

Jesus: A Life: Week 4

Calling the Disciples

Big Idea: Following Jesus means we are totally surrendered and completely loyal to Him alone!

Read the Bible:

Luke 5:1-11

STUDY

*** Before interacting with this guide, all leaders should study the referenced texts using the HEAR Method. It's also important to encourage your group members to read the text using the HEAR Method. ***

H: Highlight, or take note of, things in the passage that stick out to you as you read.

E: Explain what the passage means by asking simple questions of the text:

- **Why was this written?**
- **To whom was it originally written?**
- **How does it fit with the verses before and after it?**
- **Why did the Holy Spirit include this passage in the book?**
- **What is He intending to communicate through this text?**

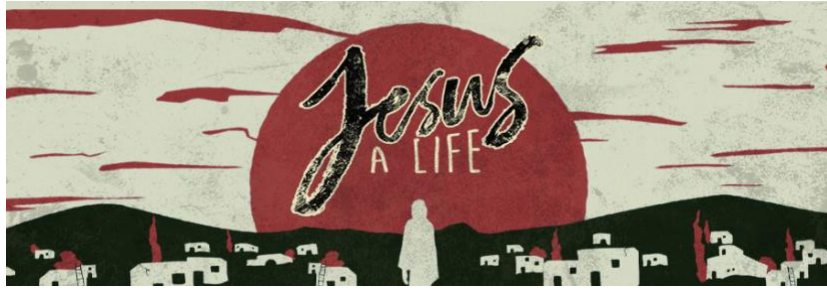
A: Apply the text to your life. What does God want you to learn from this text?

R: Respond to God in prayer.



Luke 5:1-11

On one occasion, while the crowd was pressing in on him to hear the word of God, he was standing by the lake of Gennesaret, ² and he saw two boats by the lake, but the fishermen had gone out of them and were washing their nets. ³ Getting into one of the boats, which was Simon's, he asked him to put out a little from the land. And he sat down and taught the people from the boat. ⁴ And when he had finished speaking, he said to Simon, "Put out into the deep and let down your nets for a catch." ⁵ And Simon answered, "Master, we toiled all night and took nothing! But at your word I will let down the nets." ⁶ And when they had done this, they enclosed a large number of fish, and their nets were breaking. ⁷ They signaled to their partners in the other boat to come and help them. And they came and filled both the boats, so that they began to sink. ⁸ But when Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord." ⁹ For he and all who were with him were astonished at the catch of fish that they had taken, ¹⁰ and so also were James and John, sons of Zebedee, who were partners with Simon. And Jesus said to Simon, "Do not be afraid; from now on you will be catching men." ¹¹ And when they had brought their boats to land, they left everything and followed him.



Summary

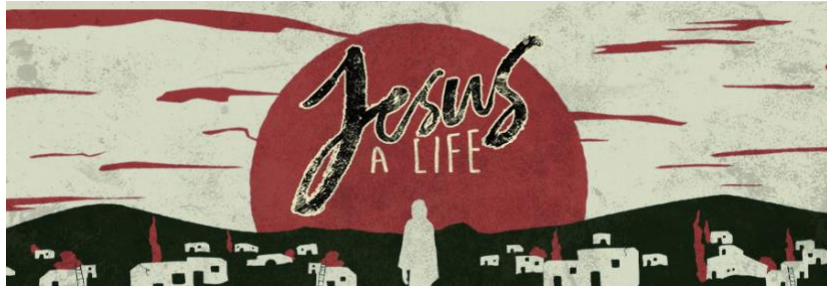
When we pick up on Christ's activity in Luke 5, he has already started to establish a strong ministry. He's preached in the synagogue and announced the arrival of the long-awaited Messiah (Luke 4:16 - 30). He then heals a man with a demon and performs other miracles to show that he's not all talk (4:31-41). In Luke 5, Jesus begins to recruit some help for this ministry. Where does he go? The local synagogue to find the best and brightest young student? Nope. He goes to the sea of Galilee and finds a few fishermen.

After teaching from Peter's boat for a little while, Jesus turns to the tired fisherman and orders that he put out his nets. Now, we cannot look over how big of an ask this is. Peter and his buds had been fishing all night. This is backbreaking work that required lots of help and lots of strength. Not to mention, as most fishermen wouldn't, that Peter and his gang hadn't caught anything. Jesus is asking a lot. Nevertheless, Peter listens.

