

## An Invitation to a Mission – February 24, 2008

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### Luke 5:1-11

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. 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; 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.

I like to get invitations, don't you? When they arrive in the mail they are much more exciting to open than junk mail or bills don't you think?

When I get an invitation it makes me feel good that whoever sent it to me has thought kindly enough of me to ask me to join them at their special event. And so with Jesus and His invitation to join Him on a mission.

### 1. We have all been invited on a mission.

As Christians we have all been invited on a mission when we come to the saving knowledge of Jesus Christ.

In our text this morning, as always, we encounter Jesus '**Being About His Father's Business**' as we find Him on the shore of Lake Gennesaret, which is another name for the Sea of Galilee, sharing a personal invitation to Peter, James, and John to join Him in His mission by being 'Fishers of Men!'

Jesus doesn't just jump right in; there is a progression to the process.

Remember, Jesus has recently announced the launching of His earthly ministry in the synagogue at Nazareth and was rejected, so He took His '**Set the Captive Free**' tour on the road and found great success in Capernaum, which by the way means '*village of comfort*.'

Deliverance of those which were demon possessed; healing of those which were sick; preaching of the Good News to the multitudes.

**It's on!** Jesus is actively engaged in His Father's Business!

As a matter of fact in **John 5:17** Jesus said, "*My Father is always working, and so am I.*" This is what He does!

Jesus' business in this passage is about inviting others to join Him in '**Being About His Father's Business**.'

Just as Jesus said in **John 5:17** "*My Father is always working, and so am I,*" so too we should be able to say '*My Jesus is always working, and so am I!*'

Christianity is not a spectator sport; we are to be participators, actively engaged in our Father's business.

In fact **Ephesians 2:10** tells us this specifically:

**Ephesians 2:7-10** The Message

*'Now God has us where he wants us, with all the time in this world and the next to shower grace and kindness upon us in Christ Jesus. Saving is all his idea, and all his work. All we do is trust him enough to let him do it. It's God's gift from start to finish! We don't play the major role. If we did, we'd probably go around bragging that we'd done the whole thing! No, we neither make nor save ourselves. God does both the making and saving. He creates each of us by Christ Jesus to join him in the work he does, the good work he has gotten ready for us to do, work we had better be doing.'*

Did you catch that last part: **'WORK WE HAD BETTER BE DOING!'**

Christian, each of us has been given the honor of receiving at salvation an **Invitation to a Mission!** According to this passage and many others it's a package deal! We each have a special part to play!

### **Ephesians 4:16 NLT**

*'He makes the whole body fit together perfectly. As each part does its own special work, it helps the other parts grow, so that the whole body is healthy and growing and full of love.'*

## **2. The Lord meets us where we are.**

*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.*

This morning Jesus finds Simon Peter at the lake, by his boat, washing his nets, and invites him to go catch some fish. Fishing for fish is familiar to Simon Peter and the boys.

Not only does the Lord meet us where we are geographically, but where we are as a person, as a unique creation of His.

President Teddy Roosevelt once said **'Do what you can, with what you have, where you are!'**

Sometimes we get so focused on looking **where** we can join Jesus on His mission or **what** we can do different from what we are doing currently we miss seeing what He is doing **RIGHT WHERE WE ARE!**

Jesus was 'looking for a few good men' as He was preparing to launch the age of the church. He knew that in a few short years He would be offered as the ultimate sacrifice for the sins of the world as He would die, arise from the dead, and ascend into heaven.

According to **Matthew 4:18** Jesus had seen Simon and Andrew fishing earlier as He walked by the Sea of Galilee so this wasn't some surprise or happen chance occurrence.

Jesus came to Simon Peter **Where** he was and **What** he was familiar in: fishing

## **3. The Lord leads us by example.**

Jesus was preparing to extend an invitation to them to become '*fishers of men*' and so He got right in the boat with them and led by example.

*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.*

\*This is natural: there was a need. Verse 1 says '*the multitude pressed about Him to hear the Word of God...*' so Jesus taught them as He was preparing to extend an invitation to the fishermen to join Him in His mission.

## **4. The Lord deals gently with us.**

*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.*

Important to note: Jesus asked Simon Peter to; He didn't demand.

He initially asked Simon to '*put out a little*' from the land.

You don't want to limit God and what He may invite you to do. However, don't be so afraid that He may invite you to join Him in the mission by moving to Africa that you miss Him inviting you to *'put out a little'* at your office or in your classroom or with your family or with your friend.

