

[Simon Answering] / Gospel of Luke Chapter Five

~ Our Spiritual Safari expedition through the entire Word of God embarks on a fishing trip today. Matthew and Mark covered the basics of the principles contained in this section of Scripture concerning how to fish, but they didn't get us out there physically in the water fishing. Well, fishing always comes with a fish story, of course...

1 And it came to pass, that, as the people pressed upon him to hear the word of God, he stood by the lake of Gennesaret, also known as the Sea of Galilee.

2 And saw two ships standing by the lake: but the fishermen were gone out of them, and were washing their nets.

3 And he entered into one of the ships, which was Simon's, and prayed him that he would thrust out a little from the land. And he sat down, and taught the people out of the ship.

~ The suggestions set forth by Scripture are both literal and figurative because every pulpit is a fishing boat! A voice on still water carries very well. Many of us need to spend a little bit more time in the Word of God being taught by Christ hearing His Voice carry over the water. That is the only way we'll ever learn to drag our nets in full. These men were told they would be fishers of men. That doesn't mean that we're going to have full nets every time, though; not as far as we can see, anyways! These men had times when they caught more than enough - and times of nothing, too. The one on board that boat has an obligation to correctly remember the supreme business of this life - which is the souls of men....

4 Now when he had left speaking, he said unto Simon, Launch out into the deep, and let down your nets for a draught.

~ When the teaching was done, He sent them out to do some fishing. Matthew and Mark tell us that the first time Jesus called the disciples, He walked by the sea. Jesus saw Simon and Andrew fishing with the nets and Jesus told them to follow Him. In this account these men have RETURNED

BACK to fishing. We see three 'calls' of these apostles by Jesus. Jesus met most of them in Jerusalem, and John records that account; when John the Baptist marked Jesus out, several disciples of John went and followed Jesus at that time. Remember, they wanted to know where He dwelt. We know Phillip and Nathaniel were there with Peter and Andrew, but Jesus never called them at that time – they only met. Later, Jesus was by the sea and saw them fishing and called them and they left the nets – but they returned, later, back to fishing. Then, they are called again to go fishing and they were made apostles. I think they were all a little embarrassed at this particular time. Jesus says He is going to fish with them for a while. Of course, Simon has to speak – because he just has to say something....

5 And Simon answering said unto him, Master, we have toiled all the night, and have taken nothing: nevertheless at thy word I will let down the net.

~ Simon Peter has to think for a moment about taking orders from Jesus! Simon Peter was an expert fisherman, friends – and when you're on his boat, you don't just tell him what to do. These men knew all about the Sea of Galilee and how the fish ran and the tides and the seasons and all of that; this unemployed carpenter is making Simon Peter a little irritated, it would seem. Well, when Jesus comes aboard your boat, He is going to usurp captainship and He will be giving a whole lot of commands that seem like they are not going to work. At that time, there is no reason to reflect on your own past failing experiences as an attempt to say "no" to God. God gives no commands that are impossible, friends.

We will either relinquish our fishing theories to the commandeering of our vessels by Christ or we won't be catching anything. You may think you see a miracle as Jesus walks on water but be careful that He doesn't walk right past you. We are going to fish HIS way and at HIS direction or we are going to be utter and complete failures for God! Because this is our first fishing trip today, we're going to go easy; in our fishing trip through the Gospel of John we're not going to be so nice. The method of fishing is an art; first, you have to get to where the fish are. Once you're there, you have to have the right bait for the type of fish you're after. Patience will become more than a virtue! The only way in the world you will ever have patience is if Christ

produces the fruit of longsuffering in you. It's impossible for us to over-emphasize this point.

Well, we find out they obeyed and trusted and, as a result, they caught so many fish that the net broke. Another account later tells us the net does not break at that particular time. When we examine the conclusion of our deep-sea fishing expedition in the Spiritual Safari through the Gospel of John, we will thoroughly detail why the net broke here but doesn't break there. The Gospel message is the net, metaphorically speaking. Once you learn what that is all about, then you will be an expert fisherman, too. At this point in our account, Christ has not died or rose again yet – so the net broke....

6 And when they had this done, they inclosed a great multitude of fishes: and their net brake.

7 And they beckoned unto their partners, which were in the other ship, that they should come and help them. And they came, and filled both the ships, so that they began to sink.

8 When Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, Depart from me; for I am a sinful man, O Lord.

~ It's pretty easy to fill the boats up when we have no death, burial and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ to preach. Remember, Jesus hasn't died yet at this time. Peter confesses that he isn't even a good fisherman for fish; and he acknowledges it is because of his lack of faith. When the Lord called me, I failed the first time, and I went back to fishing for fish. I thought I was much more of an expert in that than I am at this - and I found out the hard way I am a failure at both! The Lord probably should have just gone ahead on and departed from me, too, because I am also a desperately retched man. I don't know why God didn't get someone He could actually depend on – to be perfectly honest. Friends, this is not some pious drivel I am just playing with at a computer – you may be absolutely sure.