The results are breathtaking. The catch is enormous. Peter calls for help from his mates. The boats start to sink. It's the kind of thing you have to see to believe. Somewhere in the midst of hauling in this catch Peter has a stark realization. He is dealing with someone that is not just any other guy. So, Peter turns to Christ and falling on his knees he says, "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord." Peter realizes that he is in the very presence of God. Can you imagine it? The Holy One of Israel in a fishing boat with a sinner. Peter is now fearful for his life.

Jesus' response is the stuff that changes life. "Fear not. From now on you'll be fishing for men." In one statement Jesus alleviates Peter's sin concern and then gives him a new mission. In essence, Peter's new life is about Jesus, knowing Jesus and making Jesus known. Peter is up for it. Not only Peter, but everyone else that made up the fishing enterprise is onboard. We are told that they got back to shore and left everything behind to follow Jesus.

It makes one wonder, what did they do with the fish?



Leading Your Group

Community Time

Start group by asking for Prayer requests and checking in on everyone.

Bible Study

***Have everyone in your group read assigned scripture before meeting. ***

Start Group by Reading Luke 5:1-11.

Major Lessons – (These are the “Lesson Points” in Class)

Point No. 1: Discipleship Starts with Surrender.

It's worth pointing out that Peter obeyed Jesus even when he didn't fully understand his command or thought his command unreasonable. Peter is putting on display a heart of surrender.

This is real Christian discipleship: following Jesus in obedience even if we don't fully understand why.

DISCUSS: Spend some time as a group talking about how we are called to live like Peter, doing what Jesus says even when it makes no sense to us. Has there ever been a time in your life when you had to obey like Peter even when you didn't understand?

Point No. 2: When We See Who Jesus Is, We See Who we are.

It's interesting to note Peter's response to this situation with Christ. He sees Jesus for who he is, but then responds with a statement about himself.

Jesus' holiness and power reveals his own sinfulness.

This is how it works: we can never get close to Jesus and see his goodness without seeing just how far we fall short.



It is evident that man never attains to a true self-knowledge until he has previously contemplated the face of God and come down after such contemplation to look into himself. – John Calvin

After we see who Jesus is and who we are, we realize that we have a sin problem.

The question is: what are we going to do about our sin problem?

We can either trust in Christ to take our sin away, or we can try to deal with it ourselves.

Discuss: How understanding who Jesus is reveals our own sinfulness? Why do we not understand how sinful we are until we see who Jesus is? Can you think of another exchange in scripture similar to Peter's and Jesus' (Hint: Isaiah)?

Point No. 3: Jesus Intends for Every Believer to Be A Missionary.

Peter is given a new mission in life in his exchange with Christ. Jesus tells Peter that now he will be a fisher of men. His life will be about living for Jesus and making Jesus known.

This is not unique to Peter. Jesus intends for this to be the norm of every single believer. (See the Great Commission Matt 28:18-20).

“Every Christian is either a missionary or an imposter.” – Charles Spurgeon

Discuss: Why do we find it so hard to live for Christ on mission and be fishers of men?

Point No. 4: We Are Called to Lay Everything Down to Follow Jesus.

When Peter and the boys got back to shore, they dropped their nets and followed Jesus. They left it all to follow Jesus.



Now, we aren't sure what they sold and what they kept. We don't know what they told their wives as they left to follow Jesus. There are a lot of unknowns about what exactly it means that they left everything to follow Jesus.

What we do know is that they allowed nothing to stand in the way of following Jesus. We are called to the same kind of discipleship. Nothing is allowed to stand in the way of following Jesus. He becomes the top priority.

Discuss: What does it mean for us to leave behind everything to follow Jesus? How can we be sure that we are doing that?



Resources

Expositor's Bible Commentary

4. *Calling the first disciples* (5:1–11)

This narrative (vv. 1–11) is similar in certain details to Matthew 4:19–22 and Mark 1:16–20. Luke's account is much fuller, containing the unique encounter between Jesus and Peter. The climax of each account is a call to "catch men" and the obedience of the disciples. Luke lacks the specific command "Follow me." The sequence in which this account occurs in Luke is different from that in Mark, who records the call in 1:16–20, before the Capernaum incidents (1:21–28), which Luke put just prior to the present narrative (4:31–41). Naturally these similarities and differences have led scholars to different conclusions about the relationship of the two accounts and the history of the tradition behind them. In the light of Luke's method of focusing on individuals as a means of them drawing attention to Jesus, we can understand the placement and character of the narrative (cf. G.N. Stanton, *Jesus of Nazareth in NT Preaching*, pp. 20, 59). Although Jesus might have called the disciples several times (one such calling has already taken place according to John 1:35–51), to attempt a harmonization by defining the Lukan narrative and that in Matthew and Mark as separate incidents is unnecessary. Luke focuses on Peter, shows the sovereignty and holiness of Jesus in a way Matthew and Mark do not, and alone mentions the total abandonment of the disciples' possessions as an act of discipleship (cf. 14:33).

