

## **It's About Jesus**

*Sermon by Bob Arbogast*

*Celebration Fellowship, Ionia, Michigan*

*January 14 & 15, 2019*

**Scripture: Luke 5:1-11**

### **Sermon**

The Gospel is about Jesus. It's all about Jesus. In the last week, we read together the first half of Luke's Gospel. And it's all about Jesus, isn't it?

Well, what's true with the Gospel is also true with those of us who live by the Gospel. It's all about Jesus. And so, when you decide to leave everything and to become a disciple, it's all about Jesus. And when the water of Baptism is running down your face, it's still all about Jesus.

THE GOSPEL IS FULL OF MOVEMENT. And the One who moves is Jesus. He moves from Bethlehem to Nazareth to the Jordan to the wilderness to Capernaum. And at a critical moment, he turns and moves toward Jerusalem.

The Gospel is full of signs and wonders. And the One who performs them is Jesus. He drives out an evil spirit; he touches and heals a leper; he restores a widow's only son to life. He calms a storm; he feeds a crowd of thousands.

The Gospel is full of teaching. And the One who teaches is Jesus. He teaches in synagogues; he teaches in private homes; he teaches out in the open. He teaches individuals who come to him with questions; he teaches crowds that follow him to the middle of nowhere.

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So the Gospel is about Jesus. It's all about Jesus. If you didn't know that before, then you certainly know it now. Because you have been reading the Gospel. You have been listening to the Gospel. And you have come face to face with Jesus.

NOW, ABOUT TODAY'S SCRIPTURE. What strikes me most in that portion of Luke's Gospel—what strikes me most is the last verse.

Peter and his business partners, James and John—they just hauled in the biggest catch of fish they have ever seen. In the process, their boats almost sank. And they had to struggle to make it back to shore. But it all was worth it. They had been fishing their whole lives, but this was their most successful day ever!

Yet as soon as they landed, they left everything and followed Jesus. “As soon as they landed, they left everything and followed Jesus.” That’s the last verse. And it’s loaded with significance.

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“As soon as they landed . . . ” That means no delays. It means no “Jesus, just let me get my affairs in order first, then I’ll be right along.” And it means no goodbye hugs and kisses. None of that! Now was the time. And it was a time for action.

“As soon as they landed, they left everything . . . ” It’s almost like they left their very selves behind. Family? Bye! Habits and comfortable routines? So long! Meaningful work and a steady income? Hasta la vista! But how would they afford to eat? How would they be able to buy new sandals when their old ones wore out? They didn’t give it a thought.

“As soon as they landed, they left everything and followed Jesus.” Like Jesus himself, they started moving. And the moving never stopped. Down to the lake, up onto the hills. Into deep shadows, across patches of light. To parties and to prisons. The only let-up would come while they waited for the Spirit. But once the Spirit was upon them, they were on the road again, on the road with Jesus.

DID YOU NOTICE WHAT HAPPENED RIGHT AWAY AFTER JESUS WAS BAPTIZED? Did you notice how the Spirit led him out into the wilderness to be tested and tempted? It was a crash course in what it means to be the Messiah. And Jesus took that course with no delay at all. He didn’t have a gap year between being baptized and going to Messiah school.

And there was no gap year, not even a gap moment, for Peter and the others. And there’s no gap year for us. When Jesus calls us, the time to answer is now. The time to get up is now. The time to go is now. There is no “eventually” with Jesus. There is no, “I’ll get around to it” with Jesus. Jesus calls, and we answer. Jesus calls, and we go. Jesus leads, and we follow.

We follow him into the river, into the waters of Baptism. We follow him out the other side, into the school of discipleship. And we keep on going. The road keeps on going. The journey never ends. Not until we’re with Jesus on the other side of now. Until then, it’s always now. And now is the time for faith. Now is the time for faithfulness. (I need to listen to this message myself.) Now is the time!

OKAY, I'VE BEEN TALKING ABOUT PETER'S RESPONSE TO JESUS. And I've been talking about our response to Jesus. And all of that matters. All of that is important. But it's not about us. It's about Jesus. It's still about Jesus. It's all about Jesus.

And in that verse, "As soon as they landed, they left everything and followed Jesus"—in that verse, it's clear that there is something about Jesus. There is something compelling about Jesus, something irresistible about Jesus.

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Have you seen the movie *Ben Hur*? Not that ridiculous remake from a few years ago. I mean the original one, the good one, the one with Charlton Heston in it. Anyway, there's a scene in that movie,<sup>1</sup> and it gets to me every time I see it.

Judah Ben Hur has been arrested. And he is being marched to his fate, in chains with a long line of prisoners. The sun is beating down on them, and they can barely go on because of thirst.

Then they come to a village, and people bring water for the soldiers and the horses and even for the prisoners. But the commander won't let anyone give water to Judah Ben Hur. He has it in for Ben Hur. He wants him to suffer. He wants him to die.

But a young carpenter bends down next to Judah Ben Hur, bends down, pours cool water over his face, and gives him a long, long drink. So the commander yells, "You! I said no water for him!" And he gets his whip ready.

Then the carpenter stands up. He doesn't say a word. He doesn't need to. The commander just looks at him, and his authority crumbles. Something about that carpenter, something about Jesus, is absolutely compelling. And the commander can't resist. All he can do is turn and walk away, amazed at his own powerlessness.

THIS IS THE JESUS WHO MEETS PETER MEETS THAT DAY BY THE LAKESIDE. And Jesus is a figure so compelling that all Peter can do is fall to his knees. All he can do is admit his own sinfulness. All he can do is leave everything behind and follow.

And, to repeat myself, that is all about Jesus. It's not about the kind of man Peter is. It's not about the quality of Peter's heart. It's not about the tenderness of Peter's wounded soul. No; it's about Jesus. It's about the holy, wondrous, can't-be-ignored person Jesus is.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tVlf7OiiTJE>

AND YOU KNOW THAT, DON'T YOU? If you didn't know it before, then you know it now, after reading just the first half of Luke's Gospel. It's all about Jesus! Jesus is the One.

And your faith? Your trust? Your hope? Your baptism? None of that is about you. It's all about Jesus. Jesus has met you. Met you in such a way that he won't be denied. Met you in such a way that you believe, when you never thought you would. Met you in such a way that you trust, when you never thought you could. Met you in such a way that you have hope, when you never thought hope existed.

It's all about Jesus. And your life, your very life, is hidden with Christ in God. It's a fair thing to say that Christ is your life. And so you, too, are all about Jesus. Hallelujah!

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Glory and thanks be to God:  
Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

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