

# Called to Follow

Luke 5:1-11

SS Lesson for 01/10/2021

**Devotional Scripture:** Matt 13:47-51

## OUTLINE

### LESSON BACKGROUND AND KEY VERSE

*Background from the Echoes Commentary*

*Key Verse: Luke 5:10*

*Commentary from the Bible Knowledge Commentary*

### MAJOR THEME ANALYSIS

#### TEACHING BEFORE THE CALLING (LUKE 5:1-3)

##### *Teaching to hear the Word (1)*

Hearing so that belief is confirmed (Rom 10:14)

Hearing so that faith is strengthened (Rom 10:17)

Hearing because it is the Word of God (1 Thess 2:13)

Hearing because it is a blessing (Luke 11:28)

Hearing because it is the way to grow spiritually (1 Peter 2:2)

##### *Teaching during daily routine (2)*

During daily routine of sleeping (1 Sam 3:7-10)

During daily routine of working (Luke 5:27-28)

During daily routine of preparing meals (1 Kings 17:7-16)

During daily activities (Matt 24:37-40)

##### *Teaching of the Word (3)*

Teaching the gospel (Rom 10:14)

Teaching about the Holy Spirit (Acts 19:2)

Teaching the Word of God (1 Thess 2:13)

Teaching about the Holy Spirit (Rev 2:7)

#### MIRACLE BEFORE THE CALLING (LUKE 5:4-9)

##### *Miraculous request (4)*

Miraculous request of the jars of oil (2 Kings 4:3-7)

Miraculous request of two fish feeding thousands (Matt 14:17-20)

Miraculous request of Elijah to the widow and son (1 Kings 17:13-15)

Miraculous request of Elisha and the striking of the ground (2 Kings 13:18-19)

##### *Obedience to the request (5-7)*

Obedience to show faith (Gen 22:9-12)

Obedience to witness (Acts 8:26-31)

Obedience regardless of prejudice (Acts 10:19-23)

Obedience to follow Jesus (Matt 9:9)

##### *Amazement of the miracle (8-9)*

Amazement that helps spread the news of the goodness of God (Luke 4:36-37)

Amazement at the greatness of God (Luke 9:43)

Amazement at how much God loves (John 5:20)

Amazement at how God does everything perfectly (Mark 7:37)

Amazement that should lead to faith in God (John 12:9-11)

#### FOLLOWING AFTER THE CALLING (LUKE 5:10-11)

##### *Call to follow (10)*

A call to receive life (Deut. 30:15)

A call to serve (Joshua 24:15)

A call to follow (1 Kings 18:21)

A call to bear fruit (John 15:16)

A call to take on apostolic ministry (Acts 1:24-25)

A call for apostleship made by God (Gal 1:1)

##### *Following without hesitation (11)*

Following Jesus represents the right priorities in life (Matt 16:24-26)

Following Jesus represents safety in the presence of Jesus (John 12:26)

Following Jesus assures eternal victory (John 10:27-28)

Following Jesus means realizing that Jesus is the only way (John 6:67-68)

## CONCLUSION AND OTHER THOUGHTS

COMMENTARY THOUGHTS FROM BOB DEFFINBAUGH

### *Conclusion*

The Meaning of this Incident for Peter and His Partners

The Meaning of this Incident for Us

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS FROM THE NIV STANDARD LESSON COMMENTARY

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS FROM THE ECHOES COMMENTARY

## Lesson Background and Key Verse

### Background from the Echoes Commentary

Although Jesus had been driven out of Nazareth, He went on preaching and healing throughout the region of Galilee-including healing Simon Peter's mother-in-law (Luke 4:38-39). Already, the crowds were becoming an issue. The closing verses of Luke 4 relate that Jesus had gone to a solitary place, probably to pray, and that the crowds had found Him and insisted He stay with them. However, "he said, 'I must proclaim the good news of the kingdom of God to the other towns also, because that is why I was sent'" (Luke 4:43). And as Luke 5 opens, we find Jesus again proclaiming the Good News. In fact, the size of the crowd forced Him to preach from a boat on the Lake of Gennesaret-better known as the Sea of Galilee. And it is in this unusual situation where Jesus calls His first disciples.

