

**Luke 5 v 1 – 11      St Andrews Sunday 23<sup>rd</sup> February 2025****Part 1      v1 – 5 What Simon didn't say**

Simon, the fisherman, had been out all night with his partners, in their boats. This was their living and they had returned in the morning with no catch. So, they would be out the next night and the one after that. But first they must clean the rubbish out of their nets and mend any damage ready for the evening. Jesus came onto the beach and, of course a huge crowd followed Him to hear more teaching and hopefully witness more healings. Because of the crowd, He got into Simon's boat and asked him to push out a little way from the shore where He could sit to teach the crowds.

Finally, Jesus finished His sermon, and Simon must have breathed a sigh of relief, stretched out his tired and aching limbs and mentally headed for home and bed.

Then, Jesus said to, 'Launch out into the deep water and let down your nets for a catch.'

Simon was frustrated and tired and he just wanted to go home, have a bite to eat and sleep until it was time to go back to work that evening. And Jesus told him to go back out on the lake and fish.

Luke records Simon's reply as: 'Master, we have toiled all night and caught nothing; nevertheless, at Your word I will let down the net.'

But it doesn't take much imagination to read between the lines:

*'Look, Master, You're a super teacher. Look at the crowds that gather to hear you. When it comes to religion, there's no one better. But please give us a bit of credit. We are professionals. We know this fishing business; we know this lake; we know fish! We've been out there all night and nothing – not a sprat. The fish just aren't running. We've been cleaning nets and coping with this crowd. Please, let's go home, have a sleep, and try again later.'*

*But, if You insist, then of course we'd better do as you say!'*

Of course, we know what happened, as soon as they let down the nets it seemed every fish in Galilee headed straight for them and swam in. It took two boats and several fishermen to get the catch to shore.

Jesus asked Simon to do a hard thing – to over-ride his own legitimate needs and professional expertise and follow Jesus' instructions. Was it a little test to see how Simon would respond to a greater challenge that was coming?

**Part 2      v. 5 – 8**

**So, here were Simon, James and John with such an enormous catch that their nets were in danger of breaking and the boats in danger of sinking.**

Wow! It was worth pushing themselves through the tiredness barrier. Of course, the catch had to be got ready to sell and the nets cleaned again, but they wouldn't need to go out again that evening.

But, Simon's response isn't what one might expect: gratitude, amazement, wonder, elation.

*'When Simon Peter saw it [the great haul of fish] he fell down at Jesus' knees saying, 'Depart from me, for I am a sinful man.'*

What an extraordinary response!

I am immediately reminded of Isaiah who had a vision and saw the Lord Most High in His glory and Holiness.      Isa 6 v 1 – 8 NLT

*6 It was in the year King Uzziah died<sup>[a]</sup> that I saw the Lord. He was sitting on a lofty throne, and the train of his robe filled the Temple. <sup>2</sup> Attending him were mighty seraphim, each having six wings. With two wings they covered their faces, with two they covered their feet, and with two they flew. <sup>3</sup> They were calling out to each other,*

*"Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of Heaven's Armies!  
The whole earth is filled with his glory!"*

*<sup>4</sup> Their voices shook the Temple to its foundations, and the entire building was filled with smoke.*

*<sup>5</sup> Then I said, "It's all over! I am doomed, for I am a sinful man. I have filthy lips, and I live among a people with filthy lips. Yet I have seen the King, the Lord of Heaven's Armies."*

Simon, in his boat, surrounded by the biggest catch of his life, was suddenly convicted of his own sinful life (probably no worse than anyone else's).

Why? We're not told that Jesus suddenly shone bright white, or that the weighty glory of God descended on them. There was no dove or voice from heaven. And yet, Simon Peter fell on his knees, convicted of sin.

Had he suddenly recognised the divinity of Jesus? I think probably not.

But I think that this miracle, on top of the healings, convinced Simon that Jesus was in the same league as the great prophets: Moses, Elijah and Elisha; that Jesus was a Great One, very close to God, holy, set apart. One who, like Adam before the first sin, had command of nature, including fish.

At some level, Simon Peter, now knew he was in the presence of a holy man of God.

Simon Peter doesn't thank or praise Jesus; he doesn't beg Him to stay and help them in their business; He begs him to go away!

Sinful people are not comfortable in the Presence of the Holy God. Isaiah said, 'I'm doomed, for I am a sinful man!' Simon Peter became so aware of Jesus' holy deity that he was overwhelmed by his own sinfulness.

Jesus doesn't rebuke Simon, either for his sin, He will deal with the sin issue in due time, nor does He rebuke him for asking Him to go away.

**Let's pause, and reflect on, and respond to the extraordinary grace of God as we play a song about Holy Love.**

### **Part 3 v 8 – 11**

So, in the miracle of the huge haul of fish, Simon Peter has glimpsed holiness and knows His own filthy sinfulness.

