

## **ENTERING INTO DEEPER WATERS**

**Luke 5:1-11**

### **I. Introduction**

Tiger Woods had one of the most incredible first years of any professional golfer in 1997. He won the prestigious Masters Tournament by an unheard of 12 strokes. He went on to win 4 of the 15 tournaments, earning \$1.8 million in prize money and \$60 million in endorsements from Nike and other companies.

But he did not stop there. Instead, right after the Masters, he called his coach and told him that he wanted to change his swing.

He said his swing wasn't good. He wanted to make improvements.

He was willing to risk the swing that had won him so many tournaments in order to further improve his skills, especially controlling his shots.

His coach believed that he could do it, but that it wasn't going to be easy, and it would take time.

So, he and his coach worked on hitting hundreds and thousands of practice balls, studying videotapes of his swings, pumping irons, especially for his forearms.

While he was reconstructing his swing, he won only 1 tournament in the next 19 months. But he persisted.

And one day, it came.

He felt that his swing was now just right and that he could control his shots much better than he ever could before.

In the next 14 tournaments, he won 10 of them, including 6 in a row, 3 of the four major championships, winning \$6 million dollars, and in 2000 he signed a \$100 million endorsement contract (TIME, July, 2000).

And yet many people didn't know that he completely revamped his swings and golf game after his first year.

Why did he make a change? Why did he change a good thing?

The reason is because he wanted to be better and he knew he could be better.

Would you change something that was working so well?

Likewise, Jesus isn't afraid of changing some things, even good things, because there is some other thing he wants to accomplish.

With Jesus however, he is not interested in winning human trophies and endorsements...and he certainly doesn't need to improve himself...but he is interested in winning people and winning them over to himself.

One such incident in which Jesus changed from doing one thing to another occurred in **Luke 5**. Let's read Lk. 5:1-11. [Read.]

## **II. Jesus Encountered Peter**

Look at what Jesus was already doing here.

He was teaching a crowd of peoples the word of God.

They were listening to him. He had a captive audience, what more could he ask for?

Wasn't this what he was sent to earth to do, to teach people about God and the way of salvation?

Yes! But then he saw something else that attracted his attention.

He saw two boats by the water's edge...Two old boats used for fishing. There were two boats because fishermen often worked together in a coop arrangement to catch more fish (Bible Background Comm., 201).

Jesus saw the fishermen washing their nets that they used to catch their fish. And Jesus changed what he was doing.

He stopped. He went over to the boats and asked one of the fishermen to take him out on the boat a little ways from the shore.

And the fisherman, named Simon, did just that. Jesus sat down in the boat and continued to teach the people from there.

Now Jesus was in a different location. Why?

He could still address the people, maybe more effectively since they could all see him now further away from them and his voice may be able to project to more them since he was facing all of them and the shore functioned better acoustically like an amphitheater (BBC, 201).

But I believe there was clearly another reason why Jesus wanted to speak from the boat.

I believe it had to do with who owned the boat. Simon had already been introduced to Jesus back in Judea right after Jesus' Baptism (John 1). Remember when Jesus renames him Cephas/Peter (rock).

This incident occurs later in Galilee, after Jesus has already begun His ministry and healed Simon mother-in-law (mentioned in Mark 1/Luke 4)

So, I believe that the intention here was that Jesus wanted to talk to the owner of the boat, Simon after he was done preaching.

And this observation leads us to the first point we want to make about Jesus: He is not only interested in crowds, he is also interested in you individually.

### *A. Jesus Is Never Too Busy to Meet with Just You*

Jesus could relate to the crowds as a classroom teacher, but he also wanted to relate to a person named Simon as an individual tutor.

At my school, teachers are willing to meet with kids after school in order to help them with particular questions or difficulties they have about math, or English, or other subjects.

These teachers are copying what Jesus is doing here, not only interested in a large class of students, but also individual students.

And this is true for how Jesus wants to relate to you too.

Jesus is not only interested in us as a congregation gathered to worship him...which he delights in...but he is also personally interested in meeting with each of us one on one.