Jesus didn't force the disciples to follow Him; they chose to follow Him. The disciples didn't stop to ask Jesus questions about where they would be going or what they would be doing. They trusted Him and immediately followed Him. Jesus is calling us immediately to follow Him and participate in His mission of drawing all men to God through salvation in Jesus. This doesn't mean going around with a Bible and preaching to everyone we meet, although God may call us specifically to share His Word with others. However, one way we can participate in Jesus' mission is by being a light for Jesus wherever we go. A light draws people away from darkness and into the right direction.

### Key Verse: Luke 5:10

*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."*

### Commentary from the Bible Knowledge Commentary

The incident recorded here is obviously not the first time Jesus had been in contact with the men whom He called to be His disciples. Luke already had stated that Jesus had healed Simon's mother-in-law which denotes previous contact with Simon and Andrew. This seems to be at least the third time Jesus had contact with these men. In John 1:41 Andrew told Peter that he had found the Messiah. Apparently the men at first did not follow Jesus on a "full-time" basis, for in Mark 1:16-20 (also Matt. 4:18-22) Jesus called Simon, Andrew, James, and John. Mark recorded that that call was before Jesus entered the synagogue in Capernaum and healed a man who was demon-possessed. It is no wonder Peter invited Jesus home after the synagogue incident.

Now, sometime later, Peter and the others were still fishermen. It was at this point, now that Jesus had established His authority (Luke 4:31-44), that He called these men to full-time discipleship.

**5:1-3.** The large throng **crowding around** Jesus prevented His teaching effectively as He stood **by the Lake of Gennesaret**, another name for the Sea of Galilee, by a village on the northwest shore. So He went out a short distance in the water in Simon's boat so that they could all listen **to the Word of God**.

**5:4-7.** On Jesus' request, **Simon** put out his **nets** and **caught... a large amount of fish**. Though **Simon**, an experienced fisherman, was sure he would not catch anything at that time of the day when the fish were deeper in the lake, he obeyed Jesus' word. This showed a significant amount of faith. The resulting catch **began to break the nets**, so they **filled** Simon's and another **boat** with the fish till **both boats... began to sink**.

**5:8-11.** The miracle of the fish brought two responses in **Peter** and the others. They **were astonished** (lit., “amazement [*thambos*] seized him and all those with him,” v. 9; cf. 4:36) **at the large catch of fish**, and Peter realized his sinfulness before Jesus (5:8). The result was that Jesus made the fishermen fishers of **men**. Jesus’ teaching, combined with His miraculous acts, showed that He had the authority to call the men and have them respond by leaving **everything**.

## Major Theme Analysis

*(Scriptural Text from the New King James Version; cross-references from the NIV)*

### **Teaching Before the Calling (Luke 5:1-3)**

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.

#### **Teaching to hear the Word (1)**

*Hearing so that belief is confirmed (Rom 10:14)*

14 How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them?

*Hearing so that faith is strengthened (Rom 10:17)*

17 Consequently, faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word of Christ.

*Hearing because it is the Word of God (1 Thess 2:13)*

13 And we also thank God continually because, when you received the word of God, which you heard from us, you accepted it not as the word of men, but as it actually is, the word of God, which is at work in you who believe.

*Hearing because it is a blessing (Luke 11:28)*

28 He replied, "Blessed rather are those who hear the word of God and obey it."

*Hearing because it is the way to grow spiritually (1 Peter 2:2)*

2 Like newborn babies, crave pure spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow up in your salvation,

#### **Teaching during daily routine (2)**

*During daily routine of sleeping (1 Sam 3:7-10)*

7 Now Samuel did not yet know the Lord: The word of the Lord had not yet been revealed to him. 8 The Lord called Samuel a third time, and Samuel got up and went to Eli and said, "Here I am; you called me." Then Eli realized that the Lord was calling the boy. 9 So Eli told Samuel, "Go and lie down, and if he calls you, say, 'Speak, Lord, for your servant is listening.'" So Samuel went and lay down in his place. 10 The Lord came and stood there, calling as at the other times, "Samuel! Samuel!" Then Samuel said, "Speak, for your servant is listening."

