

THE MIRACLE CATCH

Luke 5:1-11

INTRODUCTION

Illustration – Dwight Clark passed away June 4 –he is known for “**The Catch**” – the winning touchdown reception in the 1982 NFC Championship Game between the Cowboys and 49ers.

With 58 seconds left in the game and the 49ers facing 3rd and 3, San Francisco wide receiver Dwight Clark made a leaping grab in the back of the end zone to complete a 6-yard touchdown pass from Joe Montana, enabling the 49ers to defeat the Cowboys, 28–27. To this day, some Cowboys who were playing in that game still say that they think Montana was throwing the ball away to avoid a sack. “**The Catch**” is widely regarded as one of the most memorable events in NFL history.

In baseball → “**The Catch**” was made by Willie Mays in the 1954 World Series.

In our text this morning, we have “The Catch” of the ages.
→ We have the ‘Miracle Catch’

READ Luke 5:1-11

Proposition: 5 Markers as we walk through our text:

- I. The **Crowd**
- II. The **Command**
- III. The **Catch**
- IV. The **Call**
- V. The **Commitment**

So That: I read a great summary statement of this episode uniquely recorded by Luke for your blessing and enrichment

→ By Jesus’ power and authority,
multitudes of people will be caught,

for eternal kingdom blessings,
by the followers of Jesus,
who: teach the word of God,
obey the commands of Jesus,
humble themselves,
and treasure Christ above all. (Piper)

1st Marker as we walk through our text, ...

I. The Crowd 5:1-3

Point – Jesus’ great Galilean ministry → he is expanding

Proof – “**Now it came about that while the multitude were pressing around Him and listening to the word of God, He was standing by the lake of Gennesaret**”

“**word of God**” → The words Jesus speaks are the “**word of God**”
and/or preaching Old Testament?

A good preacher has something to say.
The poor preacher has to say something.

“**pressing around Him**” – same original word translated in:

- **23:23** – “they were insistent”
- **John 11:38** – “a stone was lying against it”
- **Acts 27:20** – “storm was assailing us”
- **1 Cor 9:16** – “I am under compulsion”

“**the lake of Gennesaret;**” → this is the Sea of Galilee

- This is unique to Luke – Gennesaret is a fertile plain on NW shore of the Sea of Galilee
- **Luke** always refers to it as a **Lake** – **Luke 5:1-2; 8:22-23, 33**
- **Matthew, Mark, and John** always refer to it as a sea. “Sea of Galilee” – **Matt 4:18; 15:29; Mark 1:16; 7:31; John 6:1**
- also called the “Sea of Tiberias” by **John 6:1; 21:1** → major city on the western shore in the time of Christ

named after “Tiberius Caesar” (3:1)

- it is a large lake about 13 mi. x 7 mi., 700 ft. below sea level
- a freshwater lake fed by snowmelt out of the mountains to the North
- the Jordan river comes out of the southern tip of the Sea of Galilee, runs south, and empties into the Dead Sea

“²and He saw two boats lying at the edge of the lake; but the fishermen had gotten out of them, and were washing their nets.”

- fishermen are cleaning their nets for the next day

“^{3a}And He got into one of the boats, which was Simon’s,”

Jesus doesn’t do anything just by accident. Everything He does is divinely intentional and sovereignly purposeful.

“^{3b}and asked him to put out a little way from the land.”

- natural amphitheater

“^{3c}And He sat down and *began* teaching the multitudes from the boat.”

- teachers would stand to read the Word of God and sit down to teach → **Illustration – 4:16-21**

Illustration – Professors may hold a position of honor in a department called a “Chair” → as in a Chair of Authority and/or Honor. This is also the source of → “Chairman” of the Board

“*began* teaching”

- another case like **4:15** where NASB put *began* in italics because not in the Greek text
- grammatically – imperfect tense – “was teaching” – habitual practice

Jesus is not confined to a particular venue. He will preach the Gospel in the synagogues, in the temple, in a boat on a lake, on

a mountain, in a house, in the wilderness, and at funerals.

