

Main Street

UNITED METHODIST CHURCH



Luke 5:1-11 **“Jesus Goes Fishing”**

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“Following Christ From City Center!”

LUKE 5:1-11

"JESUS GOES FISHING"

Composite Form: Miracle, Commissioning

1) vv.1-11 THE MIRACULOUS CATCH & CALL OF SIMON & OTHERS. L Only, //Jn. 21:4-14

Commissioning Account: //Mk. 1:16-20, Jesus Preached Kingdom: Word/Deed

a) vv.1-3 Introduction: Fishermen And Their Boats Claimed By Jesus. 1. WORK SETTING

a) Introduction Following Miracles Of 4:32, 33

1 1 While the crowd (*ochlos*) pressed upon him to hear the word of God, //8:11, 22, Typical: Jesus As Divine Echo
 2 he was standing by the lake of Genessaret. Sea Of Galilee

2 3 And he saw two boats by the lake; Sails, 4 Oars, Stern Deck, 25.5 ft. x 7.5 ft. x 4.5 ft., 1 Ton

b) Confrontation but the fishermen had gone out of them and were washing their nets. Early Morning

3 3' Getting into one of the boats, which was Simon's, Even This Is A Choice
 he asked to be put out a little from the land. //Mk. 4:1-2, Floating Pulpit

2' And he sat down

1' and taught the crowds from the boat. 4:15, 31, Teaching The Kingdom
Mighty Works As Basis Of Discipleship, Acts 9:35

b) vv.4-5 Dialog No. 1 Between Jesus And Simon: Reluctant Obedience.

c) Commission 1

4 1 And when he had ceased speaking, he said to Simon, Unusual Commands, Counter-Intuitive
 "Put out into the deep Spiritual Gifts = *Prophecy, Word Of Knowledge, Insight*
 and let down your nets for a catch." Likely A Trammel Net

d) Protest 1

5 2 And Simon answered, Peter Steers, Will Peter Trust/Obey A Carpenter, The Boss?

D.A. "MASTER, we toiled all night and took nothing. Master (*epistata* for *rabbi*) // v.8b, Experienced Fisherman
 But at your word I will let down the nets." In Light Of The Earlier Healing

Obedience "at your word," Miracles Of 4:31-36 In View

c) vv.6-7 Miraculous Catch Of Fish After Obedience. Teamwork From The Start!

e) Revelation

6 And when he had done this, they enclosed a great shoal of fish, Symbol Of Coming Successful Mission

7 and as their nets were breaking, Acts 2:41 Catch, Financial \$
 they beckoned to their partners in the other boat to come and help them. Success Only At Jesus' Initiative

And they came and filled both the boats, so that they began to sink. Shared Riches

Jesus In Boat, God's Power

Miracle: Day/Prediction/Great Shoal (3/4 Ton), 2 Sinking Boats

f) Reaction:

b') vv.8-10 Dialog No. 2 Between Simon And Jesus: Simon Is Called. Deep Unworthiness

Protest 2

8 2' But when Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, Anachronism With 6:14 Bestowal

D.A. "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O LORD." 8:37, Spirit's Light/Theophany

9 (For he was astonished, and all that were with him, 5:32, Acts 15:11, Is. 6:5, Kurie, Confession: 4:34
 at the catch of fish which they had taken (together); Group Effort, Mission Takes Teamwork

and so also were James and John, sons of Zebedee, (10) who were partners with Simon.) //6:12-16