1. He may do that through something that the minister says that relates directly to you.
2. God may do that through someone else that will speak to you.
3. God may have done that this week in some alone time with him, for prayer and for silent meditation or for reading the word of God.

However God may reach you, know that God wants to reach you personally, like he did with Simon.

What an astounding thought, Jesus was willing to leave the crowds in order to focus on just one person.

But why does Jesus approach just one person?

Why would Jesus change his focus from one group to a single person?

In other words, why would Jesus change from doing a perfectly good thing?

*B. When Jesus Meets Us, It Is to Take Us from Shallow Faith to Deeper Faith*

This leads us to the second reason why Jesus meets with us.

The reason we learn from this passage, as is true to all such times when Jesus focuses on us individually, is because Jesus wants to take us from shallower faith to deeper faith.

This is what happened to Simon.

Remember, Peter likely followed Jesus intermittently after the first meeting they had, returning to his fishing trade in between.

He had been do his job all day and night and now He had been washing the nets while keeping one ear listening to Jesus.

He had other responsibilities and duties to do.

He had to fish to make a living. His family relied on him to bring in a good catch to eat and to sell.

Simon was working hard at his job, like many of you are in making a living for your family.

So, he thought he couldn't give up what he was doing and just spend the whole day with Jesus.

But Jesus was going to do something special in his life.

Notice that when Jesus asked Simon to sit in his boat, he asked Simon to put out a little from the shore (vs. 3).

Then after he had finished teaching the people, he told Simon to put out into the deep water to go for a catch of fish.

This movement from shallow water into deeper water I take as an analogy of what Jesus was going to do in Simon's faith life.

Jesus was going to take Simon from his superficial, half-hearted and casual attention to him and turn that into a deeper, more personal and real commitment to Jesus.

Simon protested mildly, saying, *"Master, we've worked hard all night and haven't caught anything.... But because you say so, I will let down the nets"* (vs. 5).

In other words, "I've already been there and nothing happened. But, oh well, since it is you, I will give it one more try."

Remember Simon is a fisherman, this is what he does...now a carpenter is telling him how to fish!

But his response is *"...because you say so, I will let down the nets"*

And how does Jesus take us from where we are to where he wants us to be?

By pushing us, that's how.

Jesus pushes us, ever gently, sometimes with words, sometimes with actions, away from one level of stability, as symbolized by the shallow water near the shore...to a place where we are more dependent on God, as symbolized by the deeper water.

And we might also argue mildly with him, saying, "Lord, I've already been there and done that." I've already tried reading the Bible, I've already prayed, and it hasn't worked.

I've already...But hopefully we won't stop there, but will continue to say, *"But if this is what you want me to do, to go once again from where I am now, then so be it."*

What happens in the deeper water?

It is more scary...It is more unstable, at least more unfamiliar.

But it is also where there are more fish.

Fishermen never catch many fish from the shore; they have to go out into the deep water to catch larger fish and more abundant fish.

Likewise, Jesus wants to take you from your comfortable shoreline to a deeper place where you will find more food for your soul and more dependence on him.

This can come, for example, in the form of an illness or other crisis...and this can be either to you or to someone you know...and all of a sudden, you are drifting away from predictability and one kind of stability to a place that is more mysterious and where you can't see the bottom.

But know, God is taking you there.

He is not abandoning you in that illness or crisis.

He is actually using that situation like a boat to take you further out into a relationship with Him.

And the comforting thing for us to know is that even though we don't know exactly where the boat is going, we know that Jesus is sitting in the boat with us.

To know that the captain of the boat is with us is very comforting when we don't know where we are going. But the captain does.

And the journey to the deeper water is always to help us to know God better.

### *C. Jesus Turns What We Are Concerned About Into What He Is Concerned About*

This leads me to see the third point of this incident.

We are always concerned about physical things; but Jesus is always concerned about spiritual things.

Let me give you an example, During the Olympics I was concerned about our USA team winning the Gold in Hockey, but Jesus is concerned about his team, the church.

