



Unit .20

Session .04

Jesus Calls His Disciples

Scripture



Luke 5:3-11,27-32

3 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. **4** And when he had finished speaking, he said to Simon, "Put out into the deep and let down your nets for a catch." **5** And Simon answered, "Master, we toiled all night and took nothing! But at your word I will let down the nets." **6** And when they had done this, they enclosed a large number of fish, and their nets were breaking. **7** 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. **8** But when Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord." **9** For he and all who were with him were astonished at the catch of fish that they had taken, **10** 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." **11** And when they had brought their boats to land, they left everything and followed him. ... **27** After this he went out and saw a tax collector named Levi, sitting at the tax booth. And he said to him, "Follow me." **28** And leaving everything, he rose and followed him. **29** And Levi made him a great feast in his house, and there was a large company of tax collectors and others reclining at table with them. **30** And the Pharisees and their scribes grumbled at his disciples, saying, "Why do you eat and drink with tax collectors and sinners?" **31** And Jesus answered them, "Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. **32** I have not come to call the righteous but sinners to repentance."

Intro Options



Main Point:
The call to follow
Jesus is a call to invite
others to do the same.

Option 1

In our culture today, there seems to be an open recognition that things are broken, whether that be at the individual, family, or societal level. People today, perhaps more so than with the previous generations, feel more comfortable with speaking transparently about their own brokenness as well as about the brokenness evident in society. Things don't act like they are supposed to, and we might as well acknowledge this.

- **Which areas of human life come to mind when you hear the word brokenness?**

We as Christians know the reason for this: sin. Things don't function according to God's intention and design. God made the world and everything in it "good," but when sin entered the world, brokenness followed and extended to everything. While we try lots of ways to get back to God's design, they all fall short. Only through the gospel, when we repent and believe in Christ, are we enabled by the Holy Spirit to recover and pursue God's original design for us as transformed and renewed image-bearers that seek to do good in a fallen and broken world.

Option 2

Imagine that you are sitting at your desk, in your room, taking a walk outside, or playing volleyball with your friends at the beach. Now, someone walks by and says, "Come follow me." Maybe you've seen this person do and heard him say some amazing things, or maybe you have no idea who he is. What would you do? Would you drop everything to follow this person? You would probably want more information, right?

When Jesus called His disciples, they were engaged in everyday activities—Matthew was collecting taxes; Peter, Andrew, James, and John were fishing. Maybe one of the most surprising things about this call isn't the way that Jesus asked these men to be His disciples, rather it is the way the men responded to His call. They immediately stopped what they were doing and did exactly what Jesus said—they followed Him.

- **What do you think prevents some people from deciding to follow Jesus today? What do you think it would take for their minds and hearts to change?**

TEACHING PLAN

Read Luke 5:3-7.



Simon Peter and his partners weren't bad fishermen. They knew what they were doing. They knew where to put their nets and when to put them down in order to get the best catch of fish. Since Jesus was a carpenter by trade, they had significantly more experience catching fish than He did. So Jesus' instructions here were not only contrary to traditional fishing strategy, but also didn't make sense in light of the fishermen's experience. Yet, Simon Peter trusted Jesus and obeyed in an act of total faith. As it would turn out, Jesus did happen to know exactly when would be the best time to fish and Simon Peter and his partners had the catch of their lives.

Because God's wisdom can look so different from the worldly wisdom we are used to, sometimes trusting Him can seem illogical and impossible. But we must remember that we aren't putting blind trust in a religious system and hoping for the best. We aren't even putting blind trust in someone who has never been proven. We are trusting in a Savior who has done the miraculous. We trust a God with a perfect résumé, a God who keeps His promises, whose character can be trusted and who has proven Himself time and time again.

- **In what ways have you experienced God's wisdom being different than the conventional wisdom of the world?**

Read Luke 5:8-11.



Consider the raw emotion of Peter's response here. He recognized the total miracle he had just witnessed and it caused him to respond by recognizing Jesus as Lord and confessing his own sinfulness. He essentially told Jesus, "Go away from me. I'm sinful and insufficient. I don't have what it takes to keep up with you. I'm not worthy to follow you."

Peter's confession may have been right, but it missed the point. The call and opportunity to follow Jesus isn't dependent upon our own goodness and sufficiency, but upon the grace and sufficiency of Christ. The transformation of the disciples from fishermen to fishers of men happened not because of what they could do, but because Jesus made it happen. He did the work. His sufficiency is more than enough to cover our insufficiency.

The same is true for us today. The call to fish for people—to make disciples—is a greater task than we could ever be able to accomplish on our own. Like Peter, we should be brought to our knees to ask the question, "Who is worthy of such a task? We are sinners in need of forgiveness." Just like Jesus responded to Peter, He responds to us with encouragement to not let our own insufficiencies cause us to run in fear but to trust in Him and His perfect sufficiency.

