had brought their boats to land, they forsook all and followed Him.

1. Luke writes this last verse with a sense of immediacy
2. They landed, stepped out of the boats, and never turned back
3. These fishermen, who had just experienced the biggest catch of their careers, turned their backs on the fish, the nets, the gear, and the boats
4. That would be like a contractor being able to build a whole tract of homes in a single day but walking away from them without getting paid, leaving all his tools, and his work truck.
5. But Peter and Andrew, James and John had come to realize that a boatload of fish is not what's important in life
6. What's important is following Jesus where ever He leads, when ever He leads
7. Some people think that because they fail at everything else, maybe they are supposed to enter the professional ministry
8. I don't think so
 - a. I think the Lord will prosper those He is calling into such roles in whatever they do

- b. just as He blessed Peter and the others with a boatload full of fish
 - c. but then He sets before us a choice
 - d. we can prosper in the temporal, passing things of this world
 - e. or we can prosper in eternal things, like fishing for men
10. Today, this pulpit is my fishing boat, and I am fishing for men
- a. but you know what, the water here is shallow
 - b. most of you have already been caught
11. You too have a boat; and God calls you to drop your nets in deeper waters where the catch is much greater
- a. your boat is your desk at work - share with co-workers
 - b. it's your service bay in the garage - share with fellow mechanics
 - c. it's that wall you sit on at school - share with kids
 - d. it's your living room where you sit with the ladies on your block and have coffee and talk about Jesus

III. CONCLUSION

A. *Touched, Then Touching*

1. Jesus first touched Peter's life with His grace
2. Then He called Peter to touch others with that same grace
3. This is ever Jesus' way
 - a. first, He blesses us
 - b. then He sends us forth to be a blessing
4. If we never bless others, then the flow of His blessing to us gets bottled up and stops flowing
5. Jesus intends us to be more like a channel than a bottle
6. If your relationship with the Lord has become a little stale, it may be because there is no outflow to your life
7. As Jesus said to the disciples, "Freely you have received. Freely give."

B. *He's Calling Again*

1. Are you one of those who began once, but went back?
2. He's calling again!