Peter Was Pushed To His Knees, Lifted In Service

Jesus Seeks Sinners, Miracle As Catalyst

10 1' And Jesus said to Simon, v.10b = *Chreia*, Jesus As Divine Agent/Prophet, 2 Emotions: Guilt/Fear

g) Reassurance: "Do not be afraid, Friend Of Sinners, Acts 2:41, Prophecy, Commissioning/Rescue
 Commission 2 henceforth you will be catching men *alive*." 10:2, Success → Jesus Needs Help, Eph. 4:11-12

a') v.11 Conclusion: Fishermen Claimed By Jesus And Boats Left Behind. Left Blessing For Blesser

h) Conclusion

11 And when *they* had brought their boats to land, From Something They Knew Well To Rank Amateurs

they left everything Jesus Does Not Depart From Peter But With Him! Insecurity, Danger, Slander

and followed him. Acts 1:21-22, Turning Point, New Allegiance, Church-Founding

A Brief Treatment Of Luke 5:1-11

This unit is found in the second of two parallel panels (A. 4:31-44 // B. 5:1-16) edited by Luke from Mark and his own source (L) to demonstrate the early ministry of Jesus. The shared pattern consists of five parts: 1) setting of preaching/teaching, 2) Ministry to an individual, 3) Ministry to second person, 4) Ministry to crowds, 5) Retreat. Each contains a notice how the news spread (4:37 // 5:15a) and a Petrine tradition (healing mother in law, call and commission). When the two panels are read together they demonstrate the comprehensive power of Jesus as God's agent in the Spirit.

Jesus preaches the kingdom, frees demoniacs, heals disease, draws crowds, has power over nature, and calls disciples as trainees and co-laborers. And, after each period of intense engagement, Jesus pulls away in solitude for rest and prayer. This is what kingdom operations look like at ground level. It is truth encounter and a power encounter, lecture plus lab. Evil is expelled, sin forgiven, people restored, missional community created. God's love is on display with great effects. The inclusion for the larger unit are the words *crowd/ multitude* and *to hear* (v.1 // v.15) and the contrasting settings of *the lake of Genessaret* and *the wilderness* (v.1 // v.16).

The surface structure of the thought unit (5:1-11) is a 5:1 concentric pattern (a-b-c-b'-a'). The alteration between narrative discourse (ND) and direct discourse (DD) confirms the pattern: a. ND b. DD c. ND b' DD, a' ND. At the center is the miraculous provision of fish (c.vv.6-7). On either side in b. vv.4-5 // b' vv.8-10 are dialogues between Peter and Jesus using the direct address *Master* (v.5) and *O Lord* (v.8). In the outer frames (a. vv.1-3 // a' v.11) references to *boats* (vv. 2, 11) and *land* (vv.3, 11) are inclusions. The literary type is a hybrid. The standard three part form of a miracle story is present: 1. Introduction, vv.1-5; 2. Miracle, vv.6-7; 3. Responses, vv.8-11. A second genre is an augmented call and commission story modeled on the Old Testament: introduction (vv.1-2), confrontation (v.3), commission (vv. 4, 10), protest (vv. 5, 8), reaction (vv. 5, 8), reassurance (v.10), conclusion (v.11). It is the functional, though expanded, equivalent of Mk. 1:16-20, minus Andrew. Jesus disrupts life and demands allegiance. He is a compelling presence who calls men and women to himself. We become his understudies.

By placing the call of the disciples after the launch of Jesus' ministry, Luke adds a measure of plausibility to the narrative. Jesus and Peter have already met. Peter has had exposure to Jesus in the synagogue exorcism (4:31-37), in the healing of his wife's mother (4:38-39), in mass healings (4:40-41) in his courtyard, and now in early morning teaching (5:1). This is perhaps why Peter is willing to obey him in something that goes against all Peter knows as an expert fisherman (v.4).

After a night with no catch, Peter and friends are prepping for the next night, washing and mending linen nets. Needing a secure place from which to teach in face of the crowd's press, Jesus requisitions Peter's boat and his help without warning. A second obedience, though not without protest, is his willingness to *put out into the deep* and *let down the nets*. The load of fish that fill the net is overwhelming. A second boat is called for, and— when filled— both are about to sink. To this manifestation of divine presence, Peter makes a physical and verbal act of humility. He kneels before Jesus and confesses his sinful nature. Jesus speaks to his fear and announces a turning point. From this point on Peter will not be catching fish to kill them but catching people to give them new life. In yet a third act of obedience, Peter- and two friends, walk away from their former lives to join the traveling school of Jesus. Peter has gathered knowledge of Jesus in multiple settings and demonstrates a desire to obey when a turning point comes. He is good soil.