In Isaiah's vision, even the Seraphim, the mighty angelic beings, the burning ones, cover their eyes in the Presence of the Holy God, and cry 'Holy, Holy, Holy'.

In response to Moses' request to see His glory, the Lord hid him in a rocky crevice, so that he only saw His back, because His holiness is such that it would have destroyed even the mighty prophet himself.

Jesus doesn't rebuke Simon, either for his sin, He will deal with the sin issue in due time, or for asking Him to go away.

He doesn't go away, instead, he commissions Simon and his business partners, James and John.

The Holy God did a similar thing with Isaiah:

*<sup>8</sup> Then I heard the Lord asking, "Whom should I send as a messenger to this people? Who will go for us?"*

*I said, "Here I am. Send me." ( not 'Here am I, send him.')*

Remember, according to Luke, the fishermen are still in the boats, surrounded by fish flopping around, and Jesus says,

'Don't be afraid. From now on you will catch men.'

## Conclusion

Sometimes, God asks us to step away from what is familiar, comfortable and safe, (as far as anything is safe), and to trust Him with the outcome. Jesus had laid out His mission statement in His sermon in the synagogue; He had come to bring in the Kingdom of God and He had already proved His credentials as he healed people and delivered those who were in the thrall of demons (evil spirits). He taught people from the written word of God and He, and only He, was fully living out God's law.

He had demonstrated His authority over the evil spirits and over nature. He had walked peacefully through an angry mob which wanted to kill Him. Simon Peter and Andrew, James and John had witnessed all this. It was mind-blowing.

And now Jesus says to them, 'Leave all this. Leave the familiar. Leave what you know how to do. Leave the security of the family business. And come with Me. Come and do something much greater; share in My work. Instead of catching fish, come and capture people in order to set them free.

These were not men without responsibilities; Simon Peter, at least, had a wife and mother-in-law; all of them had parents, possibly wives and families and a business on which their families depended. It was absolutely right that they should shoulder their responsibilities, but Jesus called them into something radical.

I wonder if the healing of Simon Peter's mother-in-law and the miracle of the catch of fish reassured them that Jesus knew about their responsibilities and was able to care for their families' needs.

Do you remember about the would-be disciple who wanted to 'bury his father first'? It might be that he wanted to delay until after the funeral, but he might have wanted to wait until his father died and he no longer had that responsibility. It was right that people should care for their family responsibilities and honour their parents, however, Jesus, called him to leave that responsibility and follow Him. Sometimes, He does that.

It has happened many times through the history of God's people, that He has called someone to leave home and family and step out into the unknown with Him: Abram was possibly the first and, in the New Testament, the apostles left homes and countries to spread the gospel, as have many missionaries since. Amy and Cody, Vaughn Goodchild, Paul Marsh are some of those we've supported as they've obeyed that call.

Simon Peter, Andrew, James and John, didn't ask how long the commitment was for – it was of course for life, but they didn't know that then. They didn't ask where; although Jesus had said, 'I must preach the word of God in other cities also.' So, they must have realised they would be travelling.

And they immediately left the boats and their familiar lives and followed Him.

Are we serious about following Him?

Someone said, 'If Jesus is not Lord of all, He is not Lord at all'. In our lives.

Are we content to paddle about in the shallows, or are we willing to go out of our depth with Him, if He calls us?

Of course, He doesn't call many to leave all, to be financially dependent on the gifts of God's people, and perhaps even travel to another country to serve Him, but He might well call us into a new and challenging situation.

I challenge myself. If the Lord calls me out of my 'safety zone', will I obey and go?

Jesus' mother told the servants at the wedding in Cana to 'Do what He tells you.' That is the motto of the Lydia Prayer Fellowship; to do, to pray, as He tells us. Do you remember the wristbands with WWJD What would Jesus do? A good reminder that we are not our own.

He doesn't promise us blue skies and easy walking at all times, but He promises to be with us always. No one has a life without difficulties, challenges and heartache, but we have the Presence of God with us. And His promise to us is: 2 Cor. 12 v 9

*My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect/ complete in weakness.*

There is an old hymn with the verse;

*Must I be carried to the skies*

*on flowery beds of ease,*

*While others fought to win the prize*

*and sailed through stormy seas?*

In my natural self I reply, 'Oh, absolutely! Give me the flowery beds every time.'

But, you know, when I gave my life to the Lord, I did just that. He forgave my sins and gave me a new life, freedom, joy, and I committed myself to Him.

He calls each one of us to step up. To be serious about our commitment to Him.

And, by His grace, we will have all that we need in order to walk with Him and do what He tells us. Just as the fishermen did by Galilee.

Quiet, listen, what is God saying to me?

Sing 'You call me out upon the waters'