- **What is an accomplishment in life you knew could not have been carried out in your own strength?**

COMMENTARY

Main Point:
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Luke 5

3-7. God's wisdom is not the world's wisdom. In Luke 5, Jesus was working to create a category of trust that supersedes our intuition, logic, and effort. Compare this to what Paul writes in 1 Corinthians 1:20-25:

20 Where is the one who is wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the debater of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? **21** For since, in the wisdom of God, the world did not know God through wisdom, it pleased God through the folly of what we preach to save those who believe. **22** For Jews demand signs and Greeks seek wisdom, **23** but we preach Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and folly to Gentiles, **24** but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. **25** For the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men.

In this passage, Paul pointed out that the gospel was a stumbling block to the Jews because they were looking to keep God's favor by works of the law. They wanted a sign different than a crucified Messiah. Further, he noted that the gospel was foolishness to the Gentiles because they were looking for an answer that didn't require faith, only reason (or what they perceived as "wisdom"). The Jews trusted in their ability to do. The Gentiles trusted their own wisdom. And the gospel defies both. What seems to be conventional wisdom is not the wisdom of God. It doesn't mean that the call to trust Christ is a blind leap of senseless, foolish faith. But it means that we place our trust in God, not the wisdom of the world.

We have the benefit of all the accounts in Scripture to help us better understand and trust God, even when it doesn't make sense. Think of all those before us who have trusted God in similar situations:

- Noah, who trusted God enough to build a giant boat in preparation for a flood;
- Abraham, who trusted that God would give him a child even though he and his wife were very old;
- Joseph, who trusted that God had good plans for him, even though he was in prison.

The stories could go on and on, big and small, all the way until here in Luke's Gospel where we see Simon Peter trusting Jesus enough to let down his nets at the wrong time and on the wrong side of the boat.

99 Essential Doctrines *(p. 80, DDG)*

Evangelism

It is the duty and privilege of every Christian and of every church of the Lord Jesus Christ to make disciples of all nations. The new birth of man's spirit by God's Holy Spirit means the birth of love for others. Missionary effort on the part of all thus rests upon a spiritual necessity of the regenerate life and is expressly and repeatedly commanded in the teachings of Christ. The Lord Jesus Christ has commanded the preaching of the gospel to all nations. It is the duty of every child of God to seek constantly to win the lost to Christ by verbal witness undergirded by a Christian lifestyle.



TEACHING PLAN

Read Luke 5:27-32.



In the call to make fishers of people in Matthew 4:19, we see Jesus do two things. First, He invited His disciples into a relationship, and second, He challenged them to be changed. He said, “Follow me,” which was an invitation into deep relationship. Then, in the second half of the verse Jesus also challenged His disciples to be changed: “I will make you fishers of men.”

In Luke 5:27-32, we see Levi (also known as Matthew) leveraging his circle of influence in order to introduce his friends and coworkers to Christ. It is an incredibly practical example of doing ministry where life exists. Levi was a tax collector. He decided to follow Jesus. So, he threw a big party and invited his friends and other tax collectors to come so they could also meet Jesus. Levi utilized the relationships he already had in order that they too might be invited into a relationship with Jesus and challenged to be changed.

- **Often we have a tendency toward being invitational without challenging others or challenging others without inviting them into relationship. Which way do you lean and why?**

At the end of this passage, Jesus makes the purpose of His ministry clear: “I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.” Never once did Jesus lose sight of this aim.



- **Do you believe most churches and student ministries focus on this same aim as Jesus? Why or why not?**

Hopefully churches and individual Christians make it a priority to focus on the things Jesus focused on. However, it probably wouldn't come as a surprise to know of Christians and churches who have turned their focus toward other Christians while giving less attention to reaching those who aren't by calling them to repentance.



Not only that, isn't it often the case that once a person comes to faith and has been a Christian for a few years, they no longer have any significant relationships with non-Christians. They might have casual friendships with classmates or teammates, but deep, meaningful friendships with non-Christians seem to be harder to come by. This reality creates obvious challenges for us when it comes to keeping the focus of our mission on the lost. Even though Jesus had His twelve with whom He spent the most time, He didn't lose sight of reaching the lost. He was intentional at each point.

- **What are some ways you can cultivate relationships with those who are not Christians?**

COMMENTARY

Main Point:
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Luke 5

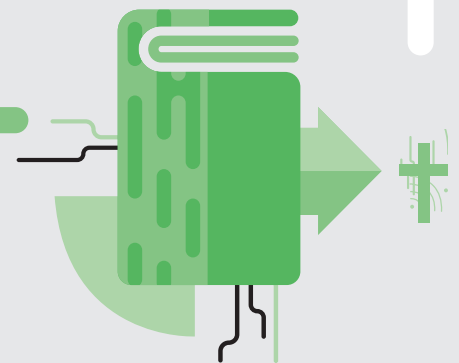
8. In the Old Testament, we see a similar scene between Yahweh, the God of Israel, and the prophet Isaiah. During his vision wherein the Lord sat in the temple seated on a throne and seraphim were extolling Him saying “holy, holy, holy” to one another, Isaiah expressed himself in words similar to Peter’s: “Woe is me for I am ruined because I am a man of unclean lips” (Isa. 6:5). Interestingly enough, after symbolically atoning for his sin with a piece of hot coal in the vision, God assigned to Isaiah a particular mission (vv. 6-9). Similarly, Jesus affirmed Peter (“Don’t be afraid”) and then commissioned him with the mission of catching people instead of fish. Unlike the symbolic atonement depicted in Isaiah’s vision, true atonement for Peter’s sins (and ours) would be accomplished at the cross. Also in contrast to Isaiah’s commissioning, Peter’s commissioning would result in world evangelization rather than localized judgment (Isa. 6:10-11).