The difference in placement is likewise understandable. None of the Synoptics ties the incident into a strict chronological sequence; so the placement is flexible. Luke first establishes the program of Jesus' ministry (4:16–30, 43). Now he is ready to establish the sovereign lordship of Christ in his relationship first with Peter as representative of the disciples and then with the social outcasts and "sinners" whom he has come to save (5:32; 19:10), such as the man with leprosy (5:12–15) and Levi also (5:27–32).

Elements of this narrative also resemble the post-resurrection story in John 21:1–14. Scholars are not agreed as to the relation between the traditions represented in the two passages (see discussions in Creed, pp. 73–74; Marshall, *Gospel of Luke*, pp. 199–200; R.E. Brown, *The Gospel According to John*, II, AB [Garden City: Doubleday 1970], pp. 1089–92). The Johannine issues aside, the Lukan narrative is coherent and natural in its context. Arguments for an original post-resurrection setting for Luke's tradition are unconvincing.



1–3 “One day” (v. 1) represents the simple *egeneto* (“it happened [that]”; KJV, “it came to pass”). It does not indicate a specific chronological sequence. The geographical description is more precise: “lake” is used instead of the more general word “sea.” Luke mentions the pressure of the crowds, as he occasionally does elsewhere (8:42, 45; 19:3). Their attention is on the “word of God,” another instance of Luke’s focus on the “word” (cf. 4:32, 36). The shore of the lake provided an excellent acoustically serviceable amphitheater. Luke, being observant of detail, draws our attention to two boats (v. 2). Next he singles out Simon as the owner of one of them (v. 3). The description in v. 2 along with the comment in v. 5 serve to emphasize the futility of the night’s work. Luke is careful to mention that Jesus again teaches—now from the boat, from which his voice would carry across the water to the crowd. Not even the next event, miraculous as it is, may, in Luke’s narrative, be allowed to direct attention away from Jesus’ teaching ministry.

4–5 The sharp contrast between the expert but unsuccessful fisherman and Jesus needs no comment. Jesus’ command (v. 4) must have seemed unreasonable to them after their failure during the night (v. 5). Peter, here called by his old name, Simon, demurs; but he does what Jesus says.

6–10a Luke now moves quickly to three focal points in his narrative. First he describes the gathering of the fish (v. 6). This extraordinary happening is similar to that in John 21 (cf: also Jesus uncanny ability to direct Peter to a fish with a coin in its mouth [Matt 17:24–27]). The details of the breaking nets and loaded boats (v. 7) help give the narrative the ring of truth. Second, the miracle moves Peter (Luke now uses his full name Simon Peter) who is overcome by awe (v. 9) to abase himself before Jesus (v. 8). He now calls Jesus “Lord” (*kyrios*); with a greater depth of meaning than the common “Sir.” Peter is gripped not merely by a sense of his inferiority but of his own sinfulness. The experience of Isaiah 6:5 comes to mind but Peter needs no such vision; he is face to face with Jesus. Luke’s reason for including this incident may be not only to portray the confrontation of human sinfulness with Jesus but also to show that to receive the saying grace of Christ a “sinful” (*hamartōlos*, cf. Notes) man must repent. Long before Luke speaks of the Gentiles with their gross sins and their being included in saying grace we are faced with the realization that even Peter who in Luke’s time was known for his obedience to the Jewish laws must take his place as a sinner (Danker, *Jesus* p. 65). Luke (v. 10a) mentions James and John but only in passing; the central figures are Jesus and Peter.

