

Luke 5:1-11

Jesus Calls the First Disciples

Once while Jesus was standing beside the lake of Gennesaret, and the crowd was pressing in on him to hear the word of God, he saw two boats there at the shore of the lake; the fishermen had gone out of them and were washing their nets. He got into one of the boats, the one belonging to Simon, and asked him to put out a little way from the shore. Then he sat down and taught the crowds from the boat. When he had finished speaking, he said to Simon, 'Put out into the deep water and let down your nets for a catch.' Simon answered, 'Master, we have worked all night long but have caught nothing. Yet if you say so, I will let down the nets.' When they had done this, they caught so many fish that their nets were beginning to break. So they signaled to their partners in the other boat to come and help them. And they came and filled both boats, so that they began to sink. But when Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, 'Go away from me, Lord, for I am a sinful man!' For he and all who were with him were amazed at the catch of fish that they had taken; and so also were James and John, sons of Zebedee, who were partners with Simon. Then Jesus said to Simon, 'Do not be afraid; from now on you will be catching people.' When they had brought their boats to shore, they left everything and followed him.

The Gospel of Christ...

Gone Fishing

Today we hear about God's voice calling us. God calls out "Whom shall I send?" and Isaiah leaps up and volunteers: "Pick me, Pick me – I'll do whatever you ask of me!" He doesn't even wait to hear the difficult job that that God needs – he's ready to serve... "Follow me, and you can be a People-catcher!" Jesus calls. And Simon, James and John drop their nets... drop their responsibilities... and follow him... directly towards the cross.

God's calling voice comes in the most remarkable ways. These stories reach out through space and time, but don't be fooled into thinking that God stopped speaking to us. God's voice calls out to each and every one of us. Do you hear it? What does God ask of you? How have you responded?

We are all called to discipleship in different ways, just as we each have different gifts. But God needs each of us to do our part to bring about the Kingdom of God -What Martin Luther King Jr called God's Beloved Community.

In today's Gospel story, we are told that the disciples have been fishing all night, dropping their nets down into the shallow waters, but have caught... nothing. They are tired and frustrated and disheartened. Go out further, Jesus calls out. Go where the water is deeper. Drop your nets there.

That's not how we do things around here, they say... But if you say so, we'll try... So, maybe a little bit doubtful and ready to prove him wrong, they take their boats to the deeper waters and drop down their nets. And they pull in more fish than they can imagine. So much fish that their boats are weighted down and begins to sink. Once they are back on shore, they fall on their knees in amazement, recognizing that this man is more than a wise fisherman. This is their first glimpse of God's own Son.

Today, Jesus is telling us that if we want to know what God is calling for us to do, we need to be willing to go deeper. It's not enough to do things the way we always do them. It's not enough to dip our toes into the shallow waters. It's time to take some risks and plunge into the Deep.

The deep water is where abundance is, more than we can imagine. But to get to the deep water takes faith. Deep water is risky. In the deep, black water, it's hard to see and you can't know where the dangers lie, things that can pull you under. All you can do is trust the words and directions of those who have passed through deep water before you. You have to have faith. Jesus is always inviting people... calling us over and over again... to the

deeper end of things. But you have to be willing to take the risk and follow the voice.

And that's scary.

This is the shallow waters. The deepest water we encounter is in the baptismal font.

Today, God sends us out there. Into deeper, darker, unknown waters.

It's easy to come to church and sit in the same pew every week. It's easy to socialize with the same people that you've known all your life. It's easy to hear the same stories and sing the same hymns. Sure, sometimes we get mad at each other or have theological or political disagreements. But, you all KNOW each other... you know each other's stories, you know each other's families, you are each other's families... and there's not a lot of risk to your faith. Sometimes, the deepest water you face is in the baptismal font.

But it doesn't have to be that way. What would it look like if we all took the things we love about Trinity Church and used them to be better people-catchers? What if we used the lessons learned here as we wade into deeper waters out there?

What is God calling out to you to do and what will your answer be?

Every week at the top of your bulletin is a weekly meditation. A sentence or thought for you to think about. Sometimes its connected to the scripture or sometimes to an event of the week. This week it is a quote by Dietrich Bonhoeffer, whose 119th birthday would have been on February 4.

"Salvation is free but discipleship will cost your life," he wrote. The rest of the quote is this: *"Silence in the face of evil is evil itself. God will not hold us guiltless. Not to speak is to speak. Not to act is to act."*

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That's the ultimate call of discipleship – to go... to speak...to act. Bonhoeffer lived into his words. As Hitler rose to power, Bonhoeffer lived as a Professor in New York. He could have stayed here in safety – speaking out against the injustice in his homeland. He could have stayed in his ivory tower and written words of wisdom and sent them home, but that would have done nothing to help alleviate the fear and suffering of his congregation back home. He couldn't do that. He knew he had to speak and act. So, he packed his bags, went back to Germany and the heart of an oppressive Empire, where he did everything, he could to stop the injustices that he saw. He knew that true discipleship was risky but it was worth the risks, even as he was executed for his part in the resistance., just two weeks before the Allied troops would have freed him.

When we wade into the deep waters, there are risks. Most of us will never face the kind of risks that Dietrich or Peter, in the heart of enemy Empires. But we face our own risks that threaten to pull us down – and only you really know what those risks are. But whatever they are, what do you have to lose? If you stay in the shallow waters, you will leave with what you come with – Nothing. But if you take that first step.... And then another, until you find yourself wading into new waters that are both deep and refreshing, you might find the abundance of new and everlasting life, with more than enough to share everywhere we go. Amen

Possible idea. Pray for each other.