11. Following a rabbi in that time meant walking with him in everyday life. Disciples had to leave behind family and friends and their work. Becoming a disciple of a rabbi wasn’t just intellectual assent to a particular line of thought; it was a total life change centered on a relationship with the rabbi. So when Jesus extended the invitation to follow Him, He was inviting the disciples into a relationship.

Jesus called His disciples to be changed. He promised to transform the disciples into men who would reach others with the good news of the gospel. And these two components of the call (an invitation to a relationship and to be changed) are the same two components of the call His disciples will make as they go out and fish for people.

(p. 81, DDG) Christ Connection

Jesus came into the world to call sinners to repentance and to lay down His life on their behalf. Likewise, as His followers, we are to tell others about Jesus and call on them to turn from their sin and trust in Jesus.



Our Mission

God's Story has always been designed to connect with our story. It is because of His Story that our stories make sense, have meaning, and carry on into eternity. Use the questions below to help think through how His Story connects with your own. Suggested answers to these questions can be found on the right-hand side of the page for leaders.

Head



What does Jesus' ministry to all types of people communicate about His character and calling?

Why is it both comforting and empowering for believers to know and understand that God calls ordinary people to proclaim His extraordinary gospel?

Heart



When it comes to trusting in God or relying upon our own intuitions or experience, which one should we choose? Why?

What role does God's Word have in helping us distinguish His voice from all others?

Hands



What are some challenges we face in sharing Jesus' message with others?

What should our attitude, actions, and mindset be when facing opposition from the culture when sharing the gospel?

Main Point: The call to follow Jesus is a call to invite others to do the same.



Head

Throughout Jesus' earthy ministry, He called, ministered to, and forgave the sins of various people. He healed an official's son (John 4:46-54), cleansed a leper (Matt. 8:2-4), healed a paralytic and forgave his sins (Matt. 9:1-8), healed the woman with the issue of blood (Mark 5:25-34), fed multitudes (Matt. 15:32-38; John 6:1-14), and raised the dead (Luke 7:11-17; 8:41-56; John 11:1-44). Because Jesus calls everyone to repent, there is no specific "profile" that describes followers of Jesus. The only qualification is repentant faith.

The beauty of God's call to repentance is that He brings together people from various backgrounds and groups in order to highlight His glorious work of redemption. He calls people you'd least expect. He does things you would never predict. He doesn't just call "the cream of the crop" to be His spokespeople, but unlikely people whose changed lives will demonstrate the glory of His work. And since we are commanded to imitate Christ (Eph. 5:1), we have the privilege of taking the gospel to those who might be viewed as undeserving, neglected, and overlooked in our society.



Heart

One important truth we learn from this account is that God often leads us to a place where we trust Him more than we trust in our own efforts, logic, or anything else. While we have the privilege of having the Holy Spirit dwelling within us, we don't walk around with Jesus in the flesh giving us audible instructions for our daily lives. Because of this, we have to learn to distinguish the voice of God's Spirit (speaking with and through Scripture) from the voices of our own hearts and from the many voices of the world. We have to be careful when claiming that God told us something that we aren't confusing His guiding with our own emotions, desires, or hunches. God has given us His Word and in it contains all the promises we need. His Word helps us in learning to distinguish His voice from the voices surrounding us so that we can trust Him even when it doesn't make sense.



Hands

Our society teaches a message of coexistence. Modern-day culture would have us believe that the gospel is foolishness, that it is narrow-minded to believe there is only one way to God. This environment can make it very challenging for us to stand firm and proclaim the person and work of Christ. But opposition is not new to the Christian faith and it should not come as a surprise to us. This is why Jesus encouraged His disciples to remember, "If the world hates you, understand that it has hated me before it hated you" (John 15:18).

We shouldn't expect a warm welcome from our culture. No matter the environment, no matter the opposition, no matter the most popular slogans and teachings of the day, Jesus' call remains the same. He calls us to trust His leading, even when it flies in the face of pop culture. He calls us to fish for people and to invite them to repent and to see Christ for who He really is. As we respond to His call as disciples who make other disciples, we should remember that this call to follow Christ is an invitation to enter into a relationship with Him. He will not leave us alone. He will not forsake us. His sufficiency will always be enough.