**At Your Word!**

**Luke 5:1-11**

Trinity V – 07.17.2022

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Amen.

Such a crowd had followed Jesus, and was pressing in on Him so close, that only a few could hear. So, Jesus went over to Simon Peter’s boat which was beached nearby and had him put out a little from the land. Then, Jesus sat in the boat and taught the people from there – a natural amphitheater. When he had finished speaking, he said to Simon, “Put out into the deep and let down your nets for a catch.” And Simon answered, “Master, we toiled all night and took nothing! But at your word I will let down the nets.”

You all know what happened. The nets were lowered and filled two boats to the point that they were near sinking. Simon fell before Jesus’ knees and begged Him to depart, for he was a sinner, unworthy to have Jesus in his presence. To this Jesus informed him that from that point on he would be catching men.

Usually, this would be turned into a mission sermon, how we are all to be out evangelizing our neighbor, bringing the good news to them. I do not even need to tell you that is what you are to be about, you already know it. But at a guess, if I were to ask each of you individually, “how many you have personally brought the Gospel of Jesus Christ to another?” I dare say that many of you would be rather embarrassed to have the question asked of you. Why? Because you have not done it as well as you know that you should. Dare I say, I am guessing that in today’s environment, there are a few of you that do not do it at all. Repent!

While this could be a mission sermon, it is not. But even the question I just asked gets to the heart of what this text is about, it can be summed up in three words – At your word! In fact, looking all three texts, there are implicit commands from God which should illicit in us only one response – “At your word!” and we should immediately do as instructed.

Simon was tired, physically exhausted from his night’s work. Along comes Jesus, a fine speaker, maybe a prophet, he had even healed Simon’s mother-in-law. But what could he know about fishing? “Master, we toiled all night and took nothing!” You can hear the heaviness in his voice, his sigh of resignation. Jesus taught with authority and had done some healings, but Simon doubts anything different will happen…yet he speaks “But at your word I will let down the nets.”

Doubting any fish will be caught, much less and incredibly miraculous catch, Peter let down the nets for a catch. At this point, what was Jesus to Peter at this time? A rabbi? Probably! A good teacher? Definitely! A prophet, who had God with him? Possibly. But Peter had not yet confessed Jesus as the “Christ, the Son of the living God” as he would later.

How does he respond when Jesus tells him to let down the nets for a catch? Does he say, “I saw the miracles, I heard you teach, and I know there is something different about you, but you are asking me to believe that there are fish here – where there were none all night! You expect me to believe that you can change the laws of nature”

No, he does not respond that way. He simply says, “At your word!” I do not believe that anything different will happen than what happened throughout the night. But I will let down the nets because you say to do so. “At your word!”

How do people respond to the Word of God today? We all know the things that Christians should not be doing, yet we continue to do them – and then try to justify our sinfulness with excuses!

There are also those things which God commands Christians to BE doing – yet those are the very things we fail to do?

Confronted with God’s clear word, do we say, “At your word,” and then immediately do so? Or, when shown the clear teaching of God’s word, do we promptly ignore it, because it does not fit our world view? Instead of doing according to God’s Word, we are more like Peter when Jesus explained that He must suffer many things at the hands of the chief priests, scribes, and elders. Peter did not say, “At your word.” Instead, he rebuked Jesus, “God forbid it, Lord! This shall never happen to you.”

At this, Jesus rebuked Peter, even calling him Satan, for he did not have in mind the things of God, but of men. Too often our own desires trump God’s Word.

In our Old Testament lesson we learn that even Elijah faith faltered. Elijah was hiding in a cave in fear of being killed for his faithfulness to God. He told God how they were trying to kill him. God told him to continue his work, that Elijah was still His prophet, basically saying, “Get out of the cave and go do My work – the work I gave you to do!” Elijah was surely still scared for his life, yet he did as God commanded! Almost like saying, “At your word!”

How willing are you to say, “At your word!”, and then do as Christ commands?

Go, bring the Gospel to your neighbor! Yes Lord, at Your word?

Forgive your enemies and pray for those who persecute you. Yes Lord, at Your word?

Have unity of mind, sympathy, brotherly love, a tender heart, and a humble mind with all those in Christ! Yes Lord, at Your word?

Do not repay evil for evil or reviling for reviling, but on the contrary, bless, for to this you were called, that you may obtain a blessing. Yes Lord, at Your word?

Whoever desires to love life and see good days, let him keep his tongue from evil and his lips from speaking deceit; let him turn away from evil and do good; let him seek peace and pursue it. Yes Lord, at Your word?

Now who is there to harm you if you are zealous for what is good? But even if you should suffer for righteousness' sake, you will be blessed. Yes Lord, at Your word?

Have no fear of them, nor be troubled. Yes Lord, at Your word?

In your hearts regard Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you. Yes Lord, at Your command? (by the way, there is your command to do speak the Gospel to your neighbor)

You remember Peter’s response when Jesus told them He was going to suffer and die at the hands of evil men? Thankfully Jesus did not respond in the manner of Peter to the will of His Father.

God the Father had some instructions for His Son.

“Son, my beloved Son, my only begotten Son, you must take on human flesh in the womb of a virgin named Mary.”

“At Your word.”

“You must then be obedient to all my laws, and the laws of our creatures, even when they are unjust.”

“At Your word.”

“You must submit to baptism, taking into your flesh the sins of all mankind.”

“At Your word.”

“You must walk among the people, teaching them, doing miraculous signs among them, even though they will not believe that you are God.”

“At Your word.”

“You must submit to the authority of Jewish leadership when the arrest you and falsely accuse you.”

“At Your word.”

“You must submit to the authority of Pilate when brought before him.”

“At Your word.”

“You must allow yourself to be mistreated in the most, vile manner; to be spat upon, beaten, whipped, humiliated, and lied about.”

“At Your word.”

“You must submit to the most cruel form of punishment, that reserved for the most vile of criminals - crucifixion.”

“At Your word.”

Upon the cross you must give your life into death to pay for the sins of all those who abused You – indeed, to pay for the sins of all mankind.”

“At Your word.”

“Love them as You do all this for them.”

“At Your word.”

“Three days later, I will raise you from the dead.”

“At Your word.”

“You must give the authority I give to You, to Your disciples, and all who will hold the Office of the Holy Ministry – the authority to forgive sins.”

“At Your word.

“You Yourself must be present in the forgiveness they dispense.”

“At Your word.”

“You must be the Water of Life – the Word of Peace – AND – the Food and Drink which satisfies their hunger and thirst for righteousness.”

“At Your word.”

All this Jesus did, in obedience to the Father for your sake... He still does things... for you.

Jesus declares to you, “Hear the absolution my minister speaks and know your sins are forgiven.”

Yes Lord, at your word.

“Bring your children to the font, that they may be united to Me, cleansed of sin, granted new life, and made my dear children.”

Yes Lord, at your word.

“Hear My word proclaimed to you, for in that Word I come to you and build you up in the most holy faith unto life everlasting.”

Yes Lord, at your word.

“Eat and drink at the table I set before you of My precious body and blood. Eat and drink of forgiveness. Partake of the salvation I won for you out of My boundless love for you. Be strengthened in faith by this holy meal unto life everlasting.”

Yes Lord, at your word.

Hear Him speak to you – “You are mine now, and will be forever.” And declare with all boldness, “Amen.”

That is, “let it be so!” Or more to the point, “Yes Lord, at your word.”

In the name of Jesus. Amen.