- We are concerned about food to eat; Jesus is concerned about food for the hungry soul.
- We are concerned about bills to pay; Jesus is concerned about the eternal bill that we have to pay because of sin.
- We are concerned about clothes to wear; Jesus is concerned about the clothing of righteousness to cover our spiritual nakedness.
- We, as Christians, are concerned about our life; Jesus is concerned about the life of those who don't yet know him.
- We are concerned about our retirement accounts; Jesus is concerned about people who will retire without knowing him.
- We are concerned about our kids' college bills; Jesus is concerned about our college kids' spiritual life.
- We are concerned about fish; Jesus is concerned about men. We are concerned about things; Jesus is concerned about people.

And whenever Jesus has an encounter with us, he wants us to be more concerned about spiritual things than physical things.

And the way that Jesus often reaches us in our blindness and busyness in life is to take the physical things that we are so concerned about and turn it in a way that it becomes a lesson about spiritual things.

And then we realize that Jesus is meeting us right in the middle of our life.

Jesus takes our health and turns it a bit, so that there is some question about our health...and all of a sudden we have to look at life not just materially, but also spiritually.

Jesus takes our stable jobs and turns it a bit, so that there is some question about our work... and all of a sudden we realize that we need to redefine what we mean by success.

Jesus takes our stable marriages and relationships and turns it a bit...and all of a sudden we realize that relationships take work and communication and spiritual connection.

Jesus takes our stable family life and turns it a bit... and all of a sudden we realize that we are selfish and we need to become more humble and listen more carefully.

In all of these events, Jesus is taking us from the shallow water into deeper water, and it is the deeper water that we begin to trust God more.

So, thank God for the deep waters.

English has a saying, "I'm in deep water," which has a negative connotation, meaning, "I'm in big trouble."

Well, we may be in bigger trouble, but with God leading us to that deeper water, it is an occasion to regain our focus and realize what is most important.

I think this is also true for restoration, vision, and growth here at the church.

Sam and I were a bit naïve. We knew there would be challenges, but we thought it would be relatively easy to do, that was nearly 6 years ago.

After all, we were completely renovating the church (modernizing it), we had Coach John Sports, Sam and I were bringing in a certain amount of energy, the potential was limitless.

But then this restoration and revision hasn't worked out the way we had thought it would.

There were mornings over these last 6 years where I would sit by the windows praying someone would show up because I didn't know if I would be preaching to an empty sanctuary.

It has taken us nearly 6 years now and we are just now starting to see some of that growth and movement with the programs and relationships.

In the hard times, it is easy to worry, doubt and be concerned. But God is leading us, like he led Simon, on a particular faith lesson, that is designed uniquely for us.

He is taking us into deeper water, where more faith is required, where we cannot rely on previous experiences, where more is at stake, where more is unknown.

But he is with us. He has not abandoned us. And there in the deeper water, where we are right now, God is telling us to let down the nets for a bigger catch.

That bigger catch will likely mean more people as the programs continue to grow.

But the bigger catch is also designed for us individually.

Jesus wants us to have a larger faith, a broader vision, and a deeper commitment.

Without that, the pretty building and all the programs are useless.

Jesus, as he always does, takes the physical things, which are our first interest, and turns it into a matter of spiritual interest.

And when we have learned that lesson, then God has accomplished his purpose in us, and will be ready to use us spiritually.

God took fishermen and made them into fishers of men, like he did with Peter and his friends.

Likewise, whatever careers we do, God will also teach us faith lessons.

That is the movement from shallower water into deeper water.

I am not saying that they all gave up their jobs and became full-time Christian workers.

But at least there should be the transformation into a deeper spiritual understanding of life.

Think of it this way:

- God will take doctors and make them also healers of souls, like he did with Luke.
- He will take lawyers and make them judges of truth, like he did with the Apostle Paul.
- He will take shepherds and make them shepherds of people, like he did with David.
- He will take builders and make them builders of nations, like he did with Solomon.
- He will take artists and make them communicators of beauty, like he did with Bezalel.
- He will take students and make them students of his word, like he did with Daniel.
- He will take administrators and make them administrators of his grace, like Moses or Joseph in the OT.
- He will take farmers and make them sowers of truth, like he did with Amos.

### **III. Conclusion**

What is the conclusion? Don't be afraid when God is taking you from one place to another. He has a purpose. And we don't need to be afraid. Amen.

