

Luke 5 & 6:1-16

Fishers of men



Begin each reflection in prayer: Suggested prayer:

Loving God, you called us each by name and gave your only Son to redeem us. Open our hearts to Jesus in the Gospel of Luke.

Send us the Holy Spirit to continue the mission of Jesus among us.

Give us the courage to speak his name to those who are close to us. And grant us the generosity to share his love with those who most need it.

Help us to be missionaries in his name.

We ask this through Christ our Lord.

Call of Simon: Luke 5: 1-11

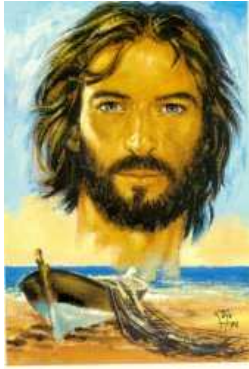
5:1 Now¹ Jesus was standing by the Lake of Gennesaret,² and the crowd was pressing around him³ to hear the word of God. **5:2** He⁴ saw two boats by the lake, but the fishermen had gotten out of them and were washing their nets. **5:3** He got into⁵ one of the boats, which was Simon's, and asked him to put out a little way from the shore. Then **6** Jesus⁷ sat down⁸ and taught the crowds from the boat. **5:4** When he had finished speaking, he said to Simon, "Put out into the deep water and lower⁹ your nets for a catch." **5:5** Simon¹⁰ answered,¹¹ "Master,¹² we worked hard all night and caught nothing! But at your word¹³ I will lower¹⁴ the nets." **5:6** When¹⁵ they had done this, they caught so many fish that their nets started to tear.¹⁶ **5:7** So¹⁷ they motioned¹⁸ to their partners in the other boat to come and help them. And they came and filled both boats, so that they were about to sink.¹⁹ **5:8** But when Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, "Go away from me, Lord,²⁰ for I am a sinful man!"²¹ **5:9** For²² Peter²³ and all who were with him were astonished²⁴ at the catch of fish that they had taken, **5:10** and so were James and John, Zebedee's sons, who were Simon's business partners.²⁵ Then²⁶ Jesus said to Simon, "Do not be afraid; from now on²⁷ you will be catching people."²⁸ **5:11** So²⁹ when they had brought their boats to shore, they left everything and followed³⁰ him.

Day 1. (Read Lk Chapter 5: 1-11)

1. How did Peter react when he witnessed the miraculous catch of fish?

2. Do you have moments of profound humility like Peter? Describe such a moment?

3. In what ways are you a fisher of others?



Luke presents Jesus as the missionary of the Father who is the founder of a missionary Church. It is not so much that the Church has a mission as the Mission of Jesus has a Church!

Central to Jesus' mission is the formation and foundation of a community of believers - a community who will participate fully in his mission. In Chapters 5 & 6, Luke shows that Jesus' first followers are called from within those he healed and forgave. He will prepare them to build up a Church of service. It is a service based in healing and forgiveness.

CALL OF SIMON (Lk 5:1-11).

Luke emphasizes the key role that Peter is to have in guiding the Church. He demonstrates that Peter does not choose Jesus. Jesus the Messiah chooses Peter! Simon Peter already knows Jesus through his preaching and healing (*Lk 4:38-39, Simon's mother-in-law is healed*). Yet Luke's account emphasizes how significant and symbolic is the call of Simon Peter. He is the first of many generations of apostles that Jesus will call and send in his name.

Luke 5:1. While the crowd was pressing in on Jesus and listening to the word of God, he was standing by the Lake of Gennesaret.

Verse 2 He saw two boats.

Jesus has a choice. He chooses the boat belonging to Simon. The second boat, which includes James and John, will be called over to participate in the abundant catch.

Verse 3 And He got into one of the boats, which was Simon's, and asked him to put out a little way from the land. And He sat down and began teaching the people from the boat. Jesus enters Simon's boat to continue his ministry of preaching and teaching. Simon and the apostles will continue the ministry of Jesus in the Church. Simon will become the prominent leader of the early Church. The image of the boat will often portray the Church.



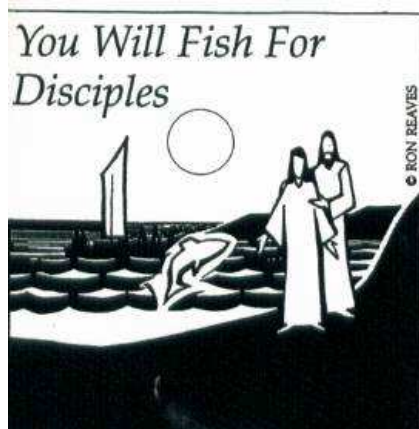
Verse 4 "Put out into the deep water and let down your nets for a catch." Jesus will lead Simon Peter and the early Church beyond Galilee and the Jewish culture to reach deeply into the Gentile world. Likewise, Jesus will call his followers to go deeper into themselves and step out in greater faith to become his missionaries. He will especially call Simon Peter to deeper commitment upon his resurrection.