Remember to *'do what you can with what you have where you are.'* That being said, when you do, be ready for the likelihood of...

## **5. The Lord will also stretch us.**

*4 When He had stopped speaking, He said to Simon, "Launch out into the deep and let down your nets for a catch."*

Jesus asked Simon Peter to *'put out a little'* and he did. Now Jesus asks him to not only *'launch out into the deep'* but to also *'let down your nets.'*

There is a time to LAUNCH OUT and to LET DOWN!

We all want to be safe and sound all of the time but when we join Jesus in the mission we are often called beyond ourselves and into His realm of potential. It's ok. It will be alright!

### **Psalm 94:18-19**

*'I cried out, "I am slipping!" but your unfailing love, O LORD, supported me. When doubts filled my mind, your comfort gave me renewed hope and cheer.'*

Loosing control isn't an easy thing, is it? However, it is necessary when you have accepted the Lord's invitation to join Him and are engaged in His mission!

Church, I believe Jesus has assuredly been with us in our *'boat'* over the years as Christ United Church has *'put out a little.'*

God's presence in this place; God's people in this church; God's passion within this congregation; and God's witness in this community has been evidenced over the years. Without any negative implications at all I believe Christ United Church has indeed been faithful to heed Jesus' call to *'put out a little'* and has done so and God has been pleased.

I also believe that right now as a church we are in a season when God has begun to stir us as a congregation in preparation to ask us to *'launch out into the deep and let down our nets for a catch.'*

As in our text this morning I believe the catch is going to be seemingly overwhelming!

We certainly don't have an exact grasp on what this all means at this point and that's okay. God's direction and vision is progressive and revealing.

**Habakkuk 2:3** tells us *'For the vision is yet for an appointed time; but at the end it will speak, and it will not lie. Though it tarries, wait for it; because it will surely come, it will not tarry.'*

As well, God is probably not nearly as concerned with our destination as He is with our process through the journey and our growth in Him!

\*Homework: I am tasking you with the responsibility of praying diligently concerning *'launching out into the deep and letting down your nets for a catch'* both for yourself and your family as well as Christ United Church.

More to come, I am sure...

## **6. Obedience isn't optional if we are to be faithful.**

*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."*

Inform the Lord what you are thinking; acknowledge the obvious. Be real! Oftentimes it will lead you to the obvious: we need Jesus in our boat instructing what to do.

There is no room for false piety and pseudo spirituality. This is not a lack of faith. It is almost like taking a deep breath in preparation of jumping into the deep end of the swimming pool.

Key word: MASTER= Superintendent or overseer: the one in charge.

Say it even as you are trying to convince yourself to relinquish your own oversight of your life and the mission. Then do what He says. This is submission to the master.

Submission doesn't mean going along with the overseer when you see things the same way or are in agreement with what they are saying. It also means when you can't see the use of doing something you have already done, going ahead and doing it anyway and relying on the fact that your Master, the Lord Jesus Christ just might know what He is talking about.

Overseers may **make** the decisions; and they also **take** the responsibility.

\*What do fishermen do? Not only do fishermen **fish**; they had better be **catching fish**, right, if they want to eat?

Nevertheless: in spite of or however; regardless of what failures I have had in the past, either last night or last year or last church or last job or last relationship or last program or whatever.

We all could use a NEVERTHELESS attitude adjustment at times don't you think?

It's time for a NEVERTHELESS energy to be released.

'Nevertheless' always the more, when you follow the Lord on a mission with obedience.

\*'at your Word...' What is it God is speaking to you about your mission? Thus the primary need of our heart's focus to be centered on intimacy with Jesus. This is the Father's Business!

Not my will but yours be done. Not my word but yours be heard!

\*Don't just say it...do it!

### **Philippians 4:9**

*9 The things which you learned and received and heard and saw in me, **these do**, and the God of peace will be with you.*

Conclusion:

I want to draw a line here and pick back up with the story next week. Please continue this week to reread this story a few times and prayerfully consider its implications and applications in your life and in our church's life as well. Lord willing we will finish up next week...

Remember, in extending an invitation to join Him in our mission...

1. We have all been invited on a mission.
2. The Lord meets us where we are.
3. The Lord leads us by example.
4. The Lord deals gently with us.
5. The Lord will also stretch us.
6. Obedience isn't optional if we are to be faithful.