

FISHING WITH JESUS

Text: Luke 5:1-11 and John 21: 3-11

There are two places in the Gospels where Jesus interacts with His disciples who were fishermen. I would like for us to draw our attention to these two contrasting episodes and make some practical application for our lives.

Everybody likes fishing stories and these are “whoppers,” but true.

1. A Message of Faith

Luke 5:1-3

In Luke 5:2, the Bible records the fishermen washing their nets. God often does something truly miraculous in the ordinary events of our days. In Luke 5:3, Christ chose Simon Peter's ship from which to teach the people. Would you be willing to allow your livelihood to become a platform from which our Lord could teach?

2. The Challenge of Faith

Luke 5:4

The promise is that if Simon Peter would get out into the deep water, he would take in a haul of fish. This brings to mind Psalm 107:23, 24: *“They that go down to the sea in ships, that do business in great waters; These see the works of the LORD, and his wonders in the deep.”* The challenge is to go deep. We don't witness God's wonders in the shallows.

3. The Word of Faith

Luke 5:5

Without Jesus, all of life is a toil. Whereas, if we take the step of faith to simply do what He says, we shall be in for the greatest adventure of our life. With a trusting heart, Simon answered, *“...at thy word I will let down the net....”*

Jesus taught this truth in John 6:63: *"It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life."* I hear the term "life coach" these days. This is a person whom you assign to guide you in major decisions and lifestyle. Much of this seems to be very humanistic and has a tendency to abdicate to man what God Himself wants to be for you. In John 6:68 Simon Peter spoke the truth: *"Then Simon Peter answered him, Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life."* The centurion had faith in Christ's life-changing words in Matthew 8:8: *"The centurion answered and said, Lord, I am not worthy that thou shouldst come under my roof: but speak the word only, and my servant shall be healed."* The Angel of the Lord released the disciples from prison and said, *"Go, stand and speak in the temple to the people all the words of this life"* (Acts 5:20). Paul has such confidence in the Word of God that he declared that although he may be bound in chains or prison, the Word of God will never be bound. *"Wherein I suffer trouble, as an evil doer, even unto bonds; but the word of God is not bound"* (II Timothy 2:9).

4. The Crisis of Faith

Luke 5:6-8

Three things are involved in this crisis.

- A. The broken net
- B. The sinking ships
- C. The sinful man

We are often not ready for God's blessings. We need to reinforce our capacity for receiving blessings. Peter showed himself a true candidate for God's favor by humbling himself in declaring himself unworthy. *"Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up"* (James 4:10). Later in Peter's life he said, *"...be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble"* I Peter 5:5).

5. The Lesson of Faith

Luke 5:9-10

The lesson of this fishing adventure was so much more than God blessing actual fishing. It had everything to do with boosting our belief system in evangelism.

6. The Life of Faith

Luke 5:11: *"And when they had brought their ships to land, they forsook all, and followed him."* According to Suetonius, Julius Caesar said, *"Lacta alea est* (the dice have been thrown or the die is cast)" in 49 B.C. just after he crossed the River Rubicon with his troops, burning the bridge behind him. The disciples now realized they must leave their entire lifestyle, give Jesus Lordship of their lives and follow Him to the end of the world if necessary.

7. The Reversal of Faith

John 21:3

Christ had died and risen from the grave, but Pentecost had not come. Peter took the initiative to declare he is going back to the old life. Sadly, when someone has leadership potential, he can get people to follow him in the wrong direction as well as the right direction. When saved people go in the wrong direction, they go without the blessing of God. It's always too soon to quit!

8. The Rebuke of Faith

John 21:4, 5

They were not looking for the resurrected Lord, therefore they did not recognize Him standing on the shore. Our Lord asked, *"...Children, have ye any meat?"* His question is a stinging rebuke. It reminds us of the way the Lord rebuked Elijah when he was running away from Jezebel: *"...What doest thou here, Elijah?"* (I Kings 19:9, 13).

9. The Renewal of Faith

John 21:6

I see a play on words in the command of Jesus to, *"...Cast the net on the right side of the ship..."* When we minister unto the Lord we need to always be on "the right side." Our Lord, ever the God of the second chance, goes ahead and lets the disciples catch a *"...multitude of fishes."* I see also an encouragement when we go fishing for men; God will bless.

10. The Restoration of Faith

John 21:7-9

There are only two places in Scripture where the exact words, *“a fire of coals”* are given. The first is in John 21:9: *“As soon then as they were come to land, they saw a fire of coals there, and fish laid thereon, and bread.”* The other passage is when Peter denied the Lord: John 18:18: *“And the servants and officers stood there, who had made a fire of coals; for it was cold: and they warmed themselves: and Peter stood with them, and warmed himself.”* This is a beautiful illustration that we will find the will of God right where we left it. Peter stepped out of the will of God when he denied the Lord three times by saying he did not know the Lord Jesus. Peter found the will of God when the Lord asked Peter if he loved Him three different times (John 21:11-22). The linchpin of all Christian service is love, and specifically, love to the Lord Jesus Christ.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Johnny Pope". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.