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Christ the King Lutheran Church – Cody, WY  
Fifth Sunday after Trinity  
July 20, 2025  
Text: Luke 5:1–11

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

There's more going on in this gospel reading than a miraculous catch of fish. If it were only about an extraordinary, miraculous catch of fish at the wrong time of day in the worst part of the lake, we'd take note but then go on our merry way. Wow! Wasn't that something. That was really something.

But nothing turns out as you might expect after such a wondrous event. Seeing the boats fill with fish, Peter feared for his life! Now that was strange. What should have been a boon for his business resulted in astonishment. And at the end of the day, Peter, James, and John quit fishing altogether. Imagine that! A miraculous catch of fish that fills two boats so full they began to sink and three life-long, professional fishermen quit the same day; left everything, fish, boats, and all on the shore. They began following Jesus, the same man Peter was so afraid of in the boat. It's all rather strange and uncanny. Something more is going here than a miraculous catch of fish.

The key phrase in this section of Scripture comes from Peter. In response to our Lord's command to set out the nets, Peter said, "But at your word..." (vs. 5). The word of Jesus is the heart and core of everything that takes place in God's kingdom. Or to put it more concretely, the word of Christ is the heart of everything in Christ's Church. Without Christ's word, nothing happens: no forgiveness, no terrified consciences set at peace, no salvation unto eternal life, no life in the Spirit, no hope for life in this world or the world to come. In the Church and for Christians, the word of Christ is everything. No matter how crazy it may seem, the word of Christ is everything. That's the take home message today. The word of Christ is everything for us Christians.

Luke prepares us for this central message in vs. 1, “On one occasion, while the crowd was pressing in on Jesus to hear the word of God...” What’s drawing the people to Jesus isn’t the miracles but His teaching and preaching. This is early in Jesus’ ministry and Luke has already written three times that people are astounded at Jesus’ preaching (4:14, 22, 31). He preaches with authority not like the scribes and Pharisees. To be sure, Jesus has cast out a demon and healed many of fevers and various diseases. But it’s His preaching that draws the crowds.

There’s something we need to take note of here. Luke calls our Lord’s preaching and teaching “the word of God.” Everything that Jesus said during His earthly ministry was the word of God. I mean the very words coming out of Jesus’ mouth and heard by the crowds. The words Jesus speaks are God’s Word. This, in part, is why we stand for the reading of the Gospel text in our worship services; they are the very words of God the Father spoken by His Son.

The entire Bible is the word of God, inspired by the Holy Spirit, without error, true in all its parts and details. The Word of the Lord endures forever. And yet, the words of Jesus are the very words of God spoken by the Son of God Himself. The Church stands up when we hear the words of Jesus; the word of God spoken by God’s Son. The apostle John gives some reflection on this truth in chapter 12:46–50:

<sup>46</sup>I have come into the world as light, so that whoever believes in me may not remain in darkness. <sup>47</sup>If anyone hears my words and does not keep them, I do not judge him; for I did not come to judge the world but to save the world. <sup>48</sup>The one who rejects me and does not receive my words has a judge; the word that I have spoken will judge him on the last day. <sup>49</sup>For I have not spoken on my own authority, but the Father who sent me has himself given me a commandment—what to say and what to speak. <sup>50</sup>And I know that his commandment is eternal life. What I say, therefore, I say as the Father has told me.”

Jesus, the incarnate Son of God, speaks the words of the Father Himself. For Jesus is the Christ, anointed by the Holy Spirit to speak the Father's words and to fulfill the Father's will. All who hear and believe the words and deeds of Jesus have eternal life. To reject the words of Jesus is to reject God the Father. For Jesus speaks what "the Father has told me."

The Church in 21<sup>st</sup> century America is going through a bit of a crisis. What I'm referring to here is the visible, organizational Church that is made up of denominations, organizations, synods, local congregations, etc. The Church that is the Body of Christ, the one, holy, Christian and apostolic church isn't in crisis at all. She is pure, holy, spotless as Ephesians 5 describes her. But the visible Church is in crisis in this regard: what word is she going to say to her members and to the world? Or to put the question differently... upon which word will she stand upon? The word of man or the word of Christ?

