**February 6, 2022 Luke 5:1-11**

***Into the Deep***

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

*(1)Once while Jesus was standing beside the lake of Gennesaret, and the crowd was pressing in on him to hear the word of God, (2)he saw two boats there at the shore of the lake; the fishermen had gone out of them and were washing their nets. (3)He got into one of the boats, the one belonging to Simon, and asked him to put out a little way from the shore. Then he sat down and taught the crowds from the boat. (4)When he had finished speaking, he said to Simon, "Put out into the deep water and let down your nets for a catch." (5)Simon answered, "Master, we have worked all night long but have caught nothing. Yet if you say so, I will let down the nets." (6)When they had done this, they caught so many fish that their nets were beginning to break. (7)So they signaled their partners in the other boat to come and help them. And they came and filled both boats, so that they began to sink. (8)But when Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, "Go away from me, Lord, for I am a sinful man!" (9)For he and all who were with him were amazed 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. Then Jesus said to Simon, "Do not be afraid; from now on you will be catching people." (11)When they had brought their boats to shore, they left everything and followed him.*

**Notes:**

1. “Put out into the ***deep*** for a catch.”
   1. This was no ***ordinary*** man, this was the ***son*** of ***God***.
   2. Simon realized that he was ***unworthy*** to stand in the sight of God.
   3. Jesus is seeing Simon’s ***heart*** and ***soul***.
2. God calls ***ordinary*** people to be the church.
   1. God isn’t ***limited*** to those who are particularly gifted.
   2. God’s calling is coupled with ***humility***, to represent God’s Kingdom.
   3. God’s calling carries a heavy ***burden***.
3. ***We*** are among those whom God calls.
   1. When we ***submit*** and say yes to God’s calling, exciting thing begin to ***happen***.
   2. How ***exciting*** it is to see it when it happens!
4. God calls ***ordinary*** folks to be the church.
   1. God calls those you’d never ***expect***.
   2. the Lord is calling you to do something in His ***power***, not yours.
   3. The Lord calls those He ***wants***, to fill a position and perform a task.
5. trust the **power** God to use you in all of our unworthiness, to ***lead*** others to Jesus.
   1. put aside our ***fears*** and ***failures***.
   2. Allow Him to ***lead*** you.
   3. ***Follow*** Him into the deep water.

**Script:**

I’m not sure how many of you know my history in this church. I was born into this church. My parents had started coming earlier in the year that I was born. I grew up in this church, participating in the Christmas and easter programs, quizzing, and talent programs. But I stopped coming in my early teen years, and would only return sporadically for the next 12 or so years. Now there are many of my peers who were much better prepared spiritually; and, I have to wonder, why am I the one who was chosen to be the pastor of this church?

Don’t get me wrong, I am not being critical of the decision, nor of those whom I grew up with; But I wonder why I am the one who was called when there seemed so many others who were most likely better suited to fill the pulpit. We all have doubts about what we have been called to do. Some hear the call of Jesus in their life and feel that they are not able, others feel they are not worthy, and still others seem to think that they are better suited for something else.

Today we look at a passage that parallels our doubts and fears regarding the call of God in our life. It is found in the Gospel of Luke 5:1-11. Stand with e today as we share in the reading of our Gospel reading and sermon passage.

*(1)Once while Jesus was standing beside the lake of Gennesaret, and the crowd was pressing in on him to hear the word of God, (2)he saw two boats there at the shore of the lake; the fishermen had gone out of them and were washing their nets. (3)He got into one of the boats, the one belonging to Simon, and asked him to put out a little way from the shore. Then he sat down and taught the crowds from the boat. (4)When he had finished speaking, he said to Simon, "Put out into the deep water and let down your nets for a catch." (5)Simon answered, "Master, we have worked all night long but have caught nothing. Yet if you say so, I will let down the nets." (6)When they had done this, they caught so many fish that their nets were beginning to break. (7)So they signaled their partners in the other boat to come and help them. And they came and filled both boats, so that they began to sink. (8)But when Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, "Go away from me, Lord, for I am a sinful man!" (9)For he and all who were with him were amazed 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. Then Jesus said to Simon, "Do not be afraid; from now on you will be catching people." (11)When they had brought their boats to shore, they left everything and followed him. Luke 5:1-11 NRSV*

Can you imagine standing on the shore of Lake Gennesaret. Can you imagine hearing Jesus talk about the Kingdom of God? Let’s rewind the video and play it once more. It was a cool and crisp morning on the banks of the Sea of Galilee. The early morning fog was just beginning to burn off. The sand was damp from the dew. The fishermen had just come in from having been out on the lake all night. Maybe there was the smell of fresh coffee in the air mixed in with the smoke of campfires up and down the beach. Jesus came there often. It was a popular gathering spot. He was sure to find a crowd to talk to. At the same time, crowds gathered there in hopes of hearing him. He spoke like no other they’d ever heard. This particular morning was especially crowded. He spoke softly, and the people pressed toward him to hear every word. He stepped back to give them room, and back, and back, until he was literally standing at the water’s edge. He turned to one of the fishermen and said, “May I step into the bow of your boat?” The fisherman, a lumbering, rough-hewn salt named Simon, nodded. Jesus climbed into the boat and spoke louder. The crowd listened to his every word.

When he finished his teaching, he turned to Simon and Simon’s brother, Andrew, and said, “Put out into the deep for a catch.” Simon was busy in the stern, straightening out the nets from the night before. “But, sir,” he protested, “we’ve fished all night and caught nothing. We’re tired. The sun’s up. It’s already getting hot. With all due respect …”But Jesus persisted: “Hoist your sails, man. Put out into the deep. Get ready to catch some fish.” Simon looked at Andrew and shrugged his shoulders. “Very well,” he sighed. “If you insist.” And in no time, they were underway.