10b–11 The third focal point in the narrative following Peter’s obedience to Jesus in letting down the net is Jesus declaration that he will catch men from then on (v. 10b). Here interpretations vary. But in view of Luke’s emphasis on the kindness of God reaching out to



embrace all mankind it is more likely to signify a beneficent rather than judgmental ingathering. It presages the widening horizons of both Luke and Acts culminating in a sense in Peter's visions symbolizing the reception of Gentiles into the church and his subsequent witness to the Gentile Cornelius (Acts 10:9–48 esp. vv. 34–35).

After the declaration about catching men the disciples followed Jesus (v. 11). Luke's observation that they left everything which is not stated in Matthew and Mark underscores the condition of discipleship Jesus taught later on (14:33). Compare also his words to the rich ruler (18:22).

Notes

- 5 All seven synoptic occurrences of ἐπιστάτα (*epistata*, "Master") are in Luke. In all but one of these (17:13), it is the disciples who use the title. It is used instead of διδάσκαλος (*didaskalos*, "teacher") in 8:24 (cf. Mark 4:38), 9:49 (cf. Mark 9:38), and instead of "rabbi" in 9:33 (cf. Mark 9:5). It was a term Luke's readers understood, and it often referred to officers.
- 8 ἁμαρτωλός (*hamartōlos*, "sinner") is one of Luke's characteristic words. Of twenty-two occurrences in the Synoptics, fifteen are in Luke, mainly in material unique to his Gospel and usually assigned to the "L" source. Luke does not use the term pejoratively but compassionately, as a common term applied to those who were isolated from Jewish religious circles because of their open sin, their unacceptable occupation or lifestyle, or their paganism. Luke shows that these sinners are the objects of God's grace through the ministry of Jesus.
- 10 Ἀπὸ τοῦ νῦν (*apo tou nyn*, "from now on") is an important indicator of transition in Luke (cf. 22:18, 69; Acts 18:6). Ἐση ζωγρῶν (*esē zōgrōn*, "you will catch") is a future periphrastic suggesting continuity of action.

1

¹ Liefeld, W. L. (1984). [Luke](#). In F. E. Gaebelin (Ed.), *The Expositor's Bible Commentary: Matthew, Mark, Luke* (Vol. 8, pp. 875–877). Zondervan Publishing House.



Teacher's Bible Commentary

Popularity and Hostility (Luke 5:1–6:11)

The passage.—The first two stories of chapter 5 bring out the immense popularity of Jesus with the people at this stage of his ministry. Several points are made in the call of Simon and the other fishermen. They are as follows: The call of Jesus determines the role of the disciple in the Christian community. Jesus' disciples are to accept and be governed by his authority even when circumstances seem to doom their enterprise to failure. The power of Jesus determines the outcome of their efforts. Furthermore, the call to follow Jesus is a call to break with the old way of life. From fishing for fish, the disciples turn to fishing for men.

In 5:17 a series of controversy stories begins. In the first one Jesus' enemies are offended by his assumption of the authority to forgive sins. In succeeding incidents, they are aroused by his association with sinners, by the failure of his disciples to fast, and by the disregard for sabbath traditions. The climax is reached when Jesus' opponents come to the conviction that they cannot afford to allow him to continue his course unhindered: they must do something with him (6:11).

Special points.—The lake of Gennesaret is another name for the Sea of Galilee (5:1).

Jesus instructed the cured leper to follow the requirements set forth in Leviticus 13–14 (5:14). The accredited authorities had to pronounce him cured if he was to be restored to society. The incident may also show Jesus' respect for the Mosaic law.

The Pharisees, from whose ranks came some of Jesus' principle antagonists, were characterized by their scrupulous observance of the great body of oral traditions. These interpreted the meaning of the written law.

Palsy (5:18) is an archaic English word used to designate various kinds of paralysis. The cure of the paralyzed man was a response to the faith of those who brought him to Jesus. But faith was not essential to Jesus' healing power (see 17:11–19). *Son of man* (5:24) is a title found in the Gospels only on the lips of Jesus, who avoided the use of Messiah (Christ). Son of man is a figure of power and glory associated with the end-time in some Jewish writings. Jesus interpreted it in the light of the Suffering Servant of Isaiah. The Son of man must suffer and be rejected before he is exalted to a position of glory and power.

Levi (5:27) is identified as Matthew in the First Gospel (Matt. 10:3). He was a publican or tax collector. Tax collectors were generally despised by other Jews for two reasons. They were in the



service of the hated Roman government. Moreover, they used their position to exploit their countrymen, often collecting more than was legitimate.