*During daily routine of working (Luke 5:27-28)*

27 After this, Jesus went out and saw a tax collector by the name of Levi sitting at his tax booth. "Follow me," Jesus said to him, 28 and Levi got up, left everything and followed him.

*During daily routine of preparing meals (1 Kings 17:7-16)*

7 Some time later the brook dried up because there had been no rain in the land. 8 Then the word of the Lord came to him: 9 "Go at once to Zarephath of Sidon and stay there. I have commanded a widow in that place to supply you with food." 10 So he went to Zarephath. When he came to the town gate, a widow was there gathering sticks. He called to her and asked, "Would you bring me a little water in a jar so I may have a drink?" 11 As she was going to get it, he called, "And bring me, please, a piece of bread." 12 "As surely as the Lord your God lives," she replied, "I don't have any bread — only a handful of flour in a jar and a little oil in a jug. I am gathering a few sticks to take home and make a meal for myself and my son, that we may eat it — and die." 13 Elijah said to her, "Don't be afraid. Go home and do as you have said. But first make a small cake of bread for me from what you have and bring it to me, and then make something for yourself and your son. 14 For this is what the Lord, the God of Israel, says: "The jar of flour will not be used up and the jug of oil will not run dry until the day the Lord gives rain on the land." 15 She went away and did as Elijah had told her. So there was food every day for Elijah and for the woman and her family. 16 For the jar of flour was not used up and the jug of oil did not run dry, in keeping with the word of the Lord spoken by Elijah.

*During daily activities (Matt 24:37-40)*

37 As it was in the days of Noah, so it will be at the coming of the Son of Man. 38 For in the days before the flood, people were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, up to the day Noah entered the ark; 39 and they knew nothing about what would happen until the flood came and took them all away. That is how it will be at the coming of the Son of Man. 40 Two men will be in the field; one will be taken and the other left.

**Teaching of the Word (3)**

*Teaching the gospel (Rom 10:14)*

14 How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them?

*Teaching about the Holy Spirit (Acts 19:2)*

2 and asked them, "Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?" They answered, "No, we have not even heard that there is a Holy Spirit."

*Teaching the Word of God (1 Thess 2:13)*

13 And we also thank God continually because, when you received the word of God, which you heard from us, you accepted it not as the word of men, but as it actually is, the word of God, which is at work in you who believe.

*Teaching about the Holy Spirit (Rev 2:7)*

7 He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes, I will give the right to eat from the tree of life, which is in the paradise of God.

**Miracle Before the Calling (Luke 5:4-9)**

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.

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;

## **Miraculous request (4)**

### *Miraculous request of the jars of oil (2 Kings 4:3-7)*

3 Elisha said, "Go around and ask all your neighbors for empty jars. Don't ask for just a few. 4 Then go inside and shut the door behind you and your sons. Pour oil into all the jars, and as each is filled, put it to one side." 5 She left him and afterward shut the door behind her and her sons. They brought the jars to her and she kept pouring. 6 When all the jars were full, she said to her son, "Bring me another one." But he replied, "There is not a jar left." Then the oil stopped flowing. 7 She went and told the man of God, and he said, "Go, sell the oil and pay your debts. You and your sons can live on what is left."

### *Miraculous request of two fish feeding thousands (Matt 14:17-20)*

17 "We have here only five loaves of bread and two fish," they answered. 18 "Bring them here to me," he said. 19 And he directed the people to sit down on the grass. Taking the five loaves and the two fish and looking up to heaven, he gave thanks and broke the loaves. Then he gave them to the disciples, and the disciples gave them to the people. 20 They all ate and were satisfied, and the disciples picked up twelve basketfuls of broken pieces that were left over.