JESUS GOES FISHING

*“And Jesus said to Simon,
‘Do not be afraid, henceforth you will be catching men alive.’”*

In his presence, fear retreats and we are given a stake in his work.

L U K E 5 : 1 0 b

It sounds odd to say, but here it goes, “I have met Jesus Christ, and he’s had a positive effect on me,” more than positive, transformative and still underway. I’m a different man because of this most-unusual relationship since— historically speaking— he lived and died nearly two thousand years ago, which is one of the best attested facts of ancient history. That he lived is not disputed; whether he lived again after death is disputed; that I claim to know him two thousand years later is a testimony you will have to evaluate on other grounds.

I haven’t met any other once-dead people, not my grandmother Lida or grandfather Alford, both of whom I buried and with whom I’d love to have a fresh conversation, but I’m convinced I have met one who was once-dead. So if he is a living presence and I’m not deluded, it’s one practical argument Jesus is not dead but more fully alive than we can imagine, just as his grieving friends found out beginning the first Easter when the negative evidence of an empty tomb was soon explained by a series of appearances of a physically transformed Jesus who convinced them he was the first model of the new kind of human being, one with a resurrection body with marvelous new powers. And if it’s true, as I and many others across the years attest, then the risen Jesus is alive just beyond your present awareness, and as I say, “If you look for him, he will find you, and at an encounter of his making, you will change.”

And when I say that I’ve met him, I’m not saying I’ve seen or touched him, so it was a different kind of meeting than with one of you. It was a meeting enabled by the Holy Spirit, the same one who was with Jesus and who now is with us and in us as his alter-ego. There was presence; there was power; there was inward

illumination; there was mental communication, there was a recognition just who I was dealing with; there was forgiveness and a release from guilt; there was a new sense of freedom and hope which eventually formed the basis of a call to serve. And so, when I read in the Gospels of Jesus’ encounters with people, I understand them on the basis of the principle of analogy. They met him in the flesh before his death and then in a new transformed flesh after his bodily resurrection, but it was the same person, the same Jesus; there was continuity of identity as the wounds in his risen body indicated. And while I’ve not met him in either form as did his early friends, there are traits of an encounter like the ones I listed above that qualify as interpersonal: presence, power, insight, communication, recognition, and real inward change I cannot explain it any other way.¹ The psychological struggles of late adolescence offer some insights, but they do not explain it away.

Though he knew me from conception— as with each of you, we were first formally introduced at my baptism on April 18, 1954, which was Easter. I’ve known his influence all my life and in a particularly intense way since I returned to him as a confused young man on July 2, 1972. I am Jesus-fascinated and Jesus-haunted. I cannot get away from him, history’s most fascinating and magnetic person. Things have happened in me and to me and through me for which he is the best explanation. Skeptics may have other explanations, but this is mine. We are partners in a conversation called *Prayer* and in an epic mission called *Life in the kingdom of God*. I now serve as a commissioned officer in the movement he created and left behind. My Corps is Protestant, my Army Methodist, my battalion the South Carolina Conference, my current duty station Main Street Church. And if that sounds a bit military, like being under orders, it is. Like Peter and Paul I was drafted: Peter early one morning at the lake, Paul on the road to Damascus, John Wesley in a May 1738 Bible study, Pastor Phil late one night in an Episcopal Church, and of the four of us only one knew him before and after his death and resurrection, and that was Peter whose call and commission story is before us today. It’s a new and compelling relationship, a living center which organizes all the other pieces of life around itself.

