

Where is God in the world? Calling you. Luke 5:1-11. Feb 10 2019.

[Children invited to be involved in opening:] After the Superbowl last week, an enormous rush of photographers and reporters pressed in around the quarterback of the winning team. This is what it looked like. *[pictures]* Can you imagine being in that jumble of people?

Now in the midst of that, usually one reporter gets to ask the winning QB a few questions. And then everyone interested gets a chance to hear what he has to say. That looked like it might not happen. There was so much noise, and so much commotion from everyone pressing in, that at first people couldn't get the chance. But how much would it have mattered if we didn't hear the winning QB's words? It's just about a football game. It wouldn't make a big difference or change your lives or mine.

But what if instead there was a different person on a different day sharing some really important words. What if the same kind of crowding in of people was happening, and with all the noise and commotion it made it impossible for some people to hear? And what if it was a message that everyone needed to hear so that they could go on living and not die? It would be important then to make sure everyone got a chance to hear, right?

What could you or I do if that were happening? Figure out a way to get some space for the person, and get everyone arranged in such a way, so that everyone could see and hear the words.

Jesus - on this day we hear about in the Bible - had a crowd of people pressing up to him. And he knew: all people need to hear the news that He is our Savior from sin. So what did he do? He made sure all the people could hear His word. When we hear the verses read in a moment, it's neat to hear how He made sure everyone could hear. And then remember this truth:

Jesus calls each of you, each of us, to hear His Word. His Word is all right here in the Bible. And why that is so important is... Everyone who hears His word and trusts in Him to save us has forgiveness of sins that He gives us and wit that the gift of life forever with Him.

The most important thing in all of life then, which the Lord calls on us to do, is: to hear and trust His Word. *[Children invited to return to their seats for rest of sermon.]*

Walk into this day that takes place in Luke ch.5. I want to take 5 steps into the scene with you. There's application for us to take away with each step. Here's our first step in:

One time, while the crowd was pressing in on Jesus and listening to the word of God, he was standing by the Lake of Gennesaret. ² He saw two boats there along the lakeshore. The fishermen had left them and were washing their nets. ³ Jesus got into one of the boats, which belonged to Simon, and asked him to put out a little from the shore. He sat down and began teaching the crowds from the boat.

We observe quickly that Peter was already a listener of Jesus' word. We know that from the days that precede this. We see evidence of it on this day. Jesus asks for the use of his boat, and Peter listens. The goal of getting Jesus' Word out was taking place. And Peter was listening. The crowd was listening. And we join them at the same conclusion:

Truth #1: Jesus calls us to hear His Word.

2. Take another step into the scene.

⁴ When he had finished speaking, he said to Simon, "Put out into the deep water, and let down your nets for a catch."

⁵ Simon answered him, "Master, we worked hard all through the night and caught nothing. But at your word I will let down the nets." ⁶ When they had done this, they caught a great number of fish, and their nets were about to tear apart. ⁷ They signaled their partners in the other boat to come and help them. They came and filled both boats, so that they began to sink.

If you were there, how do you think this would have sounded to you? Jesus, the son of a carpenter, gave Peter - the experienced fisherman - instructions for going fishing. And everything Peter knew from experience told him

not to expect anything to come from fishing in the deep water in the day. But Peter hearing Jesus' direction says: "But at your word, I'll do it." And He does it.

Trust. For Peter, Jesus was worthy of trust. Jesus' word would be put above his own experience or reason. That's a result already at work within Peter from his time with Jesus, listening to him.

Truth #2 today: Jesus also calls us to put His Word above our senses and reason and experience.

Who hasn't been where Peter was at that moment? I'm not talking about fishing, but: how many other examples flash to mind where we are called on to do the same thing Peter did? That is: to put Jesus' word above our senses, reason and experience. How about the instance where evidence suggests little hope of success getting through with God's truth to someone or a group around us..." but at your word, Lord, I'll look to seize every opportunity to give the reason for the hope I have. And we'll – as a group – go at the goal to Preach the Good News to all creation." Or how about when? There seems to be no resolution to the problem or pain we're facing, and we've prayed and prayed, and we don't see any good – we don't see God's answer... "but at your word, Lord, I'll keep praying and I'll trust you're answering." How many times – how many ways – do our senses and experience and sight seem to tell us something altogether different than Jesus' Word? How about this one? It seems like if I serve – and put my spouse before myself and serve the interest of others, how will my need be met? "But at your word, Lord, I'll trust you'll figure out the way to take care of me."

