

Bible Stories for Adults

Fishers of Men

Luke 5:1-11

Opening

Gathering: How does Jesus expect us to fish for men today?

Today's Focus: Jesus' first disciples responded to His call to become fishers of men by leaving everything to follow Him.

Key Verses: *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."* Luke 5:5

Then Jesus said to Simon, "Don't be afraid; from now on you will catch men." So they pulled their boats up on shore, left everything and followed Him. Luke 5:10-11

Opening Prayer

Lesson

Welcome Home? - Review of Last Week (*Luke 4:14-30*)

After John's stories of Jesus in Judea, where did Jesus go to begin His ministry?

Luke 4:14 = Galilee (Hebrew *galil* is *circle*), area encircled by Gentile nations

What did He do there? = People from all over flocked to Him

Matthew 4:23-25 = Taught in synagogues, preached the good news, healed

Was He welcomed as the Messiah or as a traveling rabbi? = Synagogue (*called together place*)

Luke 4:15-16, 20 = Taught in synagogues as visiting rabbi; stood to read, sat to teach

Did the people in His hometown synagogue understand His message?

Luke 4:22 = No, they were too focused on His eloquence to hear His message

How did Jesus respond to His past neighbors watching a show and ignoring His message?

Luke 4:24-27 = Gentiles will receive God's salvation that the Jews reject

Did the people understand any of Jesus' sermon?

Luke 4:28 = They heard His last point on the Gentiles being saved and were furious

How upset were they? = Lynch mobs were illegal

Luke 4:29 = They were ready to kill Him for blasphemy, even on the Sabbath

How far did they get?

Luke 4:30 = Not far, God protected Him and he just walked through the crowd

Why were they unable to kill Him?

John 2:4b = *My time has not yet come*

Home Base (*Luke 4:31-32*)

After such rejection by His hometown, did Jesus go off by Himself to re-assess His ministry?

Luke 4:31-32 = No, His ministry was right, rejection was their loss

How are we to respond to rejection when we bring the good news of Jesus to others?

Luke 10:10-12, 16 = They have rejected God, not you, and will be rejected by God

Was Capernaum just a stopping point on the way to other places?

Matthew 4:13 = No, he stayed there a while and made it His home base

What was significant about Jesus living in Capernaum? = More Gentile than Jewish

Matthew 4:14-16 = Fulfilled Isaiah's prophesy of Light in lands of Zebulun & Naphtali

Did Jesus settle back and spend most of His time in Capernaum?

Luke 4:42-44 = He resisted temptation to take it easy and fulfilled His calling to others

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People, People Everywhere (Luke 5:1)

Did this popularity create any other problems for Jesus besides a lack of privacy?

Luke 8:42b = He had trouble getting around because people crowded in on Him

What problem did the crowds present to Jesus in today's story?

Luke 5:1 = They were crowding Him into the water

Sea of Galilee

13 miles long by 8 miles wide, Up to 150-ft deep, 700 ft below sea level

Lowest freshwater lake on earth, Second lowest lake on earth (after Dead Sea)

Prone to sudden storms due to low lying position in rift valley surrounded by hills

Jordan River runs north to south through the lake

Old Testament - Called Sea of Kinnereth (or Chinnereth), from its harp-like shape

New Testament - Also called *Lake of Gennesaret* and *Sea of Tiberias*

Gennesaret was a 3x5 mile fertile plain S of Capernaum & NW of Sea of Galilee

Tiberias was a city named after Roman emperor on SW shore of Sea of Galilee

A Creative Idea (Luke 5:2-3)

What did Jesus see that let Him creatively solve His problem and still minister to the people?

Luke 5:2 = A couple of fishing boats - fishing was a lucrative business

Notes: Fish was a common part of Palestinian diet, Sea of Galilee was full of various fish

Galilee fish stayed in the depths during the day

Rose at night to feed on the surface in shallower water

Fishers pulled nets near shore at night and went ashore at daylight

Fish were separated and taken to market early in the morning

Fishers mended their nets and cleaned them by casting them into the shallow water

Fish nets would have various debris and tears after a night of dragging

Nets had to be washed and stretched out to dry or they would rot and break

What was Jesus' creative solution? = Lakeshore would have been an acoustic amphitheater

Luke 5:3 = Got into a boat, put out a little, sat down as a rabbi and taught

Hearing Rock (Luke 5:4)

Simon is Greek for *hearing*. Had this boat owner heard of this Jesus before?

John 1:40-42 = Soon after Jesus returned from wilderness, brother Andrew intro'd him

Peter is Greek for *rock*. Why did Jesus call Simon a rock?

Matthew 16:15-18 = Peter's confession is the foundation of Jesus' church

What did *Simon Peter* experience soon after meeting Jesus that began to build his faith?

John 2:1-3, 7-11 = Jesus' first miracle of turning water into wine

Did Simon become a full-time follower of Jesus from the moment he met Jesus?

Matthew 4:18 = No, he went back to work as a fisherman (casting nets to clean them)

How did Jesus nudge Simon's faith and make sure he was *hearing* the faith-building gospel?

Luke 5:3 = *Asked him to put out a little*, had a captive audience

After Simon heard this gospel message, how did Jesus further push his growing faith?