Jesus teaches that He builds His Church by making disciples of all nations through the means of teaching God's Word and baptizing in God's Trinitarian name (Matthew 28:18-19). In local congregations, people gather around preaching. It must be nothing less than the whole counsel of God recorded in the Bible. Along with preaching, the church gathers to receive the sacraments of baptism, absolution, and Holy Communion. Christians respond with prayers, praises, the giving of offerings, and the giving of mutual support and encouragement.

In these local congregations, Christians hear and learn about Jesus, God's Son, and the world's Savior. He came in our human flesh and blood, true God and true man, to bear our sins. He took them all to Calvary's cross where He shed His holy, divine blood so that all the world may know that their sins are forgiven by God Himself. Jesus rose from the dead in order to destroy the power of Satan and death. Because of Jesus' perfect life, atoning death, and resurrection from the dead, God and man are reconciled. These are the things Jesus did for us and for our salvation. The kingdom of God, the forgiveness of sins, God's love for the world, fellowship with God and God's people, living a godly life in faith in the world, the hope of the resurrection, and so

forth are the things Jesus preached to sinners of every sort. His apostles continued that ministry with the steadfast, confident faith that upon this Jesus, what He did and what He said, the Church will stand. Jesus said, “Whoever loves me will keep my Word” (John 14:23).

There are innumerable challenges facing the Church. It’s always been this way. Jesus told us to expect spiritual and physical trials and tribulations, rejection from the unbelieving world, and so forth. Nothing should surprise us. Nor should we be afraid.

So what is the Church to confess to the world and to her members about these challenges? About questions on human sexuality, about human nature being expressed as male and female, about justice, virtue, and political power, about human suffering, natural and man-made tragedies, about marriage, ordering family life, about divorce, about sin and evil in the world and among Christians, about education, about the purpose, meaning, and goal of human life, about competing religions and other religious claims of authority....the list could go on.

To all of them, we respond with what St. Paul told the Christians in Corinth. We preach the crucified and resurrected Jesus with the unswerving conviction that the word of the cross may be folly to the world, but for us who are being saved it is the power of God (vs. 18). Christ Jesus is the power and wisdom of God (vs. 24). To be sure, we study holy Scripture from beginning to end. We dig deep and treasure its teachings as our highest good. For the Bible teaches us about Christ Jesus. Dear saints of God, we stand upon the word of Christ Jesus, our Lord. We take up our cross daily and we follow Him. The consequences and outcomes are in His hands. But we know from God’s Word, Jesus will work all things for our good according to His purposes.

Remember, the words of Jesus are everything for us. And what did Jesus say to Peter, the Peter who was afraid because he knew he was a condemned sinner trapped in a boat with God, “Do not be afraid...” (vs. 10). Those are

words of forgiveness, renewal, courage, and strength. Our Lord speaks to our troubled hearts and minds and says, “Don’t be afraid.”

Lest we miss the point...those words that Jesus spoke and continues to speak to us are God’s Words! God the Father says to us through His Son according to the Scriptures inspired by the Spirit, “Don’t be afraid.” Upon those words, we stand, we follow Jesus, and we live in great hope, filled with joy, and enduring peace unto eternal life...

✠ In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. ✠ Amen.

Now the peace of God which surpasses all understanding, keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus unto life everlasting. Amen.

