

Luke 5 1-11

We cannot be made right with God by our own work. We are freely justified for Christ's sake, through faith, when they believe that they are received into favor and that their sins are forgiven for Christ's sake. By His death, Christ made satisfaction for our sins. God counts this faith for righteousness in His sight (Romans 3 and 4).

"God instituted the ministry of teaching the Gospel and administering the sacraments so that we may obtain this faith.

God works through His Word that Jesus died on the cross for you to make full payment for your sin. A pastor's job is to minister to the Baptized with this Word of God, spoken to you and connected to water, bread and wine. Using this as a pipeline, the Holy Spirit delivers Jesus to you to build you up as part of the Body of Christ.

Faith in Jesus is a gift given from outside of you through the hearing of the Word of Jesus, the sinless Son of God. The big thing about this Gospel Lesson is not how many fish Peter caught at the wrong time of day in the wrong spot in the lake. The big thing is that faith in Jesus comes through hearing the Word of Jesus and God uses that to create faith. Jesus miraculously gives you to hear and to speak His Word.

Peter and the boys used a trammel net to make a living. The net had weights on the bottom and floats on top. You toss it out and then pull it in. Fishing like this worked best at night in the shallow water. Except for the night before our Gospel Lesson. They got skunked.

But the night is over and Dawn has appeared in Galilee. From this point on, Peter and the disciples will be living in the light, where the "fishing" is good because they abide in the presence of Christ, hearing His Word and speaking it to others.

Jesus' preaching comes first. Everything that happens does so as a result of His Word. The setting is boats, water and nets.

They are on the shore of Gennesaret and Jesus goes down into the boat, asks Peter to put out a little from the land. There in the shallow water,

Jesus sat down to teach. The shallows is where most of the fish are caught. The people near the shallows on the shore are getting caught up in the net of Jesus' Word.

After He'd taught a while, Jesus asked Peter to go out to the deep water and let down the net. Peter said, "At Your Word, we will do it."

By nature, we don't take Jesus at His Word. I mean, the idea that His death on the cross all by itself saves us, is kind of offensive. We feel left out, like we should have to top off what Jesus did by doing something good or stopping doing something bad. Some will say you need to point to a specific time, date and place when you made a decision for Jesus.

Jesus' word is that He beat you to it. He decided for you before the creation of the world and declared that from the cross when He prayed that you would be forgiven and then said, "It is finished." before rising from the dead with the receipts. Faith comes by hearing the Word of God.

God's Word moved Peter to take the boat out into the deep water. In those days, the deep water was thought of as the domain of the devil. Peter and Andrew let down their net into Satan's realm and immediately, it was full of fish to the point that the net was breaking. They signaled to the other boat to come and help and both boats were so full of fish they were sinking. The nets that could find no fish now find an overabundance of fish because of the Word of Jesus.

The nets are the means by which fish/people are brought into the boat/church. The nets are put into the water at the most unlikely place at Jesus' Word. The miracle is about catching men alive through the net of the Word.

Jesus' word creates the great catch of fish. Jesus shows Peter that fish are in abundance—in places *where one least expects*. The abundance of fish is a foretaste of the success of the Gospel mission.

We are tempted to doubt Jesus' Word here, too. Some would say things are getting worse in the world. The truth is that when Adam and Eve turned

away from God, the entire world became Satan's chaotic deep sea. It's never been better than it is now. For a time Judeo-Christian guardrails helped protect human life and wellbeing in the US. In some states, those guardrails are gone. It feels like God's Word isn't enough, like we have to go take matters into our hands.

Elijah had to have a special conversation with God. It was like he thought things would settle down after the showdown on Mount Carmel. But Queen Jezebel's message that Elijah had to die discouraged him. The Lord's Word wasn't spoken out of the whirlwind, or the earthquake. It was the still small voice the Lord spoke to Elijah. And the Lord, restored Elijah to stop focusing on the threat but to proclaim the promise, that God was still at work, regardless of the headlines.

Jesus' work is huge, but it doesn't look that way. We proclaim Christ crucified for the sins of the world. That humble message is what we are given to proclaim. It was that humble Word that slowly turned people's hearts toward babies deemed disposable, confused about their sexuality, eager to steal or gossip. The washing of that Word changed people from the inside as they were brought into the ark of the Church, out of the chaotic deep.

Jesus' teaching and the miraculous catch of fish bring Peter to his knees before Jesus; he confesses that he is a sinful man. He recognizes that Jesus is "the Holy One of God." But God has come in Jesus not to condemn, but to bring about a new creation. Jesus' response, "Stop being afraid" is his word of absolution to Peter. The miracle of bringing fish into the boat is the miracle of declaring the unworthy sinner fit to stand in the presence of the holy God. It is the miracle of the forgiveness of sins.

Jesus says, "From now on you will be catching men alive." Christ comforts Peter by these kindly words. He strengthens this comfort by the promise that he will make him a help and comfort to others.

Peter's call to be a disciple benefits us. The Word of Jesus was spread by the disciples and by

those who heard the disciples speak. A crowd of congregations was formed—one "full boat" helping another. From the congregations, pastors were called to speak forgiveness of sin "In the stead and by the command of my Lord Jesus."

We are all here today because Jesus' Word was spoken by one of the apostles. We have special friends here from India today. Jesus sent His apostle Thomas to India, not far from where Isaac lives. From generation to generation the Lord Jesus has announced His forgiveness won on the cross. People have been brought into the Church. Hearts have been turned to show Jesus love to their neighbor. That is the natural fruit of faith in Jesus. We look for children to care for, people with confusion about their gender, their place in the world and whether God has a place for them.

Jesus took our unworthiness on Himself on the cross and died for it. In exchange He gives us His worthiness through Holy Absolution, Baptism and the Lord's Supper. He goes out with us in His Word into the deep to cast the net of His Word to bring others alive into His Church. Amen.