

- He is also the criterion and touchstone of what is right and wrong in God's Kingdom.
- He is our Model, our Law.

- (1) Peter must act on **Jesus' Word** if he is to be a fisher of men.
- Compare this with 6:46 which shows the hypocrisy of **calling** Jesus "Lord" while dis-obeying his Word and Way of Life.
- (2) It is **because** Jesus is Word / Son / Son of Man that he **HAS** the authority to forgive sin **ON EARTH** (5:21)
- (3) Because Jesus is Lord and Master of the Sabbath that the disciples will obey **his** instructions regarding work / Law, etc. (6:5)
- (4) It is because of who Jesus **is** that persecution for his sake is a privilege countless millions have accepted through 2 millennia.

### **The Problem for Israel:**

Jesus did not preach to a morally backward Nation. No!

The Mosaic Law was very sophisticated and highly developed in Theology and Morality.

It had Schools of Scholarship and differing interpretations of the Law depending on whether you were of the Conservative School of Shammai or the more Liberal School of Hillel, the Elder.

- All the scholars accepted the Old Testament as the Word of God and based all their moral and spiritual teaching on its authority.
- Jesus went into battle with the scholars – not about **the authority** of the Word of God, which they accepted – but about **their interpretation** of the Word of God. Jesus set about **restoring** the Law to its pristine beauty, by cutting out "human laws and regulations": Mt 15:9
- Luke wants us to see that the system of Judaism **was good in its day – but that day is over now.** Jesus has come **FROM GOD** to give us something completely new and of a much higher order.

### **Section A: Begins with 3 miracles**

**5:1-11:** From the beginning of his public ministry Jesus concentrated on Preaching the Word of God. Cf. 4:14-15, 16, 31-37, 43, 44; 5:1

### **Situation of the miracle:**

- It took place on the shores of the Lake of Gennesaret – called the Garden Lake – because it teemed with life.
- It was **the living lake** compared to the Dead Sea which supported no life, so the two lakes became a parable on life itself.
- The sea of Galilee had an inlet and an outlet so that it could sustain life. The Dead Sea had an inlet but no outlet so the waters stagnated...
- Galilee was in the area called "the land of Zebulon and Naphtali" in ancient times.

- Isaiah 9:1-7 declared that **a great light** would come from this area – a boy destined to become the prince of Peace and father of the world to come...

5:2: Jesus is present showing “the imperishable light of God’s Law” (Wisdom 18:4) to the people... **The Light of God’s Presence**, **the Light of God’s Word** and **the Grace of God** shine brightly... The people listen with fascination to a young Rabbi whose Presence and Word command respect... his words are like fresh honey from the honeycomb.

**Note:** That whenever Jesus meets the crowds he always feeds them with God’s Word. He knows better than the prophets did that “**without vision (understanding) the people perish**” Hosea 4:4

The people accept Jesus as the **Bearer-of-God’s-Word**...they listen, then must internalise it and adapt their daily lives to **the now revealed** Will of God.

Note that this is the context Luke gives for **the call of Peter and the fishermen**... they will have to put out into the deep waters of the world to catch souls for the Kingdom of God... which was Jesus’ concern that the Gentile World would also join the K.O.G.

**Jesus’ initiative:** Seeing the needs of the people were great (now and in the future)

Jesus’ looked for a way to help them... he noticed two boats coming in to land. The fishermen disembarked from a frustrating night of fishing and began washing their nets... hoping to get home ... and sleep!

Jesus left the crowd, went over and **got into Simon’s boat even though there were other boats there**. Jesus is still reigning from the Boat of Peter after 2,000 years...  
... even though there are other boats on the lake!

Jesus urged Simon to push out a little from the land and **continued to teach from Simon’s boat as a pulpit**! This was the Lord’s choice of both **Simon and his boat**. It is from **the Petrine Ministry** that Jesus wanted to teach and feed the world.

These fishermen already knew Jesus because he had worked in Capharnaum: 4:31-37. Jesus had stayed in Simon’s house: 4:38, so Jesus knows him well enough to commandeer his boat!

Nevertheless, they had no idea what the Lord had in store for them either on this day, or in the future! This day would change their lives forever... and the lives of countless millions way into the future.