### *Miraculous request of Elijah to the widow and son (1 Kings 17:13-15)*

13 Elijah said to her, "Don't be afraid. Go home and do as you have said. But first make a small cake of bread for me from what you have and bring it to me, and then make something for yourself and your son. 14 For this is what the Lord, the God of Israel, says: "The jar of flour will not be used up and the jug of oil will not run dry until the day the Lord gives rain on the land." 15 She went away and did as Elijah had told her. So there was food every day for Elijah and for the woman and her family.

### *Miraculous request of Elisha and the striking of the ground (2 Kings 13:18-19)*

18 Then he said, "Take the arrows," and the king took them. Elisha told him, "Strike the ground." He struck it three times and stopped. 19 The man of God was angry with him and said, "You should have struck the ground five or six times; then you would have defeated Aram and completely destroyed it. But now you will defeat it only three times."

## **Obedience to the request (5-7)**

### *Obedience to show faith (Gen 22:9-12)*

9 When they reached the place God had told him about, Abraham built an altar there and arranged the wood on it. He bound his son Isaac and laid him on the altar, on top of the wood. 10 Then he reached out his hand and took the knife to slay his son. 11 But the angel of the Lord called out to him from heaven, "Abraham! Abraham!" "Here I am," he replied. 12 "Do not lay a hand on the boy," he said. "Do not do anything to him. Now I know that you fear God, because you have not withheld from me your son, your only son."

### *Obedience to witness (Acts 8:26-31)*

26 Now an angel of the Lord said to Philip, "Go south to the road — the desert road — that goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza." 27 So he started out, and on his way he met an Ethiopian eunuch, an important official in charge of all the treasury of Candace, queen of the Ethiopians. This man had gone to Jerusalem to worship, 28 and on his way home was sitting in his chariot reading the book of Isaiah the prophet. 29 The Spirit told Philip, "Go to that chariot and stay near it." 30 Then Philip ran up to the chariot and heard the man reading Isaiah the prophet. "Do you understand what you are reading?" Philip asked. 31 "How can I," he said, "unless someone explains it to me?" So he invited Philip to come up and sit with him.

### *Obedience regardless of prejudice (Acts 10:19-23)*

19 While Peter was still thinking about the vision, the Spirit said to him, "Simon, three men are looking for you. 20 So get up and go downstairs. Do not hesitate to go with them, for I have sent them." 21 Peter went down and said to the men, "I'm the one you're looking for. Why have you come?" 22 The men replied, "We have come from Cornelius the centurion. He is a righteous and God-fearing man, who is respected by all the Jewish people. A holy angel told him to have you come to his house so that he could hear what you have to say." 23 Then Peter invited the men into the house to be his guests. The next day Peter started out with them, and some of the brothers from Joppa went along.

*Obedience to follow Jesus (Matt 9:9)*

9 As Jesus went on from there, he saw a man named Matthew sitting at the tax collector's booth. "Follow me," he told him, and Matthew got up and followed him.

**Amazement of the miracle (8-9)**

*Amazement that helps spread the news of the goodness of God (Luke 4:36-37)*

36 All the people were amazed and said to each other, "What is this teaching? With authority and power he gives orders to evil spirits and they come out!" 37 And the news about him spread throughout the surrounding area.

*Amazement at the greatness of God (Luke 9:43)*

43 And they were all amazed at the greatness of God. While everyone was marveling at all that Jesus did, he said to his disciples,

*Amazement at how much God loves (John 5:20)*

20 For the Father loves the Son and shows him all he does. Yes, to your amazement he will show him even greater things than these.

*Amazement at how God does everything perfectly (Mark 7:37)*

37 People were overwhelmed with amazement. "He has done everything well," they said. "He even makes the deaf hear and the mute speak."

