

Wednesday Evening Bible Study

January 30, 2019

The Gospel of Luke

Ministry in Galilee

Topics – Luke 5; Peter; Sea of Galilee; fisher of men;

Text – Luke 5:1 - 11

Introduction

Again, it is difficult to pinpoint exactly the chronological order of events contained corporately within all four of the gospels. However, to the best of our knowledge, the account of Jesus preaching off of Peter's boat in Capernaum takes place after John 1:35 – 51, which takes place in Judaea, and Matthew 4:18 – 22:

"And Jesus, walking by the sea of Galilee, saw two brethren, Simon called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea: for they were fishers. And he saith unto them, Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men. And they straightway left their nets, and followed him. And going on from thence, he saw other two brethren, James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother, in a ship with Zebedee their father, mending their nets; and he called them. And they immediately left the ship and their father, and followed him." (Matthew 4:18-22)

Though it is entirely possible that Matthew (also Mark 1:16 – 20), and Luke are discussing the same event, with Luke giving a little more detail.

The Lord Teaches on the Sea of Galilee (vs. 1 – 3)

V. 1 – The Lake Gennesaret is the Sea of Galilee. It is also called the Sea of Tiberius in John 6:1 and 21:1. The Sea of Galilee is a large freshwater lake, over 690 ft. below sea level, and serves as the main source of water and commerce for the Galilee region.¹

The fisherman had fished through the night, and as we will see, caught nothing. They were now getting their nets ready for the next night.

The Lord preached off of the boat so that the people could see and hear him better.

McGee said:

What a pulpit! I believe this illustration is both figurative and suggestive. Every pulpit is a "fishing boat," a place to give out the Word of God and attempt to catch fish. He had told these men that He would make them fishers of men. This does not mean that you and I will catch fish every time we give out the Word—the disciples didn't—but it does mean that the one on board must not forget the supreme business of life which is to fish for the souls of men.²

The Lord Tells Peter to Let Down His Nets (vs. 4 - 7)

¹ MacArthur, J., Jr. (Ed.). (1997). *The MacArthur Study Bible* (electronic ed., p. 1521). Nashville, TN: Word Pub.

² McGee, J. V. (1997). *Thru the Bible commentary* (electronic ed., Vol. 4, p. 267). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

Jesus asks the disciples to let down their nets (plural) for a draught. (pronounced “draft”) A “draught” is a catch of fish. Simon reluctantly lets down one net out of respect for the Lord. The catch of fish was so large that the net (singular) broke. Peter had to call his partners, James and John, to come help with the catch.

The Lord Transforms the Disciples into Fishers of Men (vs. 8 – 11)

Peter’s eyes and heart was now completely open and attentive to the Lord. The Lord has Peter’s complete attention. Peter now knows that Jesus is not a mere man. He is the Messiah, He is God.

Jesus uses the same illustration to call Peter back into the ministry in John 21.

Conclusion

This morning’s devotion from *Insight for Living* was on this topic:

Why should we be willing to drop everything and follow Jesus Christ? And what happens when we do? I can think of at least six reasons:

1. Jesus chooses not to minister to others all alone. He could, but he deliberately chooses not to. He could have rowed that boat Himself. He could have dropped those nets over the side Himself. He certainly could have pulled up the nets choked with fish. Instead, He had the disciples do it. And He specifically stated, "From now on you will be catching men."
2. Jesus uses the familiar to do the incredible. He came to their turf (lake, boat), their place of work (fishing), and had them use their skills (nets). In a familiar setting, He made them aware of incredible possibilities.
3. Jesus moves us from the safety of the seen to the risks of the unseen. He led them "out into the deep water" where nobody could touch bottom before He commanded, "Let down your nets." Nothing spectacular occurs in shallow water.
4. Jesus proves the potential by breaking our nets and filling our boats. When God's hand is on a situation, nets break, eyes bulge, deck planks groan, and boats almost sink. It's His way of putting the potential on display.
5. Jesus conceals His surprises until we follow His leading. Everything was business as usual on the surface. Boats didn't have a halo; nets didn't tingle at their touch; the lake water didn't glow; a chorus of angelic voices didn't thunder from the sky. No. The divinely arranged surprise came only after they dropped the nets. Remember, it wasn't until he followed Jesus' instructions that Peter changed "Master" to "Lord."
6. Jesus reveals His objective to those who release their security. He could read their willingness in their faces. Then—and only then—did He tell them they would be engaged in "catching men." And guess what—they jumped at the chance!³

³ Swindoll, Charles R. *Day by Day with Charles Swindoll*. Thomas Nelson, 2000.