They sailed across the lake and headed south toward Tiberius. Peter was at the helm mumbling to himself, “Why are we doing this? What does he know about fishing?” All the while, Jesus held his position in the bow of the boat. “Cast your nets here,” he called, and Simon and Andrew furled the sails and put out the nets, just as they had done the night before, much in the same place. But this time, as they pulled the nets back toward the boat, the resistance was strong. Had they snagged a sunken vessel? They’d never pulled so hard. Slowly, the net inched its way toward them. As it drew closer to the surface, fish began popping up everywhere out of the water. The net was filled to overflowing. “We’ll never get them all in,” Andrew shouted, “the net will break under the strain.” Simon grabbed a smaller net and began scooping out fish, a dozen or so at a time huge fish, of every shape and kind. The hull of the boat began to sag under all the weight. Water began to lap over the sides. “Better stop,” Andrew called. “Another dozen and she’ll sink for sure.”Simon looked down into the crystal blue water. There were even more fish than before. He looked up at Jesus standing in the bow, now smiling.

The realization hit him: This was no ordinary man, this was the son of God; this was no ordinary catch, this was a sign of God’s Presence. Simon threw down his net and fell headlong across the fish at Jesus’ feet. “Lord, have mercy upon me,” he sobbed, “for I am a sinful man.” Jesus smiled all the more as he reached down and took Simon by the hand. “It’s O.K., Simon,” he said, “From now on, you’ll be catching men and women for the Kingdom of God.”

Wouldn’t you love to have been there on the boat that morning out on the lake and heard Jesus’ words and seen Simon’s face? It was what we call a “God moment” or a “divine appointment”; Have you ever experienced a “God moment” or a “divine appointment”? Simon *is* seeing the Presence of God in the face of Jesus; and realizing for himself that he was not the strong, capable seaman he appeared to be. Simon realized that he was nothing but a poor unrighteous sinner, unworthy to stand in the sight of God … while, at the same time, Jesus seeing beyond Simon’s impulsive, impetuous ways to the heart and soul of a man with shoulders broad enough upon which to build a church able to withstand the very gates of hell.

What I like about this story is that it demonstrates how God calls ordinary people to be the church; God calls ordinary people like you and me which become the body of Christ in the world today. God isn’t limited to those who are particularly gifted, those who are especially capable, those who possess all of the “right stuff.” Matter of fact, it seems that many times God chooses the unlikely, the ones we might easily discount and overlook, including ourselves. Remember what Paul wrote to the Corinthians? He said, “(*26)Consider your own call, brothers and sisters*: *not many of you were wise by human standards*, *not many were powerful, not many were of noble birth*. (*27)But God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise*; *God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong*; *(28)God chose what is low and despised in the world, things that are not*, *to reduce to nothing things that are*, *(29)so that no one might boast in the presence of God. 1 Corinthians 1:26-29 NRSV ”*

God’s calling is coupled with humility. After all, our task is to introduce others to Jesus Christ. Is there anyone here who feels capable? Do you feel worthy? Do you feel adequately prepared? I doubt it. Our goal is to represent God’s Kingdom. Do you feel up to that? There are many days that I don’t. Furthermore, we’re called to reconcile the world to God. Now, that’s a pretty ominous ambition. Most of us are doing well, just to reconcile our bank accounts!

God’s calling carries a heavy burden, and I don’t know about you, but every time I consider the demands of discipleship, I feel pretty inadequate: “Surely, there’s been some mistake. Surely, God had someone else in mind, someone smarter, wiser, more eloquent, more righteous than me.” Yet, in spite of it all, the truth is, we are among those whom God calls. Not because we are worthy. Not because we are capable. But because God has chosen us, He has equipped us, and because God deems it so.

It’s when we submit and say yes to God’s calling, that exciting thing begin to happen. Others come to faith because of our witness, and we are as surprised as they are! Others find encouragement and hope through us, and we stand in awe! Others’ lives are transformed by our love, and we can only watch in amazement! It’s not we who make the difference, it’s the Spirit of God working through us. Yet, how exciting it is to see it when it happens! Like this catch of fish for a tired, discouraged fishermen, a catch so great that they can’t pull them all in, but have to call for help.

God calls ordinary folks to be the church. God calls folks like you and me, to be the body of Christ in the world today. God isn’t limited to those who are particularly gifted. As often as not, God calls those you’d never expect people like a gangly fisherman named Simon, an awkwardly acting pastor named Kevin, a working man named Harry, a woman named Alice and Jesus says to them, “Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men.”

You may have doubts and fears; you may not be sure what God is calling you to; you may not be sure you are capable of what He wants you to do. The truth of the matter is; on your own you probably aren’t capable to do it. But the Lord is calling you to do something in His power, not yours; and whatever it is he is calling you to, He will see you through, He will provide the means for you to complete the task. What do you hear the voice of God saying to you? The Lord calls those He wants, he calls you, to fill a position and perform a task; He will equip you when you accept the calling. And if you are obedient and committed to seeing the task through, he will do a great work through your efforts.

This story today is not about fishing, This story is about trusting the power God to use you in all of our unworthiness to lead others to Jesus and usher in the Kingdom of God in this time and place. May we have the courage today, to respond and say, in the words of Isaiah, “Here I am, Lord, send me.” May we put aside our fears and failures; and rely on the strength and wisdom of the Lord to answer His call on our lives. May we risk sharing our faith and story of what Jesus did for us to invite another into a relationship with Jesus. Allow Him to lead you to where He wants you to go, don’t hesitate to follow Him into the deep water.