*Amazement that should lead to faith in God (John 12:9-11)*

9 Meanwhile a large crowd of Jews found out that Jesus was there and came, not only because of him but also to see Lazarus, whom he had raised from the dead. 10 So the chief priests made plans to kill Lazarus as well, 11 for on account of him many of the Jews were going over to Jesus and putting their faith in him.

**Following After the Calling (Luke 5:10-11)**

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."

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

**Call to follow (10)**

*A call to receive life (Deut. 30:15)*

15 See, I set before you today life and prosperity, death and destruction.

*A call to serve (Joshua 24:15)*

15 But if serving the Lord seems undesirable to you, then choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve, whether the gods your forefathers served beyond the River, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you are living. But as for me and my household, we will serve the Lord."

*A call to follow (1 Kings 18:21)*

21 Elijah went before the people and said, "How long will you waver between two opinions? If the Lord is God, follow him; but if Baal is God, follow him." But the people said nothing.

*A call to bear fruit (John 15:16)*

16 You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit — fruit that will last. Then the Father will give you whatever you ask in my name.

*A call to take on apostolic ministry (Acts 1:24-25)*

24 Then they prayed, "Lord, you know everyone's heart. Show us which of these two you have chosen 25 to take over this apostolic ministry, which Judas left to go where he belongs."

*A call for apostleship made by God (Gal 1:1)*

1 Paul, an apostle — sent not from men nor by man, but by Jesus Christ and God the Father, who raised him from the dead—

## **Following without hesitation (11)**

*Following Jesus represents the right priorities in life (Matt 16:24-26)*

24 Then Jesus said to his disciples, "If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. 25 For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me will find it. 26 What good will it be for a man if he gains the whole world, yet forfeits his soul? Or what can a man give in exchange for his soul?"

*Following Jesus represents safety in the presence of Jesus (John 12:26)*

26 Whoever serves me must follow me; and where I am, my servant also will be. My Father will honor the one who serves me.

*Following Jesus assures eternal victory (John 10:27-28)*

27 My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me. 28 I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one can snatch them out of my hand.

*Following Jesus means realizing that Jesus is the only way (John 6:67-68)*

67 "You do not want to leave too, do you?" Jesus asked the Twelve. 68 Simon Peter answered him, "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life.

## **Conclusion and Other Thoughts**

### ***Commentary Thoughts from Bob Deffinbaugh***

#### **Conclusion**

*The Meaning of this Incident for Peter and His Partners*

For Peter (and Andrew too, it seems), James and John, the three who will make up the inner circle of Jesus followers, this incident is a major turning point. They have followed Jesus before, but only partially, only for a time. Now, these disciples have made the decision to leave their careers and follow Jesus wherever He went. This was no small decision. It was a crisis of careers and a mid-life crisis combined. From this moment on, Jesus would begin to pour more of His life into these disciples. The more intimate aspects of His life and ministry would now be made known to them.

The monumental change which occurs here is signaled by the striking contrast between the distance of the disciples and their dedication to their job in verses 1 and 2 and their divorcing themselves from their jobs in verse 11 to become Jesus' disciples. It is also signaled by the change in Peter's name, from Simon (as previously) to Simon Peter or Peter (as it will now be, with few exceptions).

There is also a change in the way in which Jesus is perceived and in which the disciples perceive themselves, as indicated by Peter's response. The Lord Jesus had only been "Master" before, one of a higher rank, but not seen to be whom He really was. From now on, Jesus is "Lord" to Peter and his partners. And Peter, who saw himself as an expert, at least in fishing, now sees himself as a sinner before a holy God. What a change!

*The Meaning of this Incident for Us*

Before we begin to explore the meaning of this passage for us, let me be very clear in what I think the text does not mean. **THIS TEXT IS NOT TEACHING THAT THOSE WHO ARE MOST COMMITTED TO CHRIST MUST LEAVE THEIR SECULAR JOBS TO BE HIS DISCIPLES.** There are far too many Christians who seem to feel like second class Christians because they are not in "full-time Christian service." There are many

who have entered into “full-time Christian service” on the faulty premise that this would make them more significant, spiritual Christians. The Bible does not teach this, and our text does not teach this, though some may wrongly conclude that it does.

