

The title for today's message is: **How's The Fishing, Any Bites?**

Jesus said: ***“Do not be afraid; from now on you will be catching men.”***

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

Please forgive the awful pun, but there's something "fishy" about this morning's Gospel lesson.

No, it's not the miraculous catch of fish, most of us don't struggle that much with the miracles of Jesus.

But what seems fishy, is Simon's instantaneous conversion from a fisher of fish to a fisher of men.

How can a person make such a big life change decision with such little or if any real thought?

Our gospel lesson today is the story about Jesus calling His first disciples, and how they left everything they had behind and followed Him.

As the story goes, Luke said that Jesus was preaching to a crowd on the shore of Lake Gennesaret. (gua-ness-er-ate)

And as He was preaching, the crowd grew larger and larger, to the point where Jesus was now being pushed toward the waters edge of the lake.

Luke tells us that Jesus noticed two boats tied up near by and the owners were on shore cleaning their nets after a long night of fishing.

Now a man by the name of Simon-Peter was the owner of one of the boats, actually a man Jesus already knew. Were told in John chapter 1 that:

Andrew, Simon-Peter's brother heard John the Baptist say to those around him as Jesus was walking by the lake; ***Behold the Lamb of God.***

Andrew then went and found his brother Simon-Peter and said they had found the Messiah. He then took Simon-Peter over to where Jesus was.

Now Jesus asked Simon-Peter to take Him out in his boat so He could continue preaching to the crowds.

And he did, he agreed to take Jesus out a very short distance from the shore in his boat.

Now, when Jesus finished preaching, and the crowds began leaving, Simon -Peter prepared to return to shore.

But before he could, Jesus made yet another request of him, this time Jesus asked Simon-Peter to: ***“Put out into the deep and let down your nets for a catch.”***

Simon-Peter and Andrew had fished all night and caught nothing, So, I'm sure the last thing they wanted was to go back out to fish again.

Now I'm sure you have finished some kind of work, where your tired, dirty and all you want to do is get home to clean up and get some sleep.

It's almost like going out to get a gift, you know what you want, but after looking for this gift all day long, without success, you get discouraged.

So you go home totally exhausted. You call a friend telling your friend about your day and your friend tells you where you can find what your looking for.

Your friend also tells you that you should go back to the mall right away because the thing your looking for might sell out soon.

What would you say, or do? Most likely you would say no way I'm too tired, right. Well Simon-Peter tried to make an excuse not to go, he said to Jesus.

“Master, we toiled all night and took nothing! Yet in the same breath, he also said: But at your word I will let down the nets.”

After all Simon-Peter and Andrew had been through the night before, they agreed to do as Jesus requested. But why?

Well first of all, having some knowledge of Jesus they probably thought Jesus might have some kind of power over their fishing.

Now, what happens next, was no less than a miracle, a great miracle. Luke said: ***And when they had done this, they enclosed a large number of fish, and their nets were breaking.***

Wow, can you imagine, the fish were actually jumping into their nets, so much that their nets couldn't hold them all, and the nets started to break.

It got so out of hand that, Simon-Peter called out to James and John in the other boat to come over and fill their boat with some of the fish.

The thing is; Simon-Peter's boat got very low in the water and was starting to sink all because he and Andrew were catching too many fish.

Right away James and John came over to Simon-Peter's boat to help, but soon after their boat began to sink. There was simply too many fish.

Only by the grace of God both boat's made it back to shore before their boats sunk, losing all the fish.

Now that's a fishing story to beat all fishing stories. Simon was so grateful he says to Jesus: ***“Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord.”***

Simon-Peter didn't think he was worthy to be in the presents of Jesus nor did he believe he deserved such a blessing.

Sound familiar, isn't that the way you feel when Jesus blesses you? No! It should be.

Look, we should always feel unworthy for all the blessings Jesus bestows on us.

Were all, as Simon-Peter points out, sinners, and enemies of God. Were not worthy of being in God's presents, but like Simon-Peter.

We too, have been given a glimpse of who Jesus really is, and still is today. Jesus is without a doubt, the Son of God the savior of the world.

Finally, after all that happened that day, Jesus tells Simon-Peter Andrew, James, and John that they will no longer fish for fish in the sea, but rather, they will be fishers of men.

They were to be His disciples, going out into the world, sharing the Word of God to all who would listen.

And yes, this is the same thing Jesus wants you, me, and all believers to do, because He has made all believers and you and I fishers of men.

Now, Luke finishes by saying that Simon-Peter, Andrew, James and John left to follow Jesus. I'm sure they did not really knowing what was ahead.

These four men didn't have the benefit of knowing the end of the story of Jesus' life here on earth. unlike Christians today who do

Simon-Peter, Andrew, and James and John, they left everything behind and followed Jesus by faith alone.

Yet, its still very hard for many Christians, especially today, to completely dedicate themselves to following Jesus.

You know, as we look at our text for today, written by St. Luke, we can see many things regarding faith that jump out at us.

Some we relate to, and others we can't imagine. And whether we understand any of it.

We do understand, that something very special happened to those four men on that shore many years ago.

Their lives were changed in a big way once they believed in the Word of God. And it's the same for us, we too, are changed people today.

Were changed when we were Baptized and opened our hearts, as the Holy Spirit entered in.

We are disciples of Jesus, we do have a job to do bringing the truth of the Gospel to everyone who will listen.

Pointing them to Jesus, so that they too may enjoy a saving relationship with Him.

So ask a friend, or a neighbor, to come to church with you next Sunday, so they too may become fishers of men.

Amen.

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with us all. Amen.