Jesus uses Peter's boat as his pulpit to throw the net of the gospel over His hearers.

2nd Marker as we walk through our text, ...

II. The Command **5:4-5**

Point – a seemingly very strange command

Proof – “⁴**And when He had finished speaking, He said to Simon, ‘Put out into the deep water and let down your nets for a catch.’**”

- either gill nets hung vertically so that fish are trapped in it by their gills or larger nets that trap by surrounding fish
- relatively large boat – maybe 20-25ft

“**Put out**” – singular → command to the captain

“**let down**” – plural → command to the crew - (takes more than one to let down the net).

Jesus has already had two teaching sessions (**vv. 1, 3**) so it is at least late in the morning, if not even around noon.

Illustration – Fishing on the **Deschutes River** growing up in southern Oregon. The best fishing is at dawn and dusk. The darker the sky, the cloudier the day, the better the fishing.

The sun blazes in the middle of the day on the Sea of Galilee. So, this is the worst time to go fishing which is why Simon answers the way he does.

“^{5a}**And Simon answered and said, ‘Master, we worked hard all night and caught nothing,’**”

Master – a person of high status *master, lord*. This is a Greek word used only used by Luke. Luke never uses the Hebrew word “Rabbi”.

So, Carpenter Jesus’ command to Fisherman Peter makes no sense. The fish are in the shallow waters at night and dawn and dusk. They move out to deeper parts of the water during the day and will normally be deeper than where the nets will even reach.

“^{5b}**but at Your bidding I will let down the nets.**”

- literally at “Your word” – this is the Greek word *rhema* (v. 5), not the Greek word *logos* (v. 1)
- *logos* is more *ipso facto* – total word of God
- *rhema* is more *de facto* – particular word of God → specific command

Illustration – 3:2 – “the word of God came to John, the son of Zacharias, in the wilderness.” → It is a unique and particular message of John.

We already tried fishing in the best place at the best time. Now you say go and fish in the worst place at the worst time. OK.

All the <u>fisherman in Peter</u> is saying, “This is crazy.” All the <u>faith in Peter</u> is saying, “I must obey.”
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Geoff Thomas – “*If you should take away obedience to Christ’s word, begin to decide where his word applies, shrink the confines of his authority, what realms he might have something to contribute ... then you can be sure of this, that you are no disciple.*”

Application – when God commands us to do something, we don’t do it reluctantly or begrudgingly.

Application – We don’t set it up with an expectation to fail so that afterwards we can say in our hearts, “See. I told you so.”

3rd Marker as we walk through our text, ...

III. The Catch

5:4-7

Point – Our Lord again (like in Nazareth and Capernaum) follows His verbal proclamation with a visible demonstration

Jesus guides the fishermen. He governs the fish.

Proof – “**6And when they had done this, they enclosed a great quantity of fish; and their nets *began to break*; ⁷and they signaled to their partners in the other boat, for them to come and help them. And they came, and filled both of the boats, so that they began to sink.**”

- The other boat is still by the shore, out of audible range, so they signal them to come.

Now, commentators quibble whether this was omniscience (know where the fish are) or omnipotence (direct the fish into the net). Doesn't matter. This is not fishing. This is supernatural. This has no natural explanation.

Jesus bade Peter, and he obeyed. Jesus bids the fish, and they obey.

The fish jump to do His bidding. There was hesitancy on the part of Peter before he obeyed, some negotiation. But not the fish. → These are Jesus' fish!

Illustration – Bigger than You and I

*Who made the mountains, Who made the trees
Who made the rivers flow to the sea
And Who sends the rain when the earth is dry
Somebody bigger than you and I*

*Who made the flowers to bloom in the spring
Who made the song for the robins to sing
And Who hung the moon in the starry sky
Somebody bigger than you and I*

Beloved → He can move mountains. He can move fish. He will build His church and the gates of Hades will not prevail against it.

Application – Also, notice how Jesus blesses the imperfect obedience of Peter. This is Peter doing the will of the Master out of **duty**, not out of **delight**. Massively important lesson.

What is Peter the fisherman’s response to this?
Has Peter finally found the right business partner?

