

## 15. Jesus Called His First Disciples

In our last topic, we saw that we want to help our physical and spiritual children develop God's purpose for their lives. Jesus commanded each of us as Christians to make disciples so that those disciples are equipped to make other disciples. This gives every Christian a real purpose for life. In this topic, we are going to see that Jesus started selecting a small group of men to be with Him so that they could be shown how to make disciples. As we follow the example of Jesus, and show a small group of Christians how to make disciples, we will fulfill this purpose that God has for each of us.

Luke 5:1-3 says, "So it was, as the multitude pressed about Him 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." The Lake of Gennesaret is also called by two other names, the Sea of Tiberius or the Sea of Galilee. Today, even though it is a large fresh water lake, it is best known by the last name, the Sea of Galilee.

The last verse of chapter four, Luke 4:44, says, "And He was preaching in the synagogues of Galilee." As Jesus continued to preach and teach about the kingdom of God, we see that large groups of people began to follow Jesus to hear Him teach the Word of God. This made it necessary for Jesus to begin teaching in places where larger crowds could gather to hear Him. On this particular day, we see that Jesus was standing and teaching by the lake and the crowds were all trying to get closer to hear Him. There were two boats close to the place where Jesus was teaching. The fishermen were on the shore nearby washing their nets.

Then, Jesus got into one of the boats. The particular boat that Jesus picked belonged to Simon Peter. Jesus asked Peter to push the boat a little way out from the land. We often find that when a large crowd came to hear Jesus, He either went to a mountain or to this lake. The reason for this was probably due to the fact that the mountains and the water made the sound carry better so that even those at the back of the crowd could hear what Jesus was saying. A person speaking by a smaller lake can often be heard on the other side of the lake. Jesus then sat down in the boat and taught the people from the boat. Once Jesus sat down in the boat, the people probably all sat down along the shore so that they could hear Jesus as He taught them.

Luke 5:4-7 says, "When He had stopped speaking, He said to Simon, 'Launch out into the deep and let down your nets for a catch.' 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.' And when they had done this, 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." When Jesus stopped teaching, the crowds probably left the lake shore and returned to their homes. However, Jesus was not yet through for the day.

Jesus turned to Simon and told him to take his boat out to a place where the water was deeper so

that he could let down his nets for a catch of fish. Commercial fishermen often fish at night because the fish are closer to the surface of the water. Here, Jesus was asking Simon Peter to let down his nets during the day when most of the fish would have been near the bottom of the lake. All fishermen knew that during the day was a poor time to fish. As a result, Peter said, “Master, we have toiled all night and caught nothing.” Peter and the other disciples used the title of Master for Jesus several times in the book of Luke. Peter and the others had worked hard the entire previous night and had not caught any fish. Now, Jesus was asking them to let down their nets at a poor time for fishing.

However, Peter had spent time with Jesus and had seen Him do various miracles. As a result, this caused Peter to say, “Nevertheless at Your word I will let down the net.” We see that Peter was willing to be obedient to Jesus even though Peter knew that this was not a good time to catch fish. This is an important lesson for each of us to learn in our own lives. We all need to learn the importance of obedience to Jesus. John 14:15 says, “If you love Me, keep My commandments.” Here, we see that Peter was willing to show his love for Jesus by being obedient even if he did not think that it was a good time to fish.

We see the results of obedience when we obey Christ even when it does not agree with the things we have been taught by others. Peter and Andrew let down their net. Then, the Lord showed that He is the One who controls the laws of nature. Immediately, their net was filled with fish. In fact, there was such a large number of fish in their net that the net began to break. Here, we see that Jesus gave Peter and his co-workers a visual illustration of something that Paul would write many years later. Ephesians 3:20-21 says, “Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us, to Him *be* glory in the church by Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen.” Peter suddenly realized that Jesus could do whatever He chose to do including filling their net with fish in the middle of the day.

Peter immediately motioned to their partners to come and help them. James and John quickly came with their boat to the place where Peter and Andrew were. Then, they filled both boats with the fish that were in the net. In fact, there were so many fish in the net that both boats began to sink as they continued to take fish out of the net. These men had never seen so many fish in their net. Suddenly, these men realized that Jesus could do many other things in addition to helping the sick and casting out demons. They realized that Jesus could do anything that He chose to do. That was a very clear statement to these men that Jesus is God.

We see the response of Peter to this new understanding of the fact that Jesus is God. Luke 5:8-11 says, “When Simon Peter saw *it*, he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, ‘Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord!’ For he and all who were with him were astonished at the catch of fish which they had taken; 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.’ So when they had brought their boats to land, they forsook all and followed Him.” We see that Peter immediately responded with an act of worship as he fell down in worship at the knees of Jesus.

In addition to realizing in a new way that Jesus was God, Peter also realized a very important

lesson about himself. As Peter fell down in worship at the knees of Jesus, he said, “Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord!” Peter realized that He was worshipping a holy God. Isaiah had this same response when He recognized the holiness of God. Isaiah 6:5 says, “So I said: ‘Woe is me, for I am undone! because I *am* a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; for my eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts.’” The Lord immediately sent an angel to Isaiah to purge his lips and told Isaiah that his sin had been purged. Then, we see that the Lord told Isaiah in Isaiah 6:7-8, “And he touched my mouth *with it*, and said: ‘Behold, this has touched your lips; your iniquity is taken away, and your sin purged.’ Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying: ‘Whom shall I send, and who will go for Us?’ Then I said, ‘Here am I! Send me.’” We see that this event had a similar impact on the lives of Peter and his co-workers that day.

The fishermen were all astonished at the miracle that Jesus had just performed and it made Peter very aware of his own sinful condition. Once Peter confessed that He was a sinful man, Jesus immediately changed his focus in life. He no longer needed to look at his past. Instead, he could now begin to look toward the future and what Jesus was going to do through his life. Jesus then told Peter, “Do not be afraid. From now on you will catch men.” This is one of the great blessings that we experience in our lives that is the result of the fact that Jesus has forgiven our sin. That forgiveness makes us new creations and Jesus is able to do through our lives whatever He chooses to do. Peter was told that he no longer needed to be fearful because of the sins of his past. Instead, he could look forward to what Jesus was going to do through his life in the future. This is an important lesson for all of us in our own lives.

Peter and the other fishermen were told that they would catch men from that time on. Here, we see that Jesus helped these men to understand what Jesus was going to do through their lives to give their lives meaning and purpose. We also see the response of the four men. We see that as soon as they brought their boats to the land, they forsook all and followed Jesus. These men had known Jesus for about a year. They had even traveled with Him to various places. However, this was an invitation to them to begin to spend more time with Jesus so that He could show them how to present the message of the forgiveness of sin and eternal life to others.

In the same way, we want to show our physical and spiritual children how to have meaning and purpose in their lives. True meaning in life comes from doing things that have eternal value. As we take our children with us and show them how to explain the Gospel to others, lead them to Christ and then help those new Christians grow to spiritual maturity, they will have the privilege of seeing the Lord work in the lives of others to change and transform their lives. May the Lord richly bless you as you show your children how to become disciples and then to make disciples.