Verse 5 "Simon answered master we have been hard at it all night long and have caught nothing; but if you say so, I will lower the nets." What Jesus was asking would have been absurd to a fisherman on the lake of Gennesaret. The fish fed at night and early morning. Jesus is asking Simon Peter to fish under the blaring sun. The episode shows two things. Jesus is about to show that he has authority over more than religious matters. And

Peter shows obedience to Jesus' command.

Verse 5 *“Upon doing this they caught such a great number of fish that their nets were at the breaking point. They signaled to their mates in the other boat to come and help them. These came, and together they filled the two boats until they nearly sank.”* The huge catch of fish shows Jesus' abundant care for his followers and the power he has for the mission. It foreshadows that his followers will have tremendous success in bringing others to Jesus. Likewise, no matter what the stress, challenge and difficulty the bond with Jesus will hold the mission together. They will not sink.

Verse 8 *“At the sight of this, Simon Peter fell at the knees of Jesus saying, “Leave me, Lord, I'm a sinful man.”* Simon Peter knew that he has witnessed the miraculous. Not only did a carpenter & preacher out fish him he did it in the worst time to fish and with a miraculous catch. He is truly humbled. He is the presence of the messiah the holy, wise and powerful one sent by God. In comparison he knows what a sinner he is. No one was more aware than Simon that he was unworthy before Jesus. This is what the whole story is about. God's chooses the lowly and empowers them. Jesus Calls sinners, gives them a new freedom and entrusts them with his mission.



Verse 10 *“Jesus said to Simon Peter,” Do not be afraid, from now on you will be catching men.”* Jesus promises Simon Peter a new way of life, a new career. With Jesus he will gather people into the kingdom. It is like the old saying:

‘Be fishers of men. You catch them. And Jesus will clean them’

Verse 11 *“With that they brought their boats to land, left everything, and became his followers.”*

There is no greater call or work than to be a follower of Jesus. To follow him is to make him Lord of our whole life.

The mission to the poor and abandoned:

5:12 While ³¹ Jesus ³² was in one of the towns, ³³ a man came ³⁴ to him who was covered with ³⁵ leprosy. ³⁶ When ³⁷ he saw Jesus, he bowed down with his face to the ground ³⁸ and begged him, ³⁹ “Lord, if ⁴⁰ you are willing, you can make me clean.” **5:13** So ⁴¹ he stretched out his hand and touched ⁴² him, saying, “I am willing. Be clean!” And immediately the leprosy left him. **5:14** Then ⁴³ he ordered the man ⁴⁴ to tell no one, ⁴⁵ but commanded him, ⁴⁶ “Go ⁴⁷ and show yourself to a priest, and bring the offering ⁴⁸ for your cleansing, as Moses commanded, ⁴⁹ as a testimony to them.” ⁵⁰ **5:15** But the news about him spread even more, ⁵¹ and large crowds were gathering together to hear him ⁵² and to be healed of their illnesses. **5:16** Yet Jesus himself ⁵³ frequently withdrew ⁵⁴ to the wilderness ⁵⁵ and prayed. Healing and Forgiving a Paralytic.

With his first followers accompanying him Jesus continues his mission to the poor and

outcast. God has come to heal his people and lead them to the kingdom as he promised. Jesus changes the lives of the outcast, a leper, a paralytic and a tax collector.

Cure of leper (Lk 5:12 – 16)

Day 2. (Read Lk: 5: 12-16) Jesus touches the leper.

1 What does this miracle say about the courage and compassion of Jesus?

2. Why did Jesus send the healed leper to the priest?

Leprosy (Lk 5:12)

In biblical times, leprosy included several skin diseases, such as skin cancers, psoriasis, herpes and Hansen's disease (leprosy). Some of the diseases were hideous to see & smell. All lepers were quarantined and survived only on charity. Their sickness was unjustly considered punishment for sin. It prohibited them from human contact and religious worship. Anyone who touched a leper was considered unclean (contaminated.) Such a person would have to avoid people and worship for a designated time. A person was not 'healed' from leprosy, but 'cleansed' as from sin or filth. Lepers were considered untouchables, sinners and outcast.