Now from time to time I run across a description of such a relationship that

¹ On the possibility and practice of hearing from Jesus, see Leonard Sweet, Frank Viola, *Jesus Speaks: Learning To Recognize & Respond To The Lord’s Voice* (Nashville, TN: W. Publishing, 2016).

rings true with the testimony of Scripture, the witness of others across history, and my own best understanding. And sometimes you find them in the oddest places, say in the 2002 original *Spider Man* movie.

In the beginning of the film, Peter Parker is bitten by a spider that's been subjected to genetic modification. Parker then develops arachnoid superpowers. Beneath his lycra suit beats the heart of a hero who nightly swings between skyscrapers, looking for endangered souls to rescue.

One such soul is Mary Jane (M.J.), a young woman he secretly loves. She falls for Spider-Man, but not for Peter Parker. She doesn't know they are one in the same, even when Spider-Man comes to her rescue.

Just after Peter and M.J. part company outside a diner late one night, four thugs back her into an alley. Peter watches as one pulls a knife. M.J. tries to defend herself, then Spider-Man suddenly appears, spins a web, and ties up the four bad guys. Classic Superhero stuff!

Mary Jane is impressed to learn Peter "knows" Spider-Man. In fact, Peter admits he's had a "conversation" with Spider-Man about Mary Jane. She presses Peter to hear what he told her hunky heartthrob. Peter fumbles, then says:

"I said, um, 'Spider-Man, the great thing about M.J. is when you look in her eyes, and she looks back in yours, everything feels not quite normal, because you feel strong— and weak at the same time. You feel excited, and at the same time terrified. The truth is you don't know the way you feel, except you know the kind of man you want to be. It's as if you've reached the unreachable, and you weren't ready for it.'"²

Now, absent the romantic element, the dynamics of strength and weakness, of being excited and terrified all at once, of finding your true destiny and standing unprepared at some sort of precipice, is the same as Christian conversion and call, "It's as if you've reached the unreachable and weren't ready for it," said Spider Man, and he was right.

² *Spider-Man* (Columbia Pictures, 2002), written by Alvin Sargent, directed by Sam Raimi; this scene begins at 01:30:25 and lasts about 2.5 minutes.

While the Bible does not share our same interest in psychology, this scene from Spider Man mimics some of what happened to Peter early that morning as he went through a roller coaster of emotions– fatigue, amazement, fear, shame– and finally the decision to join Jesus in a new kind fishing business. He ran into something that was deeper and more terrifying, more compelling and inviting than anything he could imagine; after the morning Peter wanted to be with and like the one who stirred him so. It was his truest destiny.

If Peter Parker and Spider Man are two sides of one person, then what if the human Jesus is simultaneously God the Son, the ultimate super hero come to our rescue. To look into his eyes is to have God look back, and that is the source of Peter’s crisis. His life script was to fish the lake till he could fish no more. The major North/South highway ran by the village of Capernaum.³ He and his buddies sold all the fish they caught; they owned the tools of their trade; it was a great source of protein in a world where meat was costly. By the day’s standards, Peter was not poor. But one morning Peter had an encounter that changed everything.

TURNING TO THE TEXT

It’s shortly after sunrise; such a crowd gathers they press Jesus back to the lake.⁴ He’s opening Scripture in light of the immediate influence of the kingdom of his Father, and they are eager listeners. Jesus was a doer of mighty deeds. In his presence and at his touch sickness and evil are pushed back, but first he was a teacher, and his deeds were like lab to lecture. First tell the kingdom in stories to open up mind and heart, then show it in deeds so they illumine one another.⁵ “This is who God is,” says Jesus, “and this is what happens when God shows up ground level.” And if and when we receive a visitation of divine presence, people will come early, hungry for exposure to the truth of the Word and the presence of the Spirit.

³ The *Via Maris*, <http://www.padfield.com/1998/capern>.

⁴ David Bivin, “The Miraculous Catch,” *Jerusalem Perspective*, March/April 1992, 8.

