

Epiphany 5 – Luke 5:1-11 The Call of the Disciples – Sunday, Feb. 6, 2022

May the words of my mouth and the meditations be pleasing to you O Lord. The story of the call of the first disciples reminds me of some of my own fishing stories. I've spent a lot of time over the years fishing. From the time when my brother Stuart and I were kids until now, I like to fish.

As children, our family often went camping at Sauble Falls Provincial Park. We'd go fishing on the Saugeen River because you could catch sizable pike and bass there. On one particular morning, we were fishing. We tried everything! Stuart, who is the keener, was getting really frustrated that we hardly had a nibble.

Then to our surprise who should troll down the river in his canoe but my dad's cousin Rick.

Now Rick is one of those diehards who goes fishing every weekend, and has his line in the water by 5am. So, Rick pulls up in front of us makes a couple of casts and bang! A big pike hits and he gets it in the canoe. My brother was so mad that he had put in all that time and effort and that Rick just floated into OUR fishing hole and stole the show. I thought it was great. Rick howled and laughed loudly as he was known to do. Then he left. It kind of makes me laugh just thinking about it.

Today, we hear in the gospel lesson one of the most famous fishing stories in scripture. As the story goes Simon Peter is cleaning up his nets and repairing holes.

Nearby the crowds were pushing in on Jesus as he was teaching so he asks Simon to borrow his boat so he can teach from the waters. Simon does as he's asked. When Jesus is finished with the boat, almost like a reward, he instructs Simon. "Ok see that deep water over there. Drop your nets over there and see what you catch."

You can imagine Simon. He must of looked at Jesus like he was crazy. So he responds:

"Master, I don't know about this. It seems kind of ridiculous to be honest. Ask the others. We have been fishing ALL NIGHT LONG and have caught zilch. Zero. Absolutely nothing!

But, *if you say so* I will do as you say."

What a sign of obedience.

It must've been awesome when Simon pulled the nets up. There was enough fish to fill two boats. The abundance of fish was most unbelievable.

So much so that Simon felt afraid, at first bowing at Jesus' feet and begging him, asking that Jesus leave him for he is sinful.

We know now Jesus was there for an alternate reason: to call Simon Peter, James and John to follow him.

So, I imagine Simon Peter, James and John, looking at each other then to their boat and then to Jesus, and sort of saying to Jesus, "Seriously? Have you seen the fish in these boats?"

It was easily the most wealth they'd ever had.

Yet they chose to walk away from it all, from a lifetime of wealth, to follow Jesus. Would you do it? Leave every nickel for someone else?

There had to be resistance to leave so much behind. Think about how their world was going to change.

I think of us now living in a Covid world. I remember when we were told it should be gone from Ontario and things would go back to normal after March Break of 2020. As we all know... So much has changed. I don't need to tell you that. Nothing will ever be the same again.

We have left so much of the old in the past and welcomed so much of the new – both good and bad. It has been difficult leaving large social gatherings behind, regular visits, seeing people's smiles, singing without masks and so forth. Now we have to welcome the new - the vaccines, rapid testing, masks, and the heavy use of technology as a means of being close to others.

So, where does this leave us now?

If you remember over the last three weeks I have been preaching on spiritual gifts, the body of Christ, and love.

During Covid what we're seeing is that people whose gifts have not come to the forefront previously, are shining through. The best is coming from people, because we are lonely when we are stuck at home and face limitations in our world. So many of us crave to be in-person together with our church family in our sanctuary praising God and renewing friendships. We miss the social gatherings in the parish hall. I am sure there are other community events we are missing out on too. I can only imagine it has to be very different worshipping from home. And yet we are all connected as the body of Christ whether at home or together.

Just like the disciples were called to follow Jesus, we are called to follow him too. So, what does that mean for us? First "to be called" is to use the talents you have been given for a specific purpose or job. It may be referred to as a vocation. So, for example some have gifts of working with

children so they have been called to be a teacher or daycare worker or coach or Sunday School teacher. If I were to take a guess, I think there are many in our congregation that know what their gifts are and what they're good at but don't see that they have been called.

Ultimately, all of us have been chosen and called to follow Jesus in fishing for people, sharing our faith. It can be scary to do so because it requires risk. There is always going to be resistance to talk to strangers about faith.

If you happen to have kids you probably remember the many times your children respond when asked to do something by saying, "Awe. Do I have to do it right now? Can I do it later?" If I'm honest I still say these things to my better half.

There isn't time for us to wait to do anything.

As the Body of Christ, God wants us to respond to his love now. Jesus didn't say to God when facing the cross, "Father, do I have to do it right now?" Instead, he did the opposite. He went very willingly and faithfully to the cross and rose again so all would have eternal life.

God doesn't say to us, "okay I choose you and you and you to live out your faith." He is calling us all to faithful service in his name. It may mean making ourselves enter uncomfortable spaces. So what? I am sure the cross wasn't comfortable either.

Let us go now in faith and follow. Be Christ to others. Share the love shown to you in the waters of Baptism. Enjoy the gifts of the Lord's Table. Share your priceless treasure, the gift of faith. Amen.