Lepers were the most marginalized people in Jesus time. They were feared because of their disease and considered grave sinners. Jesus intentionally sends the cured leper to the Jewish priest. It had a two fold purpose.

- Firstly, Jesus followed the norms of his religion. He was faithful to his Jewish religion.
- Secondly, he did not hide his missionary activity from the religious authorities.

It was a way of saying to the priest, Pharisees and scribes, "here I am, ready or not."

Priest Lk 5:14

Only the priest, acting as health inspectors, could certify a person clean of leprosy. The person then offered sacrifice and thanksgiving and was readmitted to human society and worship. (Leviticus 13-14).

A paralyzed man is healed (Lk 5:17 - 26)

Paralytic 5:17 Now on ⁵⁶ one of those days, while he was teaching, there were Pharisees ⁵⁷ and teachers of the law ⁵⁸ sitting nearby (who had come from every village of Galilee and Judea and from Jerusalem), ⁵⁹ and the power of the Lord was with him ⁶⁰ to heal. **5:18** Just then ⁶¹ some men showed up, carrying a paralyzed man ⁶² on a stretcher. ⁶³ They ⁶⁴ were trying to bring him in and place him before Jesus. ⁶⁵ **5:19** But ⁶⁶ since they

found⁶⁷ no way to carry him in because of the crowd, they went up on the roof⁶⁸ and let him down on the stretcher⁶⁹ through the roof tiles⁷⁰ right⁷¹ in front of Jesus.⁷² **5:20** When⁷³ Jesus⁷⁴ saw their⁷⁵ faith he said, “Friend,⁷⁶ your sins are forgiven.”⁷⁷ **5:21** Then⁷⁸ the experts in the law⁷⁹ and the Pharisees began to think⁸⁰ to themselves,⁸¹ “Who is this man⁸² who is uttering blasphemies?⁸³ Who can forgive sins but God alone?” **5:22** When Jesus perceived⁸⁴ their hostile thoughts,⁸⁵ he said to them,⁸⁶ “Why are you raising objections⁸⁷ within yourselves? **5:23** Which is easier,⁸⁸ to say, ‘Your sins are forgiven,’ or to say, ‘Stand up and walk?’ **5:24** But so that you may know⁸⁹ that the Son of Man⁹⁰ has authority on earth to forgive sins” – he said to the paralyzed man⁹¹ – “I tell you, stand up, take your stretcher⁹² and go home.”⁹³ **5:25** Immediately⁹⁴ he stood up before them, picked⁹⁵ up the stretcher⁹⁶ he had been lying on, and went home, glorifying⁹⁷ God. **5:26** Then⁹⁸ astonishment⁹⁹ seized them all, and they glorified¹⁰⁰ God. They were filled with awe,¹⁰¹ saying, “We have seen incredible¹⁰² things¹⁰³ today.”¹⁰⁴ **The Call of Levi; Eating with Sinners.**

Day 3: (Read Lk 5: 17-26) Jesus heals the paralytic.

1. Why can it be said that the friends of the paralytic were missionaries?

2. Why did the Pharisees accuse Jesus of blasphemy?

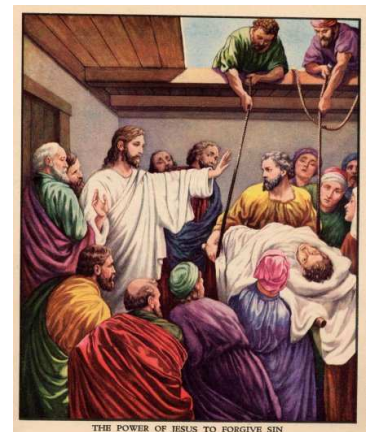
3. What does this miracle say about the authority of Jesus?

Jesus now heals a man in the presence of Pharisees and scribes. What makes the healing so incredible is that he publicly heals the man of his sin. Jesus forgives sin. This sets the Pharisees on attack. On another level, the men who went to great efforts to bring their paralyzed friend to Jesus show what it means to be a missionary. Jesus is training the apostles. They have a clear example in the conviction and determination of the paralytic’s friends.

The friends – pre-missionaries (Lk 5:18 – 20)

Nothing deterred these men from bringing the paralytic to Jesus. These men saw the need and responded. They worked together. Missionaries’ work with others in brings someone to Jesus. They also, brought a man who could not make it to Jesus on his own. When the crowd would not open a way for them they went over the crowd onto the roof. They even risked being run off by the owner of the house by taking apart the roof. Then precariously straddling the beams of the roof they lowered the sick man to Jesus.