Sinners (5:30) refers to the large number of common people who did not observe the oral traditions as scrupulously as the Pharisees expected. Both tax collectors and sinners were outside the pale of respectability.

Fasting (5:33) was required by the law only on the Day of Atonement. Pharisees, however, fasted twice a week. Jesus did not believe that fasting should be a pious ritual. The “new garment” and the “new wine” (vv. 36–37) are the teachings of Jesus: the “old garment” and “old bottles” (wineskins) represent Judaism. These verses teach the basic irreconcilability between the teachings of Jesus and the traditions of the Pharisees.

The law enjoined Israelites to keep the sabbath holy, refraining from work on the day. Jewish scribes or experts in the law had devised a host of regulations that defined activities to be classified as work and, therefore, prohibited on the sabbath. By plucking grain and rubbing the husks off, the disciples violated these oral laws (6:1–5). The grain was wheat or barley and not what we call corn. Jesus also violated these regulations when he healed a man on the sabbath (vv. 6–11). It was against the oral law to do this unless a person’s life was in danger.

Truth for today.—When Jesus looked at a man, he saw not only what he was but also what he could become. Simon was indeed a “sinful man,” as the gospels tell us. But Jesus knew that he had the possibility of becoming Peter, which means a “rock.” Christians have to be optimistic about people, since they believe that God can work a transforming miracle in any life.

There is no one outside the circle of Christian love. The Christian is not “too good” to associate with people whom others despise. In fact, the only way that he can be good is to be open and accepting to all kinds of men.

People are more important than anything, including sacred religious rules and practices. The worship and service of God can never conflict with love and service to man. Jesus’ enemies were interested in protecting their institutions. Jesus was interested in people. In the light of his actions, we must constantly ask the question: “Are our religious institutions and rules keeping us from responding to human need?”²

² Tolbert, M. O. (1972). [Luke](#). In H. F. Paschall & H. H. Hobbs (Eds.), *The teacher’s Bible commentary* (pp. 640–642). Broadman and Holman Publishers.



Reading The New Testament

Called and Commissioned

(Luke 4:31–5:11)

This unit falls into two parts: 4:31–44; 5:1–11. (1) The first parallels Mark 1:21–38. Both gospels give (a) an account of an exorcism in Capernaum (Mark 1:21–28; Luke 4:31–37—not in Matthew); (b) the story of the healing of Peter’s mother-in-law (Mark 1:29–31; Luke 4:38–39—cf. Matt 8:14–15); (c) a generalizing paragraph about many healings and exorcisms (Mark 1:32–34; Luke 4:40–41—cf. Matt 8:16–17); and (d) a reference to Jesus’ departure (Mark 1:35–38; Luke 4:42–43—not in Matthew).

The three Lukan paragraphs dealing with healing are linked together by the verb translated “rebuke” (4:35, 39, 41), thereby enabling the treatment of all three miracle stories as exorcisms or events involving exorcisms. This activity brought Jesus a tremendous following (4:37, 42; 5:1–3). In response to the desire of the people in Capernaum to keep him—as those at Nazareth had wanted to do (4:16–30)—Jesus, as at Nazareth, indicated he was under divine necessity (cf. *dei* in 4:43) to move on. Judging from the context, for Jesus to preach the good news of the kingdom must refer to his exorcisms (cf. 11:20).

(2) The second part of the larger thought unit, 5:1–11, furnishes the clue to the overall intent of 4:31–5:11. One notes first of all its location: whereas in Mark the call of Peter, James, and John comes at 1:16–20, before the exorcism and healings in Capernaum (1:21–34), in Luke the call comes after the series of miracles. This placement serves two functions in the gospel.

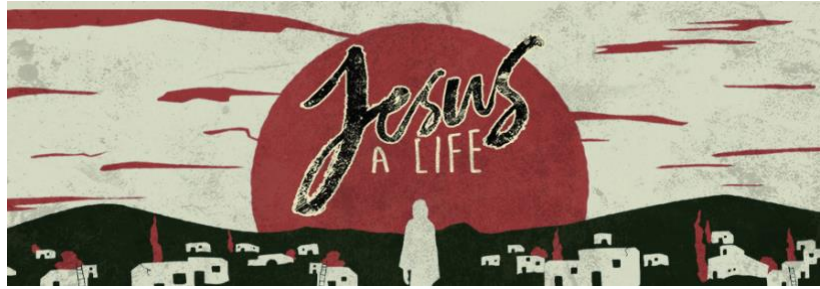
On the one hand, Luke’s placing the call of the disciples after the series of miracles makes the point that mighty works can be the basis for discipleship. Peter, at least, must have known of Jesus’ wondrous powers sometime prior to his call (4:38–39). Also, when Peter in 5:5 says, “at your word I will let down the nets,” Luke understands this to be based on the authority of Jesus’ word already established in 4:31–36. Whereas Mark 1:22 says the people were astonished at Jesus’ teaching, “for he taught them as one who had authority, and not as the