#### **OLD TESTAMENT READING**

1 Kings 19:11–21

<sup>11</sup>[The Lord] said, “Go out and stand on the mount before the LORD.” And behold, the LORD passed by, and a great and strong wind tore the mountains and broke in pieces the rocks before the LORD, but the LORD was not in the wind. And after the wind an earthquake, but the LORD was not in the earthquake. <sup>12</sup>And after the earthquake a fire, but the LORD was not in the fire. And after the fire the sound of a low whisper. <sup>13</sup>And when Elijah heard it, he wrapped his face in his cloak and went out and stood at the entrance of the cave. And behold, there came a voice to him and said, “What are you doing here, Elijah?” <sup>14</sup>He said, “I have been very jealous for the LORD, the God of hosts. For the people of Israel have forsaken your covenant, thrown down your altars, and killed your prophets with the sword, and I, even I only, am left, and they seek my life, to take it away.” <sup>15</sup>And the LORD said to him, “Go, return on your way to the wilderness of Damascus. And when you arrive, you shall anoint Hazael to be king over Syria. <sup>16</sup>And Jehu the son of Nimshi you shall anoint to be king over Israel, and Elisha the son of Shaphat of Abel-meholah you shall anoint to be prophet in your place. <sup>17</sup>And the one who escapes from the sword of Hazael shall Jehu put to death, and the one who escapes from the sword of Jehu shall Elisha put to death. <sup>18</sup>Yet I will leave seven thousand in Israel, all the knees that have not bowed to Baal, and every mouth that has not kissed him.”

<sup>19</sup>So he departed from there and found Elisha the son of Shaphat, who was plowing with twelve yoke of oxen in front of him, and he was with the twelfth. Elijah passed by him and cast his cloak upon him. <sup>20</sup>And he left the oxen and ran after Elijah and said, “Let me kiss my father and my mother, and then I will follow you.” And he said to him, “Go back again, for what have I done to you?” <sup>21</sup>And he returned from following him and took the yoke of oxen and sacrificed them and boiled their flesh with the yokes of the oxen and gave it to the people, and they ate. Then he arose and went after Elijah and assisted him.

P: This is the Word of the Lord.

**C: Thanks be to God.**

### **EPISTLE READING**

*1 Peter 3:8–15*

<sup>8</sup>Finally, all of you, have unity of mind, sympathy, brotherly love, a tender heart, and a humble mind. <sup>9</sup>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. <sup>10</sup>For

“Whoever desires to love life

and see good days,

let him keep his tongue from evil

and his lips from speaking deceit;

<sup>11</sup>let him turn away from evil and do good;

let him seek peace and pursue it.

<sup>12</sup>For the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous,

and his ears are open to their prayer.

But the face of the Lord is against those who do evil.”

<sup>13</sup>Now who is there to harm you if you are zealous for what is good? <sup>14</sup>But even if you should suffer for righteousness' sake, you will be blessed. Have no fear of them, nor be troubled, <sup>15</sup>but 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.

P: This is the Word of the Lord.

**C: Thanks be to God.**

### **GOSPEL READING**

*Luke 5:1–11*

P: The Holy Gospel according to St. Luke, the fifth chapter.

**C: Glory be to Thee, O Lord.**

<sup>1</sup>On one occasion, while the crowd was pressing in on [Jesus] to hear the word of God, he was standing by the lake of Gennesaret, <sup>2</sup>and he saw two boats by the lake, but the fishermen had gone out of them and were washing their nets. <sup>3</sup>Getting into one of the boats, which was Simon's, he asked him to put out a little from the land. And he sat down and taught the people from the boat. <sup>4</sup>And when he had finished speaking, he said to Simon, “Put out into the deep and let down your nets for a catch.” <sup>5</sup>And Simon answered, “Master, we toiled all night and took nothing! But at your word I will let down the nets.” <sup>6</sup>And when they had done this, they enclosed a large number of fish, and their nets were breaking. <sup>7</sup>They signaled to their partners in the other boat to come and help them. And they came and filled both the boats, so that they began to sink. <sup>8</sup>But when Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, “Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord.” <sup>9</sup>For he and all who were with him were astonished at the catch of fish that they had taken, <sup>10</sup>and so also were James and John, sons of Zebedee, who were partners with Simon. And Jesus said to Simon, “Do not be afraid; from now on you will be catching men.” <sup>11</sup>And when they had brought their boats to land, they left everything and followed him.

P: This is the Gospel of the Lord.

**C: Praise be to Thee, O Christ**