Application – This is the reason many people want Jesus in their boat. They want Jesus to give them more happiness, some business success. Better health, a longer life, more money. And with the Lord in the boat, they think they’re going to make out better. It is the “give Jesus a try” mentality. Sometimes they misquote Jeramiah 29:11 where God said to the nation of Israel in the context of the Babylonian exile... “I know the plans I have for you...” That is generally true for the Christian but it realizes itself in eternity, sometimes in the here and now.

4th Marker as we walk through our text, ...

IV. The Call **5:8-10**

Point – The third call of the four –

Recall first call to **Conversion** in **John 1**, the second call to **Discipleship** in **Mark 1, Matt 4**, ... and this is the next call.

We’re going to build on a running sentence to understand the significance of this call to Peter:

A. The posture adopted.

“^{8a}**But when Simon Peter saw *that*, he fell down at Jesus’ feet,**”

- only called “**Simon Peter**” in Luke
- “**Simon**” up to 6:14; he is called “**Peter**” after that

Psalm 95:3-6 – “the LORD is a great God, and a great King above all gods, ⁴in whose hand are the depths of the earth; the peaks of the mountains are His also. ⁵The sea is His, for it was He who

made it; and His hands formed the dry land. ⁶Come, let us worship and bow down; let us kneel before the LORD our Maker.”

Peter knows Who healed his mother-in-law instantaneously and completely.

He knows Who casts out demons in the synagogues.

He knows Who makes the fish swim into his net in such abundance.

B. The posture adopted is indicative of the penitence declared.

“^{8b}saying, ‘Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord!’”

Peter is the blind oppressed prisoner Jesus said He had come to preach the gospel to in reading Isaiah 61 in Nazareth.

The call of Jesus comes to a man who knows his own sinfulness. It comes to one who fears God.

Peter moves from a title of respect, Master, to a title of reverence, Lord.

HUGE → Peter obeys the Master. He falls before the Lord.

Illustration - When **Adam** fell, his first thought was to hide himself from God.

Job – “I have heard of You by the hearing of the ear; but now my eye sees You; ⁶therefore I retract, and I repent in dust and ashes.” (Job 42:5-6)

Israel at Sinai – “they said to Moses, ‘Speak to us yourself and we will listen; but let not God speak to us, lest we die.’” – (Exod 20:19)

Isaiah – “Woe is me, for I am ruined! Because I am a man of unclean lips, and I live among a people of unclean lips; for my eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts.” (Isa 6:5)

Ezekiel – “As the appearance of the rainbow in the clouds on a rainy day, so *was* the appearance of the surrounding radiance. Such *was* the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the LORD. And when I saw *it*, I fell on my face” (Ezek 1:28)

Saul of Tarsus – “fell to the ground” (Acts 9:4)

Consider **John**, who will lay his head on the bosom of Jesus, (and is here in the other boat overwhelmed with the catch of fish) fifty years later in prison on the isle of Patmos and this same Jesus meets this same John – “And when I saw Him, I fell at His feet as a dead man. And He laid His right hand upon me, saying, ‘Do not be afraid; I am the first and the last’” (Rev 1:17)

C. The posture adopted is indicative of the penitence declared because of the **Power Observed**.

“⁹**For amazement had seized him and all his companions because of the catch of fish which they had taken;**” – that is the reason why

“**amazement**” – from the original Greek word θάμβος – translated as ‘astonishment, terror’ → shaking with fear

1 Sam 14:15 – “the earth quaked so it became a great trembling.”

“**seized**” → literally means to ‘*encircle, surround*’

Illustration – **8:24-25**, later at the end of His Great Galilean Ministry... “it became calm” – resulting in a glassy sea as smooth as a mirror

The Lord who made the storm commands it to be silent and be still → it came suddenly but ceases **instantly**.

It is one thing for the **wind** to stop immediately.

It is another thing for the **waves** to stop immediately.

“Who then is this, that He commands even the winds and the water, and they obey Him?”

Only the One who created the wind and the waves can rebuke them. → **The Lord of the Universe!**

It is more terrifying to have the living God in your boat than the worst storm on the outside.

