

June 14, 2009

Text: Luke 5:1-11

8:30am, 10am & CSW 10am

Title: Push Out into Deep Water

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Main Point:

Jesus is inviting us to push out into the deep water where we will experience God in a whole new way.

Luke 5:1-11

¹⁻³Once when he was standing on the shore of Lake Gennesaret, the crowd was pushing in on him to better hear the Word of God. He noticed two boats tied up. The fishermen had just left them and were out scrubbing their nets. He climbed into the boat that was Simon's and asked him to put out a little from the shore. Sitting there, using the boat for a pulpit, he taught the crowd.

⁴When he finished teaching, he said to Simon, "**Push out into deep water and let your nets out for a catch.**"

⁵⁻⁷Simon said, "Master, we've been fishing hard all night and haven't caught even a minnow. **But if you say so, I'll let out the nets.**" It was no sooner said than done—a huge haul of fish, straining the nets past capacity. They waved to their partners in the other boat to come help them. They filled both boats, nearly swamping them with the catch.

⁸⁻¹⁰Simon Peter, when he saw it, fell to his knees before Jesus. "Master, leave. I'm a sinner and can't handle this holiness. Leave me to myself." When they pulled in that catch of fish, awe overwhelmed Simon and everyone with him. It was the same with James and John, Zebedee's sons, coworkers with Simon.

¹⁰⁻¹¹Jesus said to Simon, "**There is nothing to fear. From now on you'll be fishing for men and women.**" They pulled their boats up on the beach, left them, nets and all, and followed him.

Background

In his book, **Good to Great**, Jim Collins explains that an important function of successful leadership is to get the right people on your bus and make sure they are all headed in the same direction. In our passage today, Jesus is getting the right leaders on the bus (or in his case, boat) and making sure they are all headed

the same direction. This is early in the ministry of Jesus. He has recently gone public with his teachings and healings. The crowds are beginning to gather to hear this man who speaks like no other and see the amazing miracles of healing he can do. During this time, Jesus is quietly inviting a core team to follow him and see what he is all about. Jesus wants to develop a community of followers who will come, learn, and then serve and multiply God's Kingdom on earth.

As we begin Luke 5, the soon-to-be-disciples are interested in Jesus, but not committed. They have heard him speak; seen lines of people healed; and even had Jesus stay in their homes. These men were impressed with Jesus, but not willing to trust him fully yet. Something else needs to happen. They need to move from being spectators to becoming active participants.

Out of the Boats into the Deep Water

The disciple were treated Jesus like a hobby. They would hang out with him at night and some weekends, but during the day they would go back to their day job. In this case, it was fishing on well-stocked waters of Lake Gennesaret (the name of an adjoining plain) or commonly called the Sea of Tiberias or the Sea of Galilee (the adjoining nation). With the Jordan River flowing through it, this lake was about 13 miles long and 8 miles wide and shaped like a harp. There were towns on the North and West and high slopes to the East. They would be up early and even fish all night. This was a good and honorable profession. They worked hard and supported their families.

I want to pause to thank each person here who has worked hard to love and support their families and our community. Your work is vital to this community and the way you do your work with wisdom, diligence, joy, and compassion has and will continue to bless many. Our work is important. What you and I do each day to serve others and earn our living is very important. God has given each of us unique skills and abilities so together we can have a prosperous, healthy community. Thank you for doing your work. God is counting on you and me to do our work to bless the world.

Our work is not, however, our vocation. According to the dictionary, *"The word "vocation" comes from the Latin vocare, meaning "to call"; its' usage*

before the sixteenth century, referred firstly to the "call" by God to the individual...” Work is what we do. Our vocation is our calling. Vocation is why we do what we do. We are each called by God to be in intimate relationship with God and then all we do is dedicated to honor and serve God. You and I have the same vocation...we are sons and daughters of the Almighty God. We are called to usher in the grace, love, truth, beauty, and justice of God here on Earth. We do that by being committed and connected to Jesus Christ. This is what the early disciples were missing. They were interested, but not committed and connected. They did not really “get it” yet. They were not caught yet. This is the story of how Jesus went fishing for committed disciples. Let’s see how he did it.

Jesus was teaching right in the spot that the fishermen were cleaning their nets. Do you think this was a coincidence? As the fishermen cleaned their nets, they could hear all that Jesus was saying from the shore. *Jesus was preparing his net.* Jesus even got them involved in his ministry by asking to use one of their boats. *Now his net is going out.* After he finishes teaching, he tells Simon the fisherman where to catch fish. **"Push out into deep water and let your nets out for a catch."** *Jesus invites the fishermen into his net!* This must have seemed strange to the fishermen. A carpenter was telling them were to fish! Although they were tired and frustrated from fishing all night, Simon decided to trust Jesus at a new level. He said, **"But if you say so, I'll let out the nets."**

The rest is history. By pushing out into the deep water, Simon and the other fishermen experienced God in a whole new way! They were caught in the net of Jesus. The miraculous catch of fish helped them see more clearly the power and identity of Jesus. Simon was so overwhelmed he told Jesus to get away from him. He felt too sinful! Jesus deals gently with this new disciple. He tells him there is nothing to fear. His vocation is changing. **"From now on you'll be fishing for men and women."** The text says that **"They pulled their boats up on the beach, left them, nets and all, and followed him."** No more standing on the sidelines. No more interested observers. Their hearts and minds were caught by Jesus and now they would follow as committed disciples. They would question, they would learn, they would serve, and thank God, they would multiply.

What is my vocation, what is yours? Where do our thoughts go during the day? What is on your heart as you lay down to sleep at night? Jesus wants to capture your heart and mine. He wants us to be thinking of him all day and even as we sleep. We may do lots of different tasks throughout the day, but Jesus wants our vocation to be to serve him. Love God, love others. That is our vocation. That is what we do on the job, in our neighborhoods, and even on vacation. Jesus invites every man, woman, youth, and child to trust him like Simon did. **"Push out into deep water and let your nets out for a catch."** These intimate words to Simon are for you and me, as well.

How do I push out into deeper water? It all starts by talking to Jesus. What is he saying to you? Read through the Bible this summer. The book of John is a good place to start. As you read, ask the Holy Spirit to speak to you. "Show me what I need to know to follow you, Jesus." We have ordered a devotional Bible called **"SOLO"** by Eugene Peterson. Each day has a passage to read and a way to reflect and apply the truths to your daily life. Copies are for sale in the foyer. Allow Jesus to speak to you through daily interactions with the Bible. Keep a journal about what you are hearing. Write letters to God. Allow God to shape you through this ongoing conversation. By listening intentionally to God, you will discern your next steps. In your bulletin is a handout titled, "Practice Your Faith this Summer of 2009." This list suggests a number of summer faith practices to help you and I push out into deeper water.

How do we catch people today? Ropes, hooks and nets? Bullhorns and street preachers? People come to know and understand God through other people, people like you and me. People who do not know God hear of and see Jesus in others. People like you and me. When you and I love and serve others, they are getting a glimpse of Jesus. The Holy Spirit is in our lives to help us know how to serve others. If we are listening, the Holy Spirit will give you and me practical ideas on how to serve the people we encounter each day.

One very easy thing we can do is to invite others to church. This will help them see Jesus even more clearly. Our church has produced note cards and business cards to hand out to people you see every day. Soon we will be handing these out so you can hand them on to others. In the meanwhile, send them to our website, www.fpcLIVE.org, so they can check us out and offer to go with them to church next week. Pushing out into deep water is for the purpose of experiencing God and watching him work in others, as well!

