

TRINITY 5

July 16 2017

Old Test: 1 Kings 19:11-21

Epistle: 1 Pet. 3:8-15

Gospel: Luke 5:1-11

Standing..

Grace be unto you and peace from God our Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

The basis for today's sermon is the Gospel lesson we just heard—the great catch of fishes and Jesus calling the first disciples.

Let us pray. May the words of my mouth and the meditation of all of our hearts be acceptable in your sight, O Lord—our strength and our redeemer. Amen.

Sitting..

Note what Jesus is doing at the outset.

He's preaching—preaching to large crowds gathered around Him.

And by His preaching,
He's drawing men and women,
boys and girls,
young and old,
rich and poor..

He's catching sinners,
bringing them to faith.
He throws out His Gospel net,
and whoever gets caught in it,
He drags them in.

Due to the eager crowds pressing in upon Him,
Jesus steps into Simon Peter's boat.
Though they've spent time with each other,
Jesus hasn't asked Peter to be His disciple—not yet.
Peter, James and John are still full-time fishermen.

Now, inside Peter's boat, Jesus continues doing what He was doing out on the shore.
He's preaching. Preaching about sin and judgment,
about God's love for sinners and faith in the Messiah.

When His sermon concludes,
Jesus then asks Simon to take the boat out into the deep waters for a catch.

You're kidding, right?

Peter explains that he and his companions have done that,
All. Night. Long.

They've dropped their nets numerous times—
in all of their regular places
and got nothing.

Tough night.

What Peter doesn't know is that God had a purpose behind him
not catching any fish.

It's the lesson God wanted him to learn, and all of you.

Imagine what might have run through Peter's mind at this moment.

Not only are he and his deckhands pooped,
but the heat of the day is not the time to be fishing.
And, what-pray-tell does Jesus know about fishing
anyway?

He's a carpenter by trade—and now a traveling
rabbi.

What Jesus requests makes no sense!

Experience told Peter it was foolish.

Reason told Peter it was pointless.

Though Peter has every earthly right to reject the command, he
doesn't. He listens.

He agrees to take the boat out one more time.

Forgetting the things he knows,

and the things he's seen,

Peter follows Jesus' Word.

This is similar to Mary who, when the angel promised that she
would have a baby even though she had never known a man, said,
"Let it be to me according to Your Word." Or like Abraham who,
even when he was old, trusted the Lord's Word that His Seed
would save the world. But that's our problem—

our human reason constantly wars with our faith.

Peter navigates the boat to where Jesus tells him and the nets
are cast out.

Yawn—

"What was that?"

"The handline just twitched."

"There it is again."

"You gotta be kidding me..."

"All hands on deck!"

This catch was enormous! The biggest one ever.
 This was more fish than their nets could hold.
 They fill one boat,
 then call over the other boat manned by James and
 John.
 Both boats now teem with fish,
 weighed down, riding low in the water.
 It simply can't get any better than this.

However, as everyone celebrates, terror comes over Peter.
 It dawns on him whose presence He's in.
 This is God in the flesh—in my boat!

Peter knows what happens to sinners who stand before the face of
 God.

He knows God's wrath burns hot against sinners
 and nothing unholy can stand before Him.
 Peter is stripped naked and exposed,
 with every idle word,
 every lustful thought,
 every single transgression brought under the
 lens of a heavenly microscope.

Peter sees only one thing in his future: hell;
 God's punishment; an endless, tormenting darkness.
 Thus, falling on the deck, with fish flopping about
 him,
 Peter says, "**Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O
 Lord!**"

Beloved, the Gospel does not deny our sinfulness; it declares
 it.

Peter was no murderer, no adulterer.
 But he was still sinful.
 Sinful from birth and sinful in his thoughts, words and
 deeds,
 just like all people everywhere.
 The proper reaction to that sin is not to deny it,
 or defend it,
 or excuse it,
 but to own it,
 to sorrow over it,
 to confess it.