⁵ An accessible treatment of Jesus’ kingdom ministry is Ben Witherington, *Imminent Domain* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2009)

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That Jesus was a teacher says something. He believed people could receive insight and be strengthened as the Holy Spirit took his words and shot them like arrows into the peoples’ minds and hearts.

The night before, Jesus snoozed; Peter sweated. Jesus let go of a day’s labor; Peter embraced it. Jesus was refreshed by sleep; Peter worked by torch light all night with his partners for what? Nothing but empty nets. Not until transparent nylon nets were introduced in the 1950's could fishing be done during daylight in the Sea of Galilee. Water’s just too clear; fish spot the linen nets and avoid them. Linen nets rot if not carefully washed and hung to dry, and this they do every morning as the sun peeks over the hills. It’s pure drudgery if there’s no catch. No bills paid that day. A big waste.

As Peter worked on shore to mend and wash the nets, an early morning crowd presses in to hear the word from God through the Son of God. Then, without asking permission, Jesus takes a seat in one of the boats , “Peter. Can you hold it steady a bit off shore till I’m finished.” Every minute kept Peter from finishing the day’s work and heading home to rest.⁶ He was exhausted. It was a test of character. Someone was fishing for Peter.

There are times when emotions support our faith and carry us along; there are also times when faith is pure obedience against the grain of how we feel. As the crowd scatters, Jesus places yet another claim on his time and equipment, “Put out into the deep and let down your nets for a catch.” Jesus the construction worker is telling fisherman Peter about his own business. Men don’t like that!

Remember that Jesus is always carrying on two conversations: one with the

⁶ In Luke’s telling, the signs of 4:31-44 precedes Peter’s call. In Mark 1:16-20 the call of Peter does not include prior knowledge of Jesus; in Luke it does. Having healed Peter’s mother in law, Jesus can now ask for a favor with the boat! On Luke’s use of the rhetorical tool of plausibility in his changes to Mark’s narrative order so the Jesus and Peter have considerable interaction before the call and commission of 5:1-11, see Mikael C. Parsons, *Luke: Paidea Commentaries on the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2015), 87-89.

Father through the Spirit, one with the people around him.⁷ It’s where the insight and power came from. Jesus received a revelation and passed it on to Peter, “Launch out into the deep for a catch.” Jesus acted in faith by speaking to Peter; Peter acted in faith by obeying, even though he complained a bit, “Master, we toiled all night and took nothing. But *at your word*— can you hear the whining— I will let down the nets.” Why did he say *at your word*? Because Peter had recently seen just how potent Jesus’ word was in the Capernaum synagogue with the demoniac, at home with the healing of his mother-in-law, and with the crowds in his courtyard,⁸ so he obeys. It’s tired faith, complaining faith, but still faith based on true evidence, so Peter obeys for a second time. Peter goes with Jesus’ command, not his own fatigue. Faith is not a leap in the dark, as some say; it’s a leap into the light. Faith is trust based on evidence, and— as Luke tells it— Peter has accumulated enough relational information to obey Jesus in something that goes counter to his professional judgment.

The Spirit’s gift of knowledge is a practical gift we all need to understand. It’s form of divine revelation in which you know something because God told you. At first it seems dramatic- and is, but after a while you understand this is standard equipment which we’ve recently ignored in our bias against a truly involved God. Plumbers have wrenches, dentists drills, and believers have spiritual gifts. The word of knowledge or wisdom may come as an intruding idea that disrupts your train of thought so that you ask yourself, “Where did that come from?” Or maybe as a holy hunch, “I wonder if...” Or a picture on the mind’s eye, “What’s that?”⁹ It’s easily missed. God rarely shouts and often whispers. This happens to all Christians; only some recognize what it is. Perhaps Jesus heard something like this from the Father- and here I speculate:

“I’m about to pay Peter back for the borrowed boat. What I withheld during the night, I will now far exceed. Tell him to launch out into the

⁷ For insight into this dynamic, see John 5:19-30 where Jesus is a mimic.