**Jesus’ action was prophetic.** He intended to choose Simon as his leader disciple, ... the one who would take charge of the whole Mission when Jesus returned to the Father.

The fishing itself was a metaphor for the future Mission: Simon’s boat a metaphor for the future church The Sea of Galilee was a metaphor for the New Exodus from the earthly shore to the heavenly shore...

Jesus has made his choice; now it depends on the response of the fishermen... just as what **can** and **will happen** in the 21<sup>st</sup> century depends on us also!

**Challenge to Simon:**

Jesus gives what **seems** an unreasonable command... to sacrifice their own plans for his that day! Their future Mission will demand endless sacrifices from them – even that of their own lives!

5:4:

**"Put out into deep water, and pay out your nets for a catch".**

It would be some years before Simon would understand this simple command... for the 'deep water' was not the Sea of Galilee, but that of the Gentile Nations.

It was only **after** Pentecost that they realised that the shallow waters of Galilee did not compare to the deep waters of the seven seas of the world!

They would have to leave the relative comfort of Israel to go to strange cultures, with strange languages and even stranger gods!

They would need the Holy Spirit to teach and guide them on their way.

It is no less difficult today - with our own cultures having deviated greatly from the Way of Truth. Now even those living in our own nations don't understand either us or the message we preach!

### **Simon's Response:**

His response was respectful, while letting Jesus know that the command was crazy! The fishermen know that it was neither the time nor the place to catch fish!

It won't be the last time they see Jesus as not understanding the Lake – until they see him walk on its waters! Mt 14:22-23; Mk 6:45-52; Jn 6:16-21. Luke is the only Evangelist who doesn't speak about this!!

**"We worked hard all night and caught nothing".** This will be their experience in the future also **because only the Saviour can save!** He alone can catch the 'fish'.

Today it's the same: the church feels 'old and tired' having worked through the night of history with such little to show for it...

Then Jesus' Presence and Authority touched Simon.

Something happened to him – maybe it was the way Jesus looked at him?

Later, in the Passion it will be a look from Jesus that will produce repentance in this stubborn disciple! Simon decided to accept Jesus' Word and obey it against his own – apparently – better judgment!

In that **gaze of Jesus**, one finds infinite depths of love, compassion, mercy, Grace and understanding. It also carries the challenge to say 'Yes' to God, for it is not possible to be **one with Jesus** while saying 'No' to God!

5:6 **"But if you say so, I will pay out the nets".** This is a triumph of Grace over human reasoning.

This is Jesus' first victory over Simon! The first obedience... therefore very special.

It is the beginning of understanding Jesus' own words in Gethsemane much later:

**"Not my will, but thine, oh Lord"**

**Result of surrendering to divine Grace:** Simon's obedience caused a great miracle to happen.

The Gospel will illustrate this principle over and over again – that obedience to the Word of God opens the way for God to act.

5:7 In fact the miracle is **so great** that Simon had to signal to his companions in the other boat to help and **"they filled both boats to sinking point"!**

NB: This miracle was not a 'thank you' gift for the loan of the boat!!

It was a prophetic picture of the future mission.

Simon and his companions – who are the future leaders of the church – **will learn the hard way** that to go out on mission without being steeped in the Word of God,

- without having spent time in prayer, they will catch nothing!

**Saving souls is the great miracle of Redemption**, which can only happen **through, with and in Jesus the Redeemer**.

Just as Jesus alone could show them where the fish was here, **so, in their future mission** they needed such a close relationship with him that they could take his guidance, otherwise, it is doomed to failure.

They called to their companions in the other boat to help them.

In the future there will be other boats on the lake fishing for the same fish, and for the same reason!

**The other big boat today** is the Orthodox Church which the Catholic Church has been trying to get into unity with for some time now. In the end only a Unified Church will reap the Lord's Harvest.

#### **Effect on Simon:**

It awoke in him the consciousness of his own sinfulness and unworthiness.

He fell on his knees in the middle of those squirming fish!

Before his companions, Simon made his first Confession, equivalent to: **"Lord, I am not worthy..."**

He addressed Jesus as "Master" in vs 5, **but now as "Lord"**. He **now** realizes there is more to Jesus than he previously thought. Grace produces humility and reverence.