scribes” (Matt 7:29), Luke 4:31 states they were astonished at his teaching “for his word was with authority.” There then follows an exorcism (4:33–35) to demonstrate the authority of Jesus’ word to which the people respond: “What is this word? For with authority and power he commands the unclean spirits and they come out” (4:36; Mark 1:27 omits “word” and “and power”). It is this one whose word is powerful and who has healed Simon’s mother-in-law by rebuking the fever (4:39) who speaks to Peter in chapter 5 and to whom Peter responds in 5:5: “Master, we toiled all night and took nothing! But at your word I will let down the nets.” For the evangelist, Peter’s initial response to Jesus is based on a prior knowledge of his power in Capernaum.

“Further, the story within which the call of the first disciples is placed (5:1–11) leaves little room for doubt that they followed Jesus because of his wondrous power. Only after Peter, James, and John see the miraculous catch of fish are they summoned to follow Jesus” (Achtmeier, 161). In Luke’s schema Peter could respond to Jesus’ word to let down the nets on the basis of what he had seen done for others, but his following Jesus came as a result of what he had experienced done for him by Jesus: grace was experienced in and through a miraculous deed done for him. This emphasis on miracle as a catalyst for faith is characteristic of Luke-Acts (e.g., Acts 9:35; 9:42; 13:12; 16:30, 33; 19:17; Luke 8:2; 7:18–23). Of course Luke knew that miracle was ambiguous (Luke 11:14–19) and that non-Christians could also perform mighty works (Acts 8:9–11). Nevertheless, the evangelist shows an unusually positive attitude toward miracle as a means by which faith is created. In 4:31–5:11 he makes very clear that miracle was the catalyst for Peter’s response to Jesus.

In order to appreciate Luke’s stance, we may compare it with that of Mark and John. The Markan view of miracle is much more negative than Luke’s: he not only declares that miracles do not necessarily lead to faith (e.g., 3:19b–35; 4:35–6:6) but also asserts that to confess Jesus as Christ on the basis of his power is only partial vision and must be supplemented by the vision of his cross (e.g., 8:14–21, 22–26, 27–30; 10:46–52). The fourth evangelist has the most inclusive view of miracle in the NT: with Luke he asserts that Jesus’ mighty works are sometimes instrumental in peoples’ believing in him (4:53; 14:11—i.e., signs provoke faith); with Mark he knows not everyone believes in Jesus as a result of his miracles (i.e., signs are ambiguous—6:26; 11:46ff.; 9:16, 30, 34). John shows that in order for people to see through the miracle to the sign (i.e., to Jesus’ identity) some preliminary faith is sometimes present (2:11; 4:46–54; 20:30–31; 21:6–7), but at other times is not present (2:23; 3:2; 11:45): when faith is already there the miracles deepen it (2:11; 4:46–54; 20:30–31); when miracles evoke faith or openness to faith, a further development is necessary if Jesus is to be understood properly (e.g., ch. 3; ch. 9). This diversity within the NT reflects the struggles to accord miracle (power) its proper place in the total scheme of things. Although power was one component in

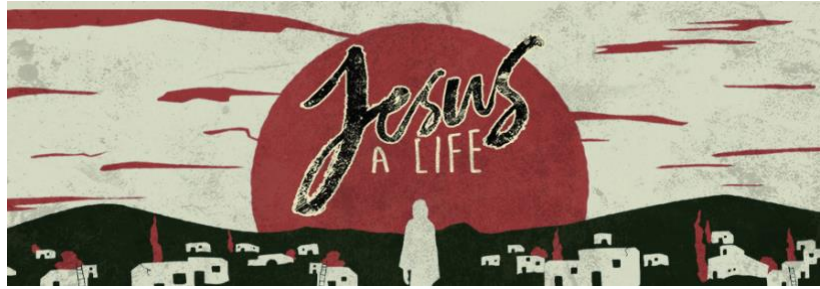


the early Christian view of God, it was not the central ingredient: Grace, however expressed, was. The gospels reflect the various struggles within the communities to recognize power as part of who God is and at the same time to set it within a structure in which miracle was subservient to grace and balanced by moral considerations (Talbert 1979).