⁸ 4:31-44.

⁹ See Bill Johnson, Randy Clark, *The Essential Guide to Healing* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2011), Chapter 10, “Words of Knowledge for Healing,” 191-212.

deep for a catch. We're going to catch more than fish this morning."

Skeptics who reduce this miracle to a natural occurrence where Jesus was a little higher than Peter and saw the shoal of fish miss the point and give away their naturalistic bias. This is not a sleight-of-hand but divine revelation. Jesus heard and spoke to Peter; after a mild complaint, Peter obeyed. The place where Peter was expert was about to be interrupted. Miracle can be a catalyst to faith, but miracles do not coerce faith.¹⁰ At the human level Jesus knows less about fishing than Peter, but he has a word from the One who created fish. Why should we be surprised if nature bends to the touch of the God who knows it intimately?

Picture the sights and sounds. A boat stops dead in the water. Linen sinews stretch and begin to pop. Help is called for. Two twenty-five-foot-long boats, nearly eight feet wide with four and a half foot gunnels fill with shining, flopping fish, so weighed own they nearly sink. This is way beyond a good catch; this is God!

I wonder how many miracles have been missed because some believer refused to obey an illogical command? No fish are caught during daylight; that was Peter's seasoned judgment. But when he moved beyond limited experience into the realm of trust based on a prophetic word of Jesus, something happened. Peter was learning to trust Jesus and his words which were grounded in the Living God. He failed; Jesus succeeded: lesson one. If you want to catch fish or people, listen to Jesus! He's really good at both.

Jesus did not give Peter silver coins; he gave him fish to sell. Mendel Nun, an expert on Galilee fisheries, estimates it was two week's work compressed in one haul.¹¹ Fifteen hundred to two thousand pounds of fish. Tiredness evaporates; adrenalin surges; Peter hit the jackpot. The one who is Lord over the demons and illness is also Lord over nature, even over the finances of those who obey him. Hello? What we need as we obey, he provides; what he doesn't provide as we obey, we don't need. And if we're not obeying, what does it matter? Lori and I see tithes and offerings as a reminder of our ongoing partnership with God, and when we need

¹⁰ See Charles Talbert, *Reading Luke*, 59-62 for a discussion of this issue.

¹¹ Bivin, "Miraculous Catch," 10.

something, it has a way of coming towards us. We like living this way.

Now where is Jesus? Where we left him, in the boat with Peter and the fish. I love it. It lets me know he's as comfortable in the banker's vault, in the farmer's field, the surgeon's suite or the teacher's classroom as in the synagogue or alone at prayer. He knows you and your business better than you do. Jesus is not particularly religious but claims the whole of life. Not just a Sunday but a Monday Jesus, a Lord of every day that ends in *Y*. Jesus smelled like fish until he took his next bath; the pungent smell of miracle was all over him. I love a Jesus who smells like sweat-and-fish, not this blow-dry-Mary-Kay-smelling Jesus that passes as sappy Christian art. Jesus was laughing. Fish flopping everywhere, and Peter about to have a mid-life career change. How many men and women work hard and never discover their destiny in Christ? Live for the weekend, dream of retirement, when all the while Jesus is walking into their workplace with a better deal.

Not all follow Christ the same way. Peter was called to change vocations: fisherman to follower, then apprentice to evangelist, finally evangelist to martyr. Jesus re-manufactured Peter several times. There are some jobs that can never become a calling because they're simply not good for people. If you are in one of those and have a troubled conscience, ask God for a move. You need a paycheck; you also need a life and a clean conscience about what you do. It may be your job is already an honorable one but that your ministry is somewhere else, so when someone asks, "What do you do?" you answer, "My calling is youth ministry or music ministry or witnessing or service or prayer, but I earn a living at Self Hospital or Covidien or District 50." The call to follow Christ is a call to participate in his work wherever you are.