Didn't the disciples have to leave their (secular) jobs in order to follow Jesus? They most certainly did. But why? At this point in time, Jesus was (only) physically present on the earth. If Jesus were to have His disciples with Him and He was called to preach the good news of the kingdom of God far and wide (cf. Luke 4:43-44), then there is no way that these fishermen could continue their fishing career in the Sea of Galilee. But what we must see is that after our Lord's death, burial, resurrection and ascension, He is now spiritually present with all saints through His Holy Spirit. While we may need to leave our homes or our employment to obey His leading and to proclaim the gospel, we do not need to leave anything in order for Him to be in and with us.

In the gospels, we can see the reticence of the disciples (used in the broader sense, not just of the 12, cf. Luke 6:17; Acts 6:1-2) to be physically separated from Jesus. They would have preferred Him to remain physically present with them, but Jesus refused, and told them His “going away” was actually better (cf. John 16, esp. vv. 6-7; 20:27). The disciples were not to leave Jerusalem until Jesus had come to be with His church through His Spirit, which commenced at Pentecost, and continues to this day. Thus, we need not leave our occupations to be with Christ. We often bring Christ to a fallen world by living and witnessing for Christ in and through our work. Spirituality (nearness to Christ) is not determined by whether or not we have “secular” jobs. One need only remember that the apostle Paul often supported himself through “secular” employment. And by means of his working with his own hands, set an example for all (cf. Acts 20:33-35).

What, then, does our text have to teach us? Primarily, our text deals with the matter of following Jesus. There are many lessons for us to learn about following Christ from our text. Let me suggest just a few.

**First, our text strongly implies that following Jesus begins with the realization of our inadequacies and needs.** Those who came to our Lord and followed Him in the gospels were those in desperate need. Jesus Himself said that He came to seek and to save the lost, that He came not to the well, but to the sick. Thus, it is those who are inadequate in themselves who follow Christ. There is no need to follow Christ if you are doing fine in and of your own efforts.

It is no coincidence that prior to the successful catch of that morning, at the command of Jesus, there was a long, frustrating night of “fishing failure” the night before. The one area in which Peter felt confident and capable was as an expert in fishing. So it was that Jesus sovereignly designed a night of failure, followed by a morning of unparalleled success. Peter failed on his own, but was abundantly successful in obedience to Christ's command. Those who follow Jesus are those who have found themselves to fail on their own. Peter's most significant confession in this text is that he was a sinner and that Christ was righteous. When this is granted, it is no wonder that the sinner gives up his way and chooses to follow Christ. Failure is the first step in following Christ. Those who follow Him have found themselves to fail on their own. Those who feel sufficient will not turn to Him.

**Second, our text teaches us that following Jesus requires faith in Him as our all-sufficient Savior.** If Peter found himself to be a failure at fishing and a sinner in life, He found Christ to be sovereign, righteous, and all-sufficient. All of Peter's fears vanished when he realized the sufficiency of the One who had called him to be a fisher of men. Jesus Christ is the only all-sufficient One. To follow Him is to be assured of God's provision of forgiveness of sins and of righteousness; to follow Him is to be assured of our physical needs. To follow Him is to be assured of eternal life. To follow Him is to be assured of divine guidance and direction. To follow Him is to be assured of all that is required to do His will. Our great lack of faith can be traced, in almost every case, to an inadequate grasp of the goodness and the greatness of God. When we realize who it is who calls us to follow Him, the faith to do so comes easily. Apart from knowing God, we find our faith lacking and deficient.

