

You Will Catch People for the Kingdom of God

SUNDAY 6 FEBRUARY 2022

GOSPEL READING: Luke 5:1-11

1 While the people pressed upon him to hear the word of God, he was standing by the lake of Gennesaret. 2 And he saw two boats by the lake; but the fishermen had gone out of them and were washing their nets. 3 Getting into one of the boats, which was Simon's, he asked him to put out a little from the land. And he sat down and taught the people from the boat. 4 And when he had ceased speaking, he said to Simon, "Put out into the deep and let down your nets for a catch." 5 And Simon answered, "Master, we toiled all night and took nothing! But at your word I will let down the nets." 6 And when they had done this, they enclosed a great shoal of fish; and as their nets were breaking, 7 they beckoned 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 But 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 was astonished, and all that were with him, at the catch of fish which they had taken; 10 and so also were James and John, sons of Zebedee, who were partners with Simon. And Jesus said to Simon, "Do not be afraid; henceforth you will be catching men." 11 And when they had brought their boats to land, they left everything and followed him.

Meditation: Why did Jesus perform the miracle of the great catch of fish? No doubt the great crowd of people who had pressed upon Jesus had something to do with this miracle. They were very hungry for God and were eager to hear his word. Jesus wanted to use this occasion to teach his disciples an important lesson. Although Simon was wearied from a night of fruitless toil, he nonetheless did what the Lord Jesus told him to do: *At your word I will let down the nets.* When you meet disappointment and failure, do you press upon the Lord, like Simon, to hear his word and to receive his command?

God expects greater things than we can do by ourselves

This incident tells us an important truth about how God works in and through each of us for his glory. God expects of us greater things than we can do by ourselves. When we cooperate in *his* works, we accomplish far beyond what we can do on our own. Therese of Lisieux, a Carmelite nun who died of tuberculosis at the age of twenty-four, wrote to a friend: "Jesus has so incomprehensible a love for us that he wills that we have a share with him in the salvation of souls. He wills to do nothing without us. The Creator of the universe awaits the prayer of a poor little soul to save other souls redeemed like it at the price of all his Blood."

When God's word is spoken his kingdom is revealed and his power is released. When people respond to God's word with faith and obedience they are changed and made "a new creation" in Jesus Christ (2 Corinthians 5:17).

Witness the joy of the Gospel

God chooses ordinary people, like you and me, as his ambassadors and he uses the ordinary circumstances of our daily lives and work situations to draw others into his kingdom. Jesus speaks the same message to us today: we will "catch people" for the kingdom of God if we allow the light of Jesus Christ to shine through us. God wants others to see the light of Christ in us in the way we live, speak, and witness the joy of the Gospel. Paul the Apostle says, "*But thanks be to God, who in Christ Jesus always leads us in triumph, and through us spreads the fragrance of the knowledge of him everywhere. For we are the aroma of Christ to God among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing*" (2 Corinthians 2:15).

Do you witness to those around you the joy of the Gospel and do you pray for your neighbours, co-

workers, and relatives that they may come to know the Lord Jesus Christ and grow in the knowledge of his love and truth?

1 I give you thanks, O LORD, with my whole heart; before the angels I sing your praise;

2 I bow down toward your holy temple and give thanks to your name for your mercy and your faithfulness; for you have exalted above everything your name and your word.

3 On the day I called, you answered me, my strength of soul you increased.

4 All the kings of the earth shall praise you, O LORD, for they have heard the words of your mouth;

5 and they shall sing of the ways of the LORD, for great is the glory of the LORD.

6 For though the LORD is high, he regards the lowly; but the haughty he knows from afar.

7 Though I walk in the midst of trouble, you preserve my life; you stretch out your hand against the wrath of my enemies, and your right hand delivers me.

8 The LORD will fulfil his purpose for me; your mercy, O LORD, endures for ever. Do not forsake the work of your hands.

Daily Quote from the Early Church Fathers:

"That you may understand that the Lord was speaking of spiritual fishing, however, Peter says, 'Master, we toiled all night and took nothing! But at your word I will let down the nets.' It is as if he were saying, 'Through the whole night our fishing has brought us nothing, and we have been labouring in vain. Now I will not fish with fishing gear but with grace, not with diligence acquired by skill but with the perseverance acquired by devotion.' When Peter lets down the nets at the word, therefore, he is in fact letting down the teachings in Christ. When he unfolds the tightly woven and well-ordered nets at the command of the Master, he is really laying out words in the name of the Saviour in a fitting and clear fashion. By these words he is able to save not creatures but souls. 'We toiled all night,' he says, 'and took nothing.' Peter, who beforehand was unable to see in order to make a catch, enduring darkness without Christ, had indeed toiled through the whole night. But when the Saviour's light shone upon him the darkness scattered, and by faith he began to discern in the deep what he could not see with his eyes." (excerpt from *SERMON 110.2.1*)

OPENING PRAYER Lord Jesus, fill our hearts with love and compassion for those who do not know you or follow you. May we be a good witness of your truth and salvation to our family, friends, and co-workers **Amen**.

CLOSING PRAYER:- "Lord Jesus, fill me with your Holy Spirit and inflame my heart with love and compassion. Make me attentive to the needs of others that I may show them kindness and care. Make me an instrument of your mercy and peace that I may help others find healing and wholeness in you." **Amen**.