These friends exhibit the missionary spirit, which the apostles will catch. It is the faith of these men that catches Jesus’ attention and makes the



healing/forgiveness a reality.”

Verse 20 “Seeing their faith Jesus said (to the paralytic)” my friend your sins are forgiven”

Confrontation with the Pharisees & scribes (Lk 5: 21 – 26)

Observe how different the religious authorities responded to Jesus. They do not respond with amazement to the friend’s efforts or the power of Jesus. There is not sign of compassion. There is no acknowledging Jesus as the messiah. Instead Jesus is rebuked as the worst type of sinner – a blasphemer.

Blasphemy (Lk 5:21)

Pharisees considered this, the worst sin a person could commit. It includes any offense to God’s authority or name. According to Jewish teachings blasphemy was punishable with death. Sin was considered an offense against God and only God could forgive sin. Jesus forgiving of the paralytic’s sins is a declaration equating his authority to God’s.

Pharisees (This word means separated ones) (Lk 5:17)

They set themselves off from and many times above the other Jews. There were only about 6,000 Pharisees in Palestine only 1% of the population. Still, they were an influential party because people looked upon them as the “unofficial religious leaders.” They believed that obedience to God’s commands was the most important religious obligation. In order to avoid unintentionally breaking a command they boxed the, laws with interpretations. For instance to avoid using God’s name in vain, they never use it. These boxed in interpretations of the Law were passed down throughout the generations until they carried as much authority as the Commandments & scripture itself.

Forgiveness of sins:

Jesus came to remove the leprosy of the soul, sin. Forgiveness of sin is at the heart of the reign of God. God offers forgiveness through Jesus. The Pharisees and scribes will not put faith in Jesus. They will not cede that God entrusts his authority to Jesus. Instead Jesus is rebuked as the worst kind of sinner.



Jesus brilliantly catches the Pharisees and scribes in their own logic.

Verse 23 “which is easier: to say, your sins are forgiven or to say get up and walk?”

Verse 24” In any case to make it clear on earth to forgive sins He then addressed the paralyzed man.” I say to you, get up! Take your mat with you and return to your house”. According to the Pharisees believed, severe sickness was a punishment for sin and a person could not be cured of a sickness until he was forgiven for his sins.



VOILA! Verse 25” At once the man stood erected before them, he picked up his mat and went home praising God.”

The call of the Tax Collector (Lk 5:27-32)

5:27 After ¹⁰⁵ this, Jesus ¹⁰⁶ went out and saw a tax collector ¹⁰⁷ named Levi ¹⁰⁸ sitting at the tax booth. ¹⁰⁹ “Follow me,” ¹¹⁰ he said to him. **5:28** And he got up and followed him, leaving everything ¹¹¹ behind. ¹¹² **5:29** Then ¹¹³ Levi gave a great banquet ¹¹⁴ in his house for Jesus, ¹¹⁵ and there was a large crowd of tax collectors and others sitting ¹¹⁶ at the table with them. **5:30** But ¹¹⁷ the Pharisees ¹¹⁸ and their experts in the law ¹¹⁹ complained ¹²⁰ to his disciples, saying, “Why do you eat and drink with tax collectors and sinners?” ¹²¹ **5:31** Jesus ¹²² answered them, “Those who are well don’t need a physician, but those who are sick do. ¹²³ **5:32** I have not come ¹²⁴ to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.” ¹²⁵

Day 4: (Read Lk 5: 27-32) Jesus calls a tax collector.

1. Why do the Pharisees consider Levi a sinner?

2. To you, what do Jesus’ words mean? “*The healthy do not need a doctor but the sick do.*”



God not only forgives sins through Jesus, but God seeks out sinners to accompany Jesus in the mission of salvation. Tax collectors were social outcast and considered low life sinners. They collected from their own people and gave to the oppressor, the Romans. They likewise took a good percentage for themselves.

Levi collected taxes outside the town. When called by Jesus he left everything to follow him. To celebrate the joyous event of his conversion, he gave a generous banquet for his friends; Jesus and the apostles was the guest of honor. (Levi’s conversion name was

considered as Mathew.)

It was this celebration of tax collectors and sinners that brought the second confrontation with the Pharisees. It sets the scene for Jesus’ focus of mission.