I thank God He doesn't just leave it at this, and I have difficulties understanding why God goes on to make it clear that He doesn't intend to

get rid of Simon Peter after all. Thank God He planned to use Peter – because that means He is planning to use YOU – and He just might use ME! Once we recognize we aren't very good at fishing, or anything else, and we can honestly evaluate our lives as being completely useless to both God and man – without that becoming some pious platitude we bottom feed from – then the Lord Jesus can and will use us. Friends, God doesn't use the man who does not recognize his position and take it. You can just write that down. Until we recognize our utter failure, we are worse failures than we really are. Our faithlessness is alarming when we really break it all down under the right premise of our life – namely honesty with ourselves. That is the only time we can come to Him and be used for His purposes. Our Spiritual Safari does not take the love train, friends. We put the acid of life in the test tube of reality in this laboratory because we are looking for the Lord Jesus Christ....

9 For he was astonished, and all that were with him, at the draught of the fishes which they had taken:

10 And so was also James, and John, the sons of Zebedee, which were partners with Simon. And Jesus said unto Simon, Fear not; from henceforth thou shalt catch men.

~ The prophecy of the Lord Jesus in this section of Scripture becomes fulfilled on the Day of Pentecost for Simon Peter. This is significant to us today because we aren't catching cold fish but, rather, the hearts of men. At the time in which we are studying, these men could not catch fish – they had miserably failed at that. Only the direction of the Lord led to any fish being caught. So, let's figure out how we can see into the darkness - because we need to know where this boat is going. There is another boat floating in the water tonight and the captain on that boat is an expert fisherman, too; and his name is Satan. The devil has his eyes on the same schools of fish you do....

2 Timothy 2: 26 And that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will ~

That is not funny, friends. Satan has his drag net and his own demon disciples fishing in the same waters right along side where you are. They are going to attempt to tell you to fish with them, too. They will say you are both doing the same thing, right? Except they dangle the things of this world on a sharp hook; and their objective is to kill your soul. The big difference is: God brings us ashore and separates the good from the bad – as we will see – and then sets your soul free - as opposed to stuffing you in a nasty container with other dead fish to die slowly by suffocating. This is a horrible, nasty metaphorical picture the Spirit of God is painting tonight, and if you have ever been deep sea fishing with a cold beverage in your hand - and if you caught anything - you will know the thoughts connected with this....

11 And when they had brought their ships to land, they forsook all, and followed him.

12 And it came to pass, when he was in a certain city, behold a man full of leprosy: who seeing Jesus fell on his face, and besought him, saying, Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean.

13 And he put forth his hand, and touched him, saying, I will: be thou clean. And immediately the leprosy departed from him.

~ We examined in both Matthew and Mark how disease necessarily comes with an inherently attached psychological effect. The leper had been diagnosed at some point, but we aren't told how or at what stage the leprosy was. What we do know is that the man would have been separated immediately from family, friends and all of society; his life, as he knew it, would have been over. This man trusted Christ to make the decision whether or not to heal him. Of course, Jesus will heal you. There's never a question about that with Him. All we have to do is come to Him - His way. Not only that; but Jesus healed by touching the man. Nobody had touched that man in years. The effect of a hand upon him would have been tremendous.

There are many lives that need to be touched today, and the Lord Jesus may be trying to touch others by living through you. Are you allowing your

hand to be His hand that touches others? Are you allowing Him to love others through you? Touching other people's lives may be doing some unknown something that you do – you just don't recognize it - have you ever thought about that? We all touch somebody – you may be absolutely sure. Jesus is instructing us to do some fishing; but also, to reach out and touch some soul that may have not been touched in a long time - if ever. It may be that some individual will only allow YOU to touch them, too....

14 And he charged him to tell no man: but go, and shew thyself to the priest, and offer for thy cleansing, according as Moses commanded, for a testimony unto them.

15 But so much the more went there a fame abroad of him: and great multitudes came together to hear, and to be healed by him of their infirmities.

16 And he withdrew himself into the wilderness, and prayed.

17 And it came to pass on a certain day, as he was teaching, that there were Pharisees and doctors of the law sitting by, who were come out of every town of Galilee, and Judaea, and Jerusalem: and the power of the Lord was present to heal them.

18 And, behold, men brought in a bed a man which was taken with a palsy: and they sought means to bring him in, and to lay him before him.

19 And when they could not find by what way they might bring him in because of the multitude, they went upon the housetop, and let him down through the tiling with his couch into the midst before Jesus.

~ We have been to this party twice before with Matthew and Mark. Mark gave us the most details. Remember, the four stretcher bearers came down the road with this lame man hanging off the bed. They went all the way up on the roof just to come back down again. It just seems to me that it didn't have to be that difficult. I acknowledge that they ultimately got the man to the place where he needed to be, and his sins forgiven – but – we elaborated on this previously, so we're just moving on by saying this man

was healed. I'll also say there are many people that aren't going to get the message unless you take hold of the corner of a stretcher and personally carry them to Christ! Many, many people are paralyzed by sin: fear, lies, drugs; alcohol, broken homes, broken marriages and broken trust – just to name a few of the things people are paralyzed by – some are paralyzed by prejudice, hate and indifference. Well, most of those people will never hear Jesus say to them their sins are forgiven unless you grab the corner of a stretcher.