**Jesus' Response:** **A divine call!** Jesus asked them to fish for souls and bring in a miraculous harvest for God. Their ministry was to be universal...

**Nota bene:** Simon's prominence in the Gospel begins here – with Jesus' call to mission..

Throughout the Gospel he is the **No 1 disciple**, the spokesperson for all the others:  
6:14; 8:45,51; 9:20,28,32-33; 12:41; 18:28; 22:8,34,54-61; 24:12

Luke's account of Peter's call **resembles the post-resurrection account** of a fishing incident in John 21.

- There, too, Jesus and Peter are the main characters.
- There, too, there is a miraculous catch of fish.
- There, too, Peter is appointed the No 1 disciple.

The difference: - In Lk 5 Peter confesses that he is a sinner  
- There in Jn 21 Peter has proved that he is a sinner!

For Luke Peter represents all the sinners who respond positively to Jesus' call throughout his Ministry.  
See Luke 5:30,32; 7:34,39; 15:1-2,7,10; 18:13; 19:7

**Final Response of Peter + others:** 5:11 **This is a vital point in Luke's Gospel.**

- "They left everything":** 5:28; 14:33; 18:22-
- "They followed him":** 5:27-28; 9:23,49,57,61; 18:22,28,43; 22: 39,54

'**Following Jesus'** means imitating his life; accepting his teaching and following him along the Via Dolorosa.

#### **General points: Daily Work:**

The Lord visited **Peter, Andrew** (Boat 1) **James and John** (Boat 2) in the midst of their daily work. It was not a special occasion and there was no warning given to get ready.

- Peter had to be **open** to the Lord's coming.
- " " " " " allow the Lord intervene.
- Peter had to be open to obey the Lord even when the command did not make sense to him.
- Peter had to learn his sinfulness in his daily work.
- When he allowed the Lord to transform **THE WAY HE WORKED**, he became one of the most famous men who ever lived!
  - famous for his work! - famous for his martyrdom!

### **What could our sinfulness be in daily work?**

- The world works for fame, success, honour, power and recognition.  
What do we, Christians, work for?  
If **our motivation** is the same as that of the world, then we prove ourselves worldly, **not** Christian.
- Do we obey God's Word consciously by showing justice, mercy, kindness, forgiveness, meekness, tolerance, etc.? Do we go against our selfishness just to please **Him**!

#### **Nota Bene:**

Peter's weakness / sinfulness **was NO BLOCK to God** once he confessed it and would do something to change his lifestyle. Jesus does not need us to be perfect before he uses us.

- he uses imperfect people all the time!

### **Miracle 2: The Leper: The Untouchable One:**

This is the first public healing in the Gospel. Its importance lies in the OT background.

Peter was a good, decent man, whose sinfulness had to be made known to him before he could convert. The leper who approached Jesus now **had his uncleanness exposed to everyone**. No one would go near him for fear of contamination.

**Lev 13:45-46** obliged him to wear his clothes and hair dishevelled, and to cry "unclean! unclean!" whenever he saw anyone along the road ... He had to live apart from the community.

This illness was thought to make a person unfit (unclean) for God's Presence – hence it was **a graphic symbol** of the uncleanness of sin.

The Mosaic Law was hard on the sufferer, but it was necessary **FOR THE HEALTH OF THE NATION**.

Leprosy began with a red swelling on the skin...then incubated until it reached maturity when it turned white as snow: **Isaiah 1:18**.

**Leprosy was viewed as a symbol of sin.** **Isaiah 1:4-6** accuses the nation of being leprous.

The ugliness of the disease reminded them of the ugliness of sin and its destructive power in the soul.

The prophets taught that only God could forgive sin – and that this gift would come through the Messiah. Before that time the sick person had to endure isolation from family, society and temple. **On the spiritual plane**, sin also isolates us from God and from all relationships...

**(NB)** **Because of this** the cure of the leper **must be seen** from the higher - moral / spiritual level – rather than just the physical.

Why? Because **Jesus was a Prophet as well as a Healer** and **all** of his healings were **SIGNS** of deeper realities.

They were also graphic illustrations of what Redemption entailed for the individual – as in this case – or the group / Nation – as in other cases.