"Jesus has not called us to judge things by what reason tells us or by what we see or by what we feel; he has called us to faithfulness to his Word..." – Devotions on the Wisdom of God and the Foolishness of Man, Pastor – Professor - Author Deutschlander.

Jesus calls us to put His Word above our senses and reason and experience. That's a result God brings about within us from time with Jesus hearing His Word. What an awesome thing when faith triumphs over human objections and concludes: "Everything else would lead me to a different conclusion, but at your word, Lord, I'll follow the direction you give me."

So Peter gives this beautiful confession of trust, based just on listening to Jesus' word, before even as much as one measly little fish is in the nets. ... Then, when the nets are full, and the trust he expressed is shown to be well-placed in Jesus, everything suddenly seems all upset and all-a-jumble in the scene.

3. ⁸ When Simon Peter saw this, he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, "Go away from me, because I am a sinful man, Lord." ⁹ For Peter and all those with him were amazed at the number of fish they had caught, ¹⁰ and so were James and John, the sons of Zebedee, who were partners with Simon.

Put yourself in Peter's shoes. What this reveals to you is: the One right in front of you is the Lord: holy, all-powerful, knowing everything. He must then, of course, know everything about you. Every sinful deed, known. And even more – seeing right down into you, knowing the mess your thoughts have been. When you didn't act in sin, but you sure thought about it and would have liked to, and might have if you had the opportunity, or if you weren't afraid of getting caught. And then there's the times we're trying our best, but the same day we express trust many moments, we find ourselves complaining still about something (God has given in our life). Or we'll thank him for the gifts that catch our attention, but the same day we'll fail to appreciate so much else that doesn't sparkle quite as much in our estimation.

Could you or I come up with anything better than what Peter cries out? What might a repentant but still sinful human say in this situation? It is, after all, our situation every day. The Lord Jesus is here. Unseen, but just as present as when He stood visibly before Peter.

Truth #3 that we take away today: Jesus calls us to a proper understanding of who He is and who we are (what we are like). Or, to rephrase in a briefer statement: he calls us to awe & confession.

So, where do we go from there? Look where Peter goes.

The last word to fall from his lips as he fell at Jesus' knees was: "Lord." Realize, the name "LORD" is wrapped in the meaning: He is absolutely constant - faithful to His love and faithful to His every Word, which of course includes his promises of rescue for us. That's where Peter leaves the matter of his sin and his unworthiness. He leaves it at the word "LORD", as he remains bowed before him.

Don't we do the same? We say: "*Lord*, have mercy on me, a sinner." And we await our Lord's reply. And so we take step 4 into our lesson today...

4. **Jesus said to Simon, "Have no fear.**

The gospel word, the good news, from our Lord is the only thing that can truly heal and make right the relationship between our holy God and us.

Jesus told Peter, Don't be afraid. And He tells us the same. The only way that is possible for a sinner in the presence of our holy God is: He has taken our sin from us, and has hurled it into the depths from which no one can bring it back to put back on us... there's a Bible verse that assures of that with the words, He has taken our sin and hurled them into the depths of the sea. Jesus had taken our sins, suffered our

Truth #4: Jesus calls us with the good news (don't despair, don't fear, your sin has been taken away, your guilt is removed)

5. **From now on you will be catching people." ¹¹ After they brought their boats to the shore, they left everything and followed him**

Truth #5: Jesus calls us to serve him.

If we look at the close of this account and see primarily the call of 3 men to be Jesus' disciples in a full-time ministry role, we'll certainly walk away with an important truth. But we'll be missing something if we don't see the bigger picture. The source and motivation and power for all that we do in service to God is: the mercy He has already shown to us in Jesus. Romans 12:1 says it like this: "In view of God's mercy, offer your bodies as living sacrifices to God." Makes one think of "leaving everything" and "following him." The bigger truth here isn't limited to those called to serve in full time ministry. The application extends to all areas of Christian life. The basis for serving the Lord is always what we see here: any call to do what is good must be connected to the good news of God's love to us in Jesus.

As Jesus picks us up with his promise of mercy, everything changes. What he has done to make us His own and heirs of heaven is nothing short of miraculous. And, as he says to each of us, "Follow me. Listen to me. Trust me. Love and serve me," His Word and His love move us to say like Joshua... "As for me, as for my household, we will serve the Lord."