**Third, our Lord knows our weaknesses and our unbelief, and gives us ample evidence, ample basis for our faith.** The Lord Jesus knew of the inner turmoil which Peter and his partners were dealing with, better than they did. Instead of berating them or of forcing them to follow Him unconvinced and semi-committed, Jesus performed a miracle which vaporized their fears and was a catalyst for their faith. For these men, an overflowing, tearing net and two sinking ships was all the evidence they required to see the sufficiency of the Savior.

God has given us even greater testimony to His sufficiency. In the first place, He has given us the evidence of His resurrection. Not two full ships of fish, but an empty tomb testifies to the holiness and the power of our Lord. In addition, He fills us with His Spirit, and He shows us His power in the transformed lives of those who have trusted in Christ as their Savior. Finally, we have the testimony of the Scriptures themselves, including this very account in the gospel of Luke. We have ample evidence on which to base our faith. Our problem is that we

do not meditate these matters often enough. Our greatest problem as a church and as individual saints, I fear, is that we lack faith, and this is due to an inadequate grasp of the greatness of our God. Let us let our minds and hearts dwell long and deep upon Him.

**Fourth, our text strongly implies that in order to follow Jesus, we must forsake certain things.** In order for Peter, James and John to follow Jesus, they had to leave their ships and their nets. In the final analysis, they had to leave those things in which they had faith, in which they found their safety, their security, and their significance. Following Christ, finding Him to be our all-sufficient Savior, requires that we forsake anything besides Him in which we trust, in which we feel secure, in which we feel significant, in which we feel safe. For the rich young ruler, his trust was in his riches. Jesus instructed Him to forsake his riches, to sell his possessions and to give the money to the poor, not because rich people cannot be saved, but because God will not let men trust in His Son and something, anything, else. Selling all of his goods would have been the most beneficial thing (for himself) that this young man could have done, for it would have forced him to place all of his trust in Jesus alone. We cannot follow two leaders, and we are led by that in which we trust. Thus, we must have our faith in only one person, Jesus Christ, and in nothing else, if we are to follow Him.

Often times, our greatest problem will come in that area in which we are most skilled, most knowledgeable. For Peter, this was his skill as a fisherman. Jesus had to show Peter that He knew more than this veteran of the Sea of Galilee, so that Peter could find Jesus the Master and Teacher, even about fishing. Whatever it is that you find yourself good at, whatever it is that you trust in, is that which you must forsake to follow Christ.

**Fifth, our text suggests that if we are to be followers of Christ, we must do what He does.** Jesus came “to seek and to save” the lost. The disciples were to become “fishers of men” not only because Jesus would command them to do so, but because this is His mission. These men would become “fishers of men,” not so much because they were fishermen, but because Jesus had come to draw (catch) men into His kingdom. To follow Christ means to do as He does. Those who would be followers of Christ cannot ignore the fact that Jesus was a seeker of men, and thus we, too, must be fishers of men. Evangelism is an inseparable part of the calling of a disciple of Jesus.

**Sixth, our text suggests that if we would follow Jesus, we must not only do what He does, but we must do it His way.** Peter thought of himself as an expert at fishing. Using their finest skills the night before, Peter and his partners caught nothing. Fishing Jesus’ way, which involved a violation of all of the principles of fishing Peter knew, brought great success. Following Jesus, in my estimation, means leaving behind many of the “proven methods” of our past. This statement may trouble many, but there is much truth in it, I believe. In the early chapters of the book of First Corinthians, the apostle Paul made a point to show how his methods were seemingly silly, and diametrically opposed to the methods of successful speakers of his day. But in doing things this way, in doing things God’s way, the Spirit of God produces the fruit and God receives the glory. Let us be careful about what it is we try to bring with us when we seek to follow Jesus. Not only did Peter and his partners leave behind their boats and their nets, they left their proven fishing methods behind as well.

**Seventh, our text suggests that we should not make hasty commitments to follow Christ, nor should we call on others to do so.** Finally, let me conclude by reminding you that Jesus did not press these men to make a hasty decision. Considerable time passed, and I would suspect that much agony was experienced in the interim. Why is it that we press men to make hasty decisions, when Jesus did not? Important decisions should not be made quickly. Decisions which are good ones, which are lasting ones, are those made slowly, prayerfully, deliberately.