Luke 5:4 = Told him to go fishing - even at daytime in unknown deep water

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An Unlikely Miracle (Luke 5:5-7)

How did Simon react to this crazy idea from a rabbi/carpenter who knew nothing about fishing?

Luke 5:5 = We know there are no fish to be had and we're tired, but I'll obey

Was this experienced fisherman foolish to go along with this ignorant suggestion?

Luke 5:6 = No, they quickly caught more fish than they could handle

Were any other prospective disciples able to witness this amazing miracle?

Luke 5:7 = Simon & Andrew's partners James & John came to help and saw

Letting Down Our Nets (Luke 5:5-7)

Have we been given a crazy-sounding command like Jesus' command to Simon to go out?

Luke 10:2-3 = *Go! I am sending you out like lambs among wolves.*

This sounds scary. How can we accept such a difficult calling?

John 14:16, 27 = Jesus sends the Spirit to help us and gives us His peace

How will the Spirit help us?

Luke 12:12 (Matthew 10:20) = *The Holy Spirit will teach you at that time what you should say*

How are we to respond to this call to go out?

Isaiah 6:8 = Reply, *Here am I. Send me!*

What results can we expect as we accept Jesus' call and go out as fishers for Him?

Acts 2:46-47 = He will add to our number daily those who are being saved

Are we to assume our faith is lacking if the people we witness to don't become Christians?

1 Corinthians 3:6-9 = We are to plant seeds and water them, God will make them grow

What does the help Simon got from his partners tell us about our activities as Jesus' fishers?

Matthew 18:19-20 = Jesus will be with and support us as we work together for Him

I'm Unworthy (Luke 5:8-10a)

How did Peter respond to this miracle that only a professional fisherman could fully understand?

Luke 5:8 = He recognized who Jesus really was and fell down unworthily

Why did he react so severely? = John 3:2 – *No one could do these things if God were not with him*

Luke 5:9 = *He and all his companions were astonished at what had happened*

What did his partners who had come with the second boat think about what had happened?

Luke 5:10a = They were also astonished

What other leaders of God's people felt unworthy and undeserving to be called by God?

Exodus 3:4-6, 11 = Moses hid his face, "Who am I to go to Pharaoh?", 5 excuses

Judges 6:14-15 = Gideon said he was least of the weakest family, asked for proof

Jeremiah 1:4-6 = Jeremiah said he couldn't speak and was only a child

What other leader expressed unworthiness because of his sinfulness?

Isaiah 6:5 = Isaiah said, *"I am a man of unclean lips..."*

Are we worthy of our calling?

Luke 17:10 = *We are unworthy servants; we have only done our duty.*

Who, then, is worthy?

Revelation 5:2-5 = No one in heaven or on earth is worthy but the Lamb who was slain

So how can we then be worthy of the callings God has given us?

Romans 5:8, 11 = *While we were still sinners, Christ died for us - reconciled us*

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Simon's Risky Response (Luke 5:8-10)

What risky statement did Simon make when he confessed his unworthiness?

Luke 5:8 = He told Jesus, *Go away from me, Lord.*

How was this so risky?

Matthew 10:32-33 = By rejecting Jesus, Simon would be rejected

How did this play out in Jesus' statement to the Nazarenes that the Gentiles would be saved?

Acts 13:46-48 = The Jews rejected Christ's salvation and it was taken to the Gentiles

Simon's Perfect Response (Luke 5:11)

How did Jesus show that He understood Simon's confession and was ready to call Him further?

Luke 5:10b (Matthew 4:19) = He said, "Don't be afraid; from now on you will be fishers of men"

How did Simon, Andrew, James and John respond to this huge call to be full-time disciples?

Luke 5:11 = They *left everything and followed Him*

Note: A fishing business with partners and employees would have been very lucrative

This business was a family business headed by fathers Jonas and Zebedee

The decision to leave everything would cost financially and personally

Did they leave everything to follow Him for a little while or for good?

Matthew 19:27 = For good, they committed their lives to following Him

What promise do we have if we likewise commit our lives to following Him?

Matthew 19:28-29 = We will be rewarded with eternal life

Closing Prayer

Response - Consider and meditate on one each day this week

1. How earnestly do I look for Jesus to hear him speak to me?
(Luke 4:42; 5:1, 18-19; 8:42b; 10:38-42; Matthew 4:25; 7:7-8)
2. When have I responded in faith to Jesus' guidance even though it made no sense to me?
(Luke 5:4-5; Genesis 22:2-3; 2 Kings 5:10-15; Matthew 17:20; Hebrews 11)
3. How has God blessed me beyond all expectations?
(Luke 5:6-10; 6:38; 2 Kings 7:1-2; Proverbs 3:9-10; Jeremiah 33:9; Malachi 3:10; 2 Cor. 9:8-11)
4. When have I felt unworthy of the calling and blessings I have received from God?
(Luke 5:8; 17:10; Genesis 18:27; 32:10; Exodus 3:1-14; Judges 6:14-18; Job 40:4; Isaiah 6:5; Jeremiah 1:4-6; Romans 5:6-8; Revelation 5:2-5)
5. What have I left to follow Jesus?
(Luke 5:11, 27-28; Isaiah 65:17; Mark 10:17-30; John 1:43; 21:18-22; Romans 6:1-14; 2 Cor. 5:17)