D. The posture adopted is indicative of the penitence declared because of the power observed with his **Partners Identified.**

“^{10a}**and so also James and John, sons of Zebedee, who were partners with Simon.**”

- this is the first mention of James and John by Luke
- much more in **6:13-15**

Treasure this!

E. The posture adopted is indicative of the penitence declared because of the power observed with his partners identified. And this is more than matched by the **Pardon Received.**

“^{10b}**And Jesus said to Simon, ‘Do not fear,’**”

- Just like the hymn we sing – Amazing Grace; “*Twas grace that taught my heart to fear, and grace my fears relieved*”

Get motivated by this:

F. The posture adopted is indicative of the penitence declared because of the power observed with his partners identified. And this is more than matched by the pardon received and the **Purpose Defined.**

“^{10c}**from now on you will be catching men.**”

- breaks with the past!
- It changes everything!

→ Christianity is the story of the, “**from now on**”

- From now on with a clear purpose, with your new birth, new worldview...defined by God.

Christ uses a different word for “**catching**” here in **v. 10** than in **vv. 4** and **9**

- literally means “to catch alive” because what we are doing with men is catching them from death to life
- this is a rescue mission
- the only other New Testament appearance of this word is in **2 Tim 2:26** – “they may come to their senses *and*

escape from the snare of the devil, having been held captive by him to do his will.”

Illustration – Jesus is clearly sovereign over all these affairs. Now, does the fact that Peter and his partners have to obey and cast their nets into the lake to catch the fish diminish, in anyway, the sovereign rule of Christ?? No. Of course not.

Illustration – Some people who do not understand the sovereignty of God will ask, “Why would you pray ... and why would you evangelize ... If God is sovereign over salvation?”

This is just like asking, “Why would Peter drop the nets into the water if Jesus is going to put the fish in the net anyway?”
→ What a silly question.

Application – Evangelize! Cast your nets! Don’t take your gospel net, fold it nice and pretty, and hang it on your wall to admire it while sipping your coffee.

5th Marker as we walk through our text, ...

V. The Commitment 5:11

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Point – Committed followers

Proof – “¹¹**And when they had brought their boats to land, they left everything and followed Him.**”

- *to follow one who precedes, join as his attendant, to join as a disciple, become his disciple;*

Illustration– Jesus likens himself to a torch which the disciples follow. “I am the light of the world; he who follows Me shall not walk in the darkness, but shall have the light of life.” (**John 8:12**)

The same ‘following’ we see in **Rev 19:14** – “the armies which are in heaven, clothed in fine linen, white *and* clean, were following Him on white horses.”

In the first call of the four, they were fishing when Jesus called them. Here, they are cleaning their nets after having fished. Later, when Matthew is called, (5:27-29) he is called from his tax business. Note, none of the 12 are called while they are idle.

They leave everything when their fishing business has never been better!

On the Day of Pentecost, perhaps Peter remembered this fishing trip – Acts 2:41-47 ☺

Acts 5:14 – “all the more believers in the Lord, multitudes of men and women, were constantly added to *their number*;”

The word ‘multitude’ is the same Greek word as “great quantity of fish” in Luke 5:6! ☺

“**everything**” → different call, renounce everything

God appropriates our boats and our nets. It is our business to provide the boat, the bait, the nets, and the fishermen. Then He asks we submit to His mastery. This means we don’t just surrender the boat ... we surrender ourselves.

Application – Every business deal I close, every ditch I dig, every burger I flip, every heart I transplant, every lunch I prepare, every shirt I fold is all done for the glory of God!

CONCLUSION

David Brainerd – “*Nothing is too hard for God to perform; nothing is too great for me to expect from him.*”

William Carey – “*Attempt great things for God; expect great things from God.*”

Eph 2:8-9 – “by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, *it is* the gift of God; ⁹not as a result of works, that no one should boast.”

Eph 2:10 – “For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.”

The question: Are we walking in those works that God has prepared beforehand for us with the energy, the excitement and anticipation that is befitting our position in Christ?