The good news is this:
 instead of departing,

Jesus offers Peter pure grace and comfort.

God had not visited Simon's boat to destroy him.

He's come to rescue him—

to rescue him from his sins,
his disordered desires and the death he scrambles anxiously
to avoid.

Yes, you are a sinner Peter—worse still than you even realize—
but do not be afraid.

Christ came to save sinners.

Folks, you're sinful. I am too. Far more sinful and corrupt
than we realize.

But the wrath that you and I have earned and deserved has
been poured out upon Jesus. He drinks to the dregs the cup
of God's anger so that His gifts to us might overflow. And
one of His gifts He offers is His announcement of peace to
all who repent.

It's the word spoken over you when you come to
confession.

It's the word given in bread and wine at the
Eucharist.

It's Jesus' word at the burial of the one you love,
and to you in death,

"Do not be afraid."

Trust His Word.

It's always true, and by it

you have the certainty of the forgiveness of
all your sins.

Well, for Peter, Jesus does one more thing.

He calls Peter to the ministry of the Word—to be a fisher
of men.

That phrase can be misleading...

because it's better translated as "*You will save men
alive.*"

Or, "*You shall be reviving men.*"

It's as if Jesus says,

"Peter, You used to catch living fish, drop them in the
boat where they'd die and eventually be eaten. Your job is
going to change.

You'll be catching men dead in their trespasses and sins
and make them alive, reviving them. It's the death and
resurrection theme seen throughout the Bible.

Recall, what was Jesus just doing before launching out into the middle of the Sea?

He was casting out the Gospel net—pulling in whoever believed.

But His plan wasn't to do that forever.

He only planned to "catch" men on earth, visibly, in Person, for a few years, because His earthly ministry was to end in crucifixion, resurrection and ascension to the right hand of God the Father Almighty.

His plan was ultimately to draw people into His kingdom through the preaching of sinful men, men like Peter—sinful men who preach the Gospel.

Sure—Jesus

could have easily chosen to send angels to preach the Gospel.

For starters, angels are sinless. They're perfect servants of the Lord.

Moreover, angels would've gladly done it, and they work for free.

For crying out loud, use them!

But that's not what Christ has ordained. He's chosen only sinful men to preach the Word, in season and out of season, meaning when people like it and when they don't. Pastors are to catechize—teach the faith and they are to baptize—use water and the Word to make disciples whether they are minutes old in the hospital or on their deathbed. They are to forgive sins and celebrate the Lord's Supper. All of which comes with Jesus' promise to be with the Pastor as he does these things, even until the end of the age, just as He was

in the boat
with Peter.

For the last 2000 years, this is how the Church has been built.
God sending catchers to catch you.

The catcher, whoever that may be,

Casts the Gospel net out into the chaos and darkness of the sea.

Then he closes the net, drawing those in it away from judgment,

into the safety of His Church.

A few here, a few there, a thousand here, twenty there.

They all add up to that great multitude which no one
 can number,
 of all nations, tribes, peoples, and tongues,
 standing before the throne and before the Lamb.

By the way, this is why you support the preaching ministry here
 in our midst, by coming to church and Bible class, by listening,
 concentrating, by praying for me, Pr. Bruss and other preachers,
 by your offerings and by your obedience to the Word. IT's all
 because this is what God has ordained.

Now it's easy to look out at the world, and see the culture
 change and degenerate. We are tempted to think we need to tweak
 something, either the message or the ministry of it.

I mean, we've got to "reach" more fish.

Word and Sacrament aren't enough.

We need not think that.

We dare not think that.

Instead we trust in the power of the Gospel,
 the power of the Holy Spirit,
 to catch men,
 where and when
 it pleases God.

In the Name of the Father, the Son and Holy Spirit, Amen.

Standing..

And now may the peace of God which passes all understanding,
 keep your hearts and minds through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Sitting..