May each of us thoughtfully consider what it means for us to be followers of Jesus Christ. Let us contemplate His sufficiency, and our sin. Let us forsake our methods, our sources of security, salvation, and significance. Let us follow Him.

*(Adapted from URL:<https://bible.org/seriespage/how-hook-fisherman-luke-51-11>)*

## ***Concluding Thoughts from the NIV Standard Lesson Commentary***

When I was a child, I enjoyed a game show called What's My Line? Each week a panel of celebrities tried to guess the contestants' line of work by asking only yes or no to questions. Any Christian who appeared on the show really should have been regarded as a trick contestant. Regardless of that person's workaday occupation, he or she also had work to do for Jesus. Do you realize that you also have another line of work? Everyone who responds to Jesus' call to follow him shares a common job title and description (see Matthew 28:19-20). The way in which we live out that calling varies greatly. But the key component is that we further God's plan of extending his kingdom, which is based and built on the good news of his Son, Jesus. Simon Peter, James, and John did indeed pull up stakes to travel with Jesus. That fact may serve as an example-call to follow today as Christians relocate to the other side of the globe as missionaries. But strong argument can be made that although Luke 5:1-11 depicts the fishermen's call to full-time, vocational ministry, that text does not thereby serve as a directive that all followers of Jesus must do exactly likewise. Think of the man who wanted to go with Jesus after Jesus delivered him from demonization: Jesus told him to return home and share with the people there what God had done for him (Luke 8:26-39). Jesus used the disciples' occupation as fishermen as an analogy of what he was calling them to do in ministry for him. How could you do likewise regarding your job? For example, if you are a farmer, what would it look like for you to be a "farmer of people"? Whether your calling is to full-time vocational ministry or to Christian witness in the secular workplace or to serve your family as a homemaker, how can you state your calling as a purpose statement for your life in Christ's kingdom?

## ***Concluding Thoughts from the Echoes Commentary***

As more people heard about Jesus' preaching and miracles, the crowd following Him increased. At one point, He used a boat on the Sea of Galilee as His pulpit. The boat belonged to a fisherman named Simon Peter. This initial encounter with the Savior eventually led to Peter becoming one of Jesus' most faithful disciples, totally involved in the Kingdom mission.

Catching Fish - After Jesus finished His teaching from Peter's boat, He offered a thank you gift. He challenged Peter to push away from the shore and let down his nets. Initially, Peter protested—they had fished all night without any success. In spite of Peter's apprehensions, he called Jesus "Master," which meant you are the boss, and he obeyed Jesus' instructions. Their catch was enormous, so large other fishermen had to lend a hand.

Catching People - Jesus' teaching on Peter's boat and the miraculous catch of fish caused Peter to realize Jesus' holiness and his own unworthiness. Peter felt so undeserving of being in His presence. Jesus understood Peter's fear and inner turmoil. But the Savior's mission was for all to realize the unfailing love of the Father. Jesus came to deal with man's sin issue so they could draw near to God and get to know Him. Jesus used this occasion of the overabundance of fish to help Peter understand God's calling on his life. Jesus said to Peter that this event was only a depiction of the true "catching" Peter was going to do—the catching of people through the good news of the Gospel. That day Peter walked away from his fishing business and became one of Jesus' disciples.

God's Ambassador - The call to Christian discipleship is still being extended. Becoming a believer in Christ means you become His "ambassador" (2 Cor. 5:20). Paul used this term to bring home several points. As believers walk daily on this earth, they are to be Christ's representatives. God's people are to stand up for His principles, especially the Gospel message. Christians answer Christ's call to be reconciled to God. Now they are to participate in the ministry with the goal in mind of helping all humanity to understand why Jesus came and died. It's the Christian's job to get the message out: God longs to reconcile everyone to Himself.