

“Our Christian Faith in Our Daily Calling”
(Luke 5:1-11 – Epiphany 5 – February 9, 2025)

Luke 5:1-11 – ¹So it was, as the multitude pressed about Him to hear the word of God, that He stood by the Lake of Gennesaret, ²and saw two boats standing by the lake; but the fishermen had gone from them and were washing their nets. ³Then 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. ⁴When He had stopped speaking, He said to Simon, “Launch out into the deep and let down your nets for a catch.” ⁵But 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.” ⁶And when they had done this, they caught a great number of fish, and their net was breaking. ⁷So 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. ⁸When Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus’ knees, saying, “Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord!” ⁹For he and all who were with him were astonished at the catch of fish which they had taken; ¹⁰and 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.” ¹¹So when they had brought their boats to land, they forsook all and followed Him.

Dear disciples whom Christ Jesus has called as His followers:

How close is the Lord in our daily lives? As Peter finds out, He is much closer than expected. As Peter is going about his daily work as a fisherman, Jesus provides a miraculous catch of fish. Suddenly realizing he is in the presence of God Himself in Jesus, Peter feels his unworthiness and sinfulness. But his forgiving and loving Savior assures him: “Do not be afraid. From now on you will catch men” (vs. 10).

With Peter, let us see how close the Lord is in our daily lives and work. Our Savior is present with His forgiveness, calling us to great things in His Kingdom. Let us apply **“Our Christian Faith in Our Daily Calling”** as we see that: **1) Faith listens to Jesus’ Word, 2) Faith acts on Jesus’ Word, and 3) Faith shares Jesus’ Word.**

1) Faith listens to Jesus’ Word

First, faith listens to Jesus’ Word. This is what Peter is doing as our text begins. “So it was, as the multitude pressed about [Jesus] to hear the word of God, that He stood by the Lake of Gennesaret, and saw two boats standing by the lake; but the fishermen had gone from them and were washing their nets. 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” (vs. 1-3).

When Jesus asked Simon Peter to let Him use His boat, it was not the first time they had met. In John 1:40-42, we hear Jesus first calling Peter and other disciples to follow Him. At that time, as Peter listened to Jesus' Word, the Holy Spirit worked faith in his heart to trust in Jesus as his Savior. That was the Lord's call to faith.

After that, Peter and his companions returned to fishing. Jesus had not yet called them to full-time work as apostles. So their daily calling remained in the fishing trade, by which they provided for themselves and their families. Peter's life calling included marriage, for Luke 4:38 speaks of his wife's mother being in his house. There were mouths to feed, fish to catch and sell, a living to be made. This was an important calling, as it is for us to whom God has given loved ones to care for. God wants us to take our daily calling seriously, serving Him and the people He puts around us with the abilities He gives us.

So as Jesus approached Peter and his companions, they were busy washing their nets, doing important work. Could they afford to stop and listen to Jesus, when they already felt so far behind in their work after a fruitless night of fishing? Did Peter have time to just lay down his nets, let Jesus take over his boat, and listen to Him preach a sermon? Yes, of course he did. Ever since he was called to faith by Jesus' Word, Peter knew there was nothing more important in daily life than to hear Jesus' words of eternal life. He showed his faith by finding time to listen to his Savior's Word.

How important it is to approach daily life in Jesus' Word. Even more important than our daily work and plans in temporal life, we need to refresh our souls with Jesus' words of eternal life. Martin Luther once said: "Tomorrow I plan to work, work, from early until late. In fact, I have so much to do that I shall spend the first three hours in prayer." He did not feel he could get his work done, and done rightly, unless he first meditated on Jesus' Word and promises. He needed to lay all his responsibilities and burdens in the Lord's hands in prayer. Then he could go forward in the Lord's strength, guidance, and blessing.

Do we find ourselves busy with the cares of our daily calling? Do responsibilities seem overwhelming when it comes to satisfying the needs of family, or the expectations of a teacher or employer? Are we wondering how we can ever accomplish an important task before us? Do we even wonder what our purpose is in the day ahead? Let us apply our Christian faith in our daily calling, first by listening to Jesus' Word and praying. Then with our faith strengthened, we are ready to act on His Word for great blessing.

2) Faith acts on Jesus' Word

This is what happened here. When Jesus finished speaking, He told Peter: "*Launch out into the deep and let down your nets for a catch.*" Peter said: "*Master, we have toiled all night and caught nothing; nevertheless at Your word I will let down the net*" (vs. 4-5).

As an experienced fisherman, Peter knew the best time to cast the net was nighttime, not in daylight; and the best place was in shallow waters, not in the deep. There was a temptation to feel foolish following Jesus' direction. After a frustrating night of catching nothing in the best of conditions, why go through all of this now?