Verse 32 “*I have not come to invite the self-righteous to a change of heart, but sinners.*”

Fasting versus feasting (Lk 5:33 – 39)

Jesus and his disciples feasted because they chose to be where the sinners were. Yet there was a deeper reason for their choice. They had reason to celebrate also; they were with the Royal Bridegroom, the Messiah. It beckons back to Jesus’ missionary identity (Lk 4:18-19) “*He has sent me to bring glad news to the poor. To announce a year of favor from the lord.*”

Fast and pray (Lk 5:33)

All Jews fasted yearly on the Day of Atonement. Individuals chose to fast at other times for worship on prayer. Jesus fasted in the desert. The pious Pharisees fasted twice a week for the atonement of sins of the nation.

Jesus knew the law better than the Pharisees. He drew upon the wedding celebration, which usually lasted a week. During the wedding feast day the guests of the bridegroom were free from all fast expectations. It was a time of great joy.

The Sabbath (Lk 6:1-11)

6:1 Jesus ¹ was going through the grain fields on ² a Sabbath, ³ and his disciples picked some heads of wheat, ⁴ rubbed them in their hands, and ate them. ⁵ **6:2** But some of the Pharisees ⁶ said, “Why are you ⁷ doing what is against the law ⁸ on the Sabbath?” **6:3** Jesus ⁹ answered them, ¹⁰ “Haven’t you read what David did when he and his companions were hungry – **6:4** how he entered the house of God, took ¹¹ and ate the sacred bread, ¹² which is not lawful ¹³ for any to eat but the priests alone, and ¹⁴ gave it to his companions?” ¹⁵ **6:5** Then ¹⁶ he said to them, “The Son of Man is lord ¹⁷ of the Sabbath.” **Healing a Withered Hand****6:6** On ¹⁸ another Sabbath, Jesus ¹⁹ entered the synagogue ²⁰ and was teaching. Now ²¹ a man was there whose right hand was withered. ²² **6:7** The experts in the law ²³ and the Pharisees ²⁴ watched ²⁵ Jesus ²⁶ closely to see if ²⁷ he would heal on the Sabbath, ²⁸ so that they could find a reason to accuse him. **6:8** But ²⁹ he knew ³⁰ their thoughts, ³¹ and said to the man who had the withered hand, “Get up and stand here.” ³² So ³³ he rose and stood there. **6:9** Then ³⁴ Jesus said to them, “I ask you, ³⁵ is it lawful to do good on the Sabbath or to do evil, to save a life or to destroy it?” **6:10** After ³⁶ looking around ³⁷ at them all, he said to the man, ³⁸ “Stretch out your hand.” The man ³⁹ did so, and his hand was restored. ⁴⁰ **6:11** But they were filled with mindless rage ⁴¹ and began debating with one another what they would do ⁴² to Jesus.

Day 5: (Read Lk 6: 1-11) Discussion about the Sabbath.

1. What do the Pharisees accuse the disciple of doing?

2. What does Jesus teach us from the healing of the man with the withered hand?

3. Jesus confronted the Pharisees of his day. Who do you think Jesus would confront today? Why?

The Sabbath was sacred. “Remember to keep holy the Sabbath day.” (Exodus20) Jesus is confronted twice in this chapter because of his activity on the Sabbath he makes 2 points.

1. The Pharisees had taken the spirit out of this law. They restricted the Sabbath so much that the reason for it became secondary to keep all the regulations. The reason for the Sabbath was to rest and be



renewed in their relationship with God.

2. Jesus is lord of the Sabbath healing and renewing is God's recreation.

Jesus is a dynamic fisherman for the kingdom. He caught the hearts of the poor, sinners and tax collectors. As hard as he tried he could not touch the Pharisees. They were to remain true to their name – Pharisees -The separated ones, the real untouchables.

FATHER JUDGE: "APOSTLES"



"The hope of our generation lies with the faithful. All great movements come out of the laity; to them we look for our priest, for our consecrated ones in every department of Catholic charity. The supreme question, then, is how to get from every work-a-day Catholic a sense of responsibility for his neighbor. It is necessary to make each of them realize that indeed he is his brother's keeper.

This truth is easily within their capacity, in fact they eagerly reach out for it. It has been my experience that the people of everyday life are really great missionaries. I have had converts, but if I speak to you in simplicity and candor, I must admit that other were responsible for my converts. Looking over a missionary experience of years, I must confess that with the converts who came to me I was but a party to the fact... The first agent in those conversions generally was some man or woman in the office, store or factory, school or sickroom.

How can we effect that every Catholic, no matter in what circumstances they may be, will be a missionary? If this can be affected, vexing problems will be solved... That the remedy may be in proportion to the need, a question supremely important should be agitated. I place this question before you. I ask you to keep it with you. What can I do to make every Catholic a missionary?"

(Fr. Judge address to National Convention of Catholic Charities 1923)