There are three different ways in this chapter in which Jesus tells us we are to get the Gospel message out to the world; and this so-called Spiritual Safari is designed to take the entire Word of God to the entire world. I don't feed stray cats in the Appalachian Mountains, I don't rescue dogs in Denver, and I don't advertise under a banner of animal rights, housing orphans or even baptizing a hundred people a day blindly and without understanding. So, if you want to support a worthwhile cause of getting the Word of God to the entire reading and thinking world in the sound doctrine of the apostles, then this safari is the best possible place you can pray for and support. That's our business - and I hope you'll make it your business. By the way, nothing else is our business on safari....

20 And when he saw their faith, he said unto him, Man, thy sins are forgiven thee.

21 And the scribes and the Pharisees began to reason, saying, Who is this which speaketh blasphemies? Who can forgive sins, but God alone?

22 But when Jesus perceived their thoughts, he answering said unto them, What reason ye in your hearts?

23 Whether is easier, to say, Thy sins be forgiven thee; or to say, Rise up and walk?

24 But that ye may know that the Son of man hath power upon earth to forgive sins, (he said unto the sick of the palsy,) I say unto thee, Arise, and take up thy couch, and go into thine house.

25 And immediately he rose up before them, and took up that whereon he lay, and departed to his own house, glorifying God.

26 And they were all amazed, and they glorified God, and were filled with fear, saying, We have seen strange things to day.

27 And after these things he went forth, and saw a publican, named Levi, sitting at the receipt of custom: and he said unto him, Follow me.

28 And he left all, rose up, and followed him.

29 And Levi made him a great feast in his own house: and there was a great company of publicans and of others that sat down with them.

~ The feast is the detail left out by both Matthew and Mark; and I have to wonder why they both omitted it. Well, Matthew wasn't trained in a theological seminary – he was a tax man. He was a hard core and slick individual. Rich people usually like to make a dinner and throw a party. They always like to talk about it. Well, he invites the entire sinful neighborhood over to get saved. Let's be careful to notice – the sinners came to Jesus – not the other way around. This is one very effective way of bringing people in; particularly to a neighborhood Bible study – just advertise that you'll be serving food. Let's invite people in for a spiritual dinner and handle them that way....

30 But their scribes and Pharisees murmured against his disciples, saying, Why do ye eat and drink with publicans and sinners?

31 And Jesus answering said unto them, They that are whole need not a physician; but they that are sick.

32 I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.

33 And they said unto him, Why do the disciples of John fast often, and make prayers, and likewise the disciples of the Pharisees; but thine eat and drink?

34 And he said unto them, Can ye make the children of the bridechamber fast, while the bridegroom is with them?

35 But the days will come, when the bridegroom shall be taken away from them, and then shall they fast in those days.

~ As is typical, the Pharisees can't keep their mouths shut. Notice how they bounce from question to question with no rhyme or reason for said questions. They just totally ignore the answers Jesus gives, too. Well, Jesus was in the business of healing the sickness of sin. Of course, the religious rulers won't allow Jesus to minister to them. Jesus came for the sick and the Gospel is only for people who realize they have a need. There are many people who are simply too strong and too self-righteous to ever be saved. They will always be lost! If you recognize the Gospel is needed in your life, then Christ can save you and He will save you – BUT – if you are self-sufficient and content in your chosen profession, then all I can advise you to do is continue on your pathway to destruction, because this message is not for you at all. There is no message for you that makes sense, either, by the way. There are messages you receive, but they are letters of loneliness and despair that spell out an existential emptiness. You may as well play a sad song on a record from some long dead musician and weep along for yourself; this is all meaningless to you unless and until you see your desperate condition. Yeah, it's like that....

36 And he spake also a parable unto them; No man putteth a piece of a new garment upon an old; if otherwise, then both the new maketh a rent, and the piece that was taken out of the new agreeth not with the old.

37 And no man putteth new wine into old bottles; else the new wine will burst the bottles, and be spilled, and the bottles shall perish.

38 But new wine must be put into new bottles; and both are preserved.

39 No man also having drunk old wine straightway desireth new: for he saith, The old is better.

~ We're living in a modern world where the Lord Jesus is conspicuously absent; and while He is in Heaven, we are to teach the Word of God to the entire world. This leg of our safari pulled from one direction – up! As we close this report, we read the parable about the garments and the bottles again. This marks the first actual parable we have come across in this Gospel record of Luke, by the way. The natural old man likes his old wine – the old ways – the old religion. The Lord Jesus Christ is bringing you something new today - completely and totally new and exciting and fresh and vibrant. It's called the Gospel of His death, burial and resurrection. Jesus didn't come to this earth to do ANYTHING except something new. Christ didn't come to close the loopholes of the law – and he didn't come to refurbish something that got old over time. This is all new – brand new ~

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