On the other hand, Luke's placing the call of the disciples after the series of miracles allows Jesus some ministry and such success (4:37, 40, 42) that he is pressed upon by the people (5:1–3). The call of Peter, James, and John (5:10) functions, then, as Jesus' effort to get some assistance in an overly successful ministry. The same motif is found in Acts 11:19–26 where Barnabas, confronted with enormous success in Antioch, enlists Paul as a helper (cf. also Eph 4:11–12 where, if the punctuation is properly placed, the pastors and teachers function "for the equipment of the saints for the work of ministry"). Success creates the need for helpers (Luke 10:2).

If the location of 5:1–11 has pointed to the enlistment of the disciples, brought about by Jesus' miraculous activity, as a way for Jesus to deal with his success, the form of the passage confirms what the arrangement implied and gives clues to success for disciples involved in ministry. Confirmation comes when we note that in its present form, 5:1–11 is not so much a call story as it is a commissioning narrative. Call stories (e.g., Mark 1:16–20; 2:14; Luke 5:27–28) involve: (a) Jesus came; (b) he saw the person; (c) he called; (d) the person left all and followed him. A commissioning story includes: (a) an introduction describing the circumstances; (b) the confrontation between the commissioner and the one to be commissioned; (c) the commission, in which the recipient is told to undertake a specific task; (d) a protest in which the person questions in some way the word of the commissioner; (e) a reaction of fear, amazement, unworthiness to the presence of the august commissioner; (f) reassurance to the individual, providing confidence and allaying misgivings; and (g) conclusion, usually involving the beginning of the commissioned one's undertaking the assignment (Hubbard 1977, 187–98). Examples in Luke-Acts include Luke 24:36–53; Acts 1:1–14; 10:9–23. Luke 5:1–11 fits this form nicely: (a) introduction—5:2; (b) confrontation—5:3; (c) commission—5:4; (d) protest—5:5; (e) reaction—5:8–9; (f) reassurance—5:10b; (g) conclusion—5:11. Although there are overtones of a call story present in v. 11, the dominant thrust is that of a commissioning of Peter for his role of catching people (i.e., mission). The disciples are commissioned to "go fishing" in order to help Jesus with an overly successful ministry. The merging of call and commissioning in 5:1–11 reflects the view that to be called to be a disciple is at the same time to be commissioned as a fisher.

The use of this commissioning form also speaks about success in a disciple's ministry. The symbolism of the story contrasts the futility of "fishing" with only human resources with the effectiveness of "fishing" in obedience to Jesus' word. The symbolism of a great catch in response to Jesus' word after a fruitless effort prior to Jesus' command would fit the Lukan



view of the church's missionary-evangelistic outreach. It was to be (a) to all nations, but (b) the disciples were to stay in Jerusalem until they were empowered (Luke 24:47; Acts 1:8). The narrative of Acts tells the working out of this principle: after being clothed with power from on high, the first fishing expedition of Peter yielded three thousand converts (Acts 2:41). "Fishing" that results in a large catch is that done in response to Jesus' initiative.

The location of the call-commissioning of Peter in time is important. Luke 5:1–11, unlike John 21:4ff., with which it has marked similarities, is located not after the resurrection but early in Jesus' Galilean ministry. This was because the Lukan view of apostleship demanded an apostle have been with Jesus from the first of his ministry to the time of his ascension (Acts 1:21–22; contrast Paul who thought what was needed was to have seen the risen Lord and received a call—1 Cor 9:1; 15:8–10; Gal 1:16). Peter, Luke was saying by his location of the episode in time, was a disciple from the first and so had the credentials for apostleship. Theologically, this view of apostleship is significant as it places the church's proclamation under the control of the career of the pre-Easter Jesus as known through his witnesses. The earthly Jesus is the criterion of the true proclamation, the primary check and balance on any ministry done in Jesus' name.³

³ Talbert, C. H. (2002). [*Reading Luke: a literary and theological commentary on the third Gospel*](#) (Rev. ed., pp. 61–64). Smyth & Helwys Publishing.