In our daily calling, it is not always easy to act on Jesus' Word. His ways do not always seem to make sense. Sometimes, we think we know better by our experience. A Christian at work may deal with frustrating conditions, tempted to think: "Why should I put in the effort to do a good job? They don't appreciate me anyway, and I never see much success." A Christian in a difficult marriage may be tempted to think, "I can't please my spouse anyway; why even try to show love and honor?" A Christian child may not understand his parent's rules, tempted to think, "I know better. I'll go ahead and do what I want."

We know what God's Word says about these things: Love, honor, obey, serve. Do it, not only when they are watching, but as to the Lord (Colossians 3:17-23). But instead of answering, "*at Your word I will,*" we are tempted to sin against the life callings God has given, to neglect those He has put around us, and withhold the love and service we owe.

At times, we struggle with meaning and purpose in our calling when we do not see how God is working in them. One missionary spent years translating the Bible into the language of a remote tribe, only to have it all destroyed in a disaster. We may ask, "Why?" A Christian lying on a sick bed may wonder: "What is God's purpose in this? Wouldn't I be more useful if I could serve in good health?" In many ways, in our daily callings we feel the frustration of a world fallen in sin. After we have tried and failed, we may throw up our hands like Peter and say: "*Master, we have toiled all night and caught nothing.*"

Yet the faith strengthened by Jesus' Word says: "*nevertheless at Your word I will let down the net.*" In Jesus' command was a promise: "*let down your nets for a catch.*" As Peter and the others acted on His Word, it says: "*They caught a great number of fish, and their net was breaking. 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*" (vs. 6-7).

When Peter saw this miracle: "*He fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, 'Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord!'*" (vs. 8). He suddenly realized how close the Lord of Glory had been all along – yes, right here in his boat, right here in his mundane and sometimes frustrating livelihood. The Lord was here to work powerfully in his daily life in ways he had not imagined. This was very humbling.

Do we stop to think just how close the Lord is to us? He who gives us life and breath is always near, promising to watch over and provide for us. But at times the thought strikes us that He has been near also to see our sinful attitudes and failures to serve in our callings. Seeing our unworthiness in His holy presence, we may fall at Jesus' knees and say with

Peter: *“Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord!”* We bow before Him confessing: “Lord, forgive my lack of taking Your Word to heart. Forgive my lack of trust in You. Forgive my lack of love and willingness to serve those You have put around me.”

At once Jesus says: *“Do not be afraid”* (vs. 10). He is here as our Savior to lift us up in His forgiveness and peace. He is here to direct our life and bless us in our daily callings. Why can we trust Jesus and act on His Word? Because we know how good He is as our Savior. He loved us enough to go to the cross and pay for all our sins with His blood. So we can trust Him as He says: “I forgive you. Go in My peace.” He loved us enough to spend His earthly life loving and serving in every calling, so He could cover our life in His holiness. So we can trust Him when He says our life is infinitely valuable, even if we do not feel good about how things are going. He loved us enough to come from heaven to work out all things for our eternal life. So we can trust Him to work out all things in our temporal life, even if we do not understand how it all fits into His great plan for us.

Jesus has called us to great things in His Kingdom, as His disciples. As He strengthens our faith by His promises, He is working His miracle in our life. He is leading us to act on His Word in ways He can bring blessings greater than imagined in His Kingdom.

3) Faith shares Jesus’ Word

Think of the great blessings He brings as we live our Christian faith and share His Word. Here, as Peter and the others marveled at Jesus’ miraculous catch of fish, He said: *“From now on you will catch men.’ So when they had brought their boats to land, they forsook all and followed Him”* (vs. 10-11). They would use His Gospel of grace and forgiveness like a net, to draw people by faith into His Kingdom for eternal life. But as they had seen by Jesus’ miracle, it was the power of His Word that would bring the catch.

Not everyone is called to the public ministry of the Word like them. But every believer is a witness of Jesus in our daily callings (1 Peter 2:9). We can share our faith with family, friends, coworkers, fellow students, neighbors... We can share Jesus’ Word with one troubled by guilt and fear: “Jesus forgives you! He took your sins away on the cross!” We can share Jesus’ Word with the hopeless and sorrowful: “Jesus gave His life for you, for you are that precious to Him; and He has risen to give you eternal life in His Kingdom!”

What great blessings Jesus is working in our lives as we listen to His Word, act on His Word, and share His Word. Like Peter’s boat, our daily calling becomes a vehicle in Jesus’ service. However humble, it is a setting in which His glory shines through as we live our faith, and through us He brings His blessings to others. We may not realize the ways He has worked in our life until we see His great plan fulfilled in heavenly light. Then we will rejoice, together with all whom He called to faith, in His glorious presence.

Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit. As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be. Amen.