Preachers sometimes give altar calls to come kneel and pray. But the best are not accompanied by hymns and pleadings. They come as the Lord pushes someone to their knees with the weight of his mercy and blessing. One moment Peter was a successful fisherman, the next a man in agony. Light dawned; Peter saw through the circumstances to who Jesus was, "Depart from me, *O Lord*, for I am a sinful man," and *Lord* is the Old Testament address for God. Peter didn't read that confession off a page; it erupted out of his heart because of the illumination of divine revelation.

Jesus is at once the most attractive and frightening man who ever lived. Holy

love is terrifying and magnetic at the same time.¹² To do business with him is to be utterly exposed, the truth about a holy God and the reality of me in close proximity. Peter sees himself, and it hurts. The crusty fisherman begs Jesus to get out of his boat, then get out of his life. “Depart from me, Lord; I don’t like what I see.” Jesus crawled inside Peter’s defenses through a miracle of provision. Remember, it’s not our bad actions or history that disqualifies us from service, only its denial. Peter was a good Jew by current standards: kosher, work all night, take in his wife’s mother, hold the boat for Jesus when tired, launch out against better judgment, then have Jesus wreck your life with a load of fish and a load of guilt and shame, “Get away from me.” It was just too much for one day. He was overwhelmed.

In the wake of numerous public confessions by fallen politicians, sports figures, and business execs, Susan Bauer offers a distinction: "An apology is an expression of regret: I am sorry. A confession is an admission of fault: I am sorry because I did wrong. I sinned. Apology addresses an audience. Confession implies an inner change... manifested in outward action."¹³

Jesus did not obey Simon and leave him alone; instead he gave a second command and prophecy, “Do not be afraid, henceforth you will be *netting people*.”¹⁴ The crowds are growing; helpers are needed. Peter, his brother Andrew and their buddies James and John are the first four apprentices.¹⁵ The story ends on a note of joyful sacrifice, “And when *they* brought their boats to land, *they left everything*-including three quarters of a ton of fish- and followed him.” and while the focus of the story is on Peter, it was a team from the start.

¹² The Latin is *mysterium tremendum et fascinans*, which means *mystery that attracts and repels*; see Johan Cilliers, “Liturgical Perspectives on the Approach to God,” www.academic.sun.ac.za/tsv/Profiles/Profile_documents/Johan_Cilliers_MYSTERIUM_TREMENDUM_ET_FASCINANS.pdf.

¹³ Paul Wilkes, *The Art of Confession* (Workman Publishing, 2012), 4-5.

¹⁴ Luke Johnson’s felicitous, inclusive translation in *Luke: Sacra Pagina* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1991), 88.

¹⁵ Mark 1:16-20.

For the farmer a tractor, for the business leader a briefcase; the nurse leaves a blood pressure cuff, a teacher their chalk. Is there anything you must empty your hands of to receive the destiny to which you are called? Jesus now has a four helpers for three years of on-the-road kingdom training, eventually a dozen.¹⁶ Peter went fishing and got hooked, as did his partners. I don't preach this stuff to entertain; I preach it to give the Holy Spirit raw materials to change lives, and me first!

In his book *Mere Christianity*, C.S. Lewis speaks plainly about the total claim Jesus make on a life. He writes:

“Christ says, ‘Give me all. I don't want so much of your time and so much of your money and so much of your work: I want you. I have not come to torment your natural self, but to kill it. No half-measures are any good. I don't want to cut off a branch here and a branch there. I want to have the whole tree down. I don't want to drill the tooth, or crown it, or stop it, but to have it out. Hand over the whole natural self, all the desires which you think are innocent as well as the ones you think are wicked- the whole outfit. I will give you a new self instead. In fact, I will give you myself: my own will shall become yours.”¹⁷

Peter and his friends found this out. I warn you. Jesus knows your name, and he's coming after you! You can say *No*, but I do not recommend it. What you crave, which is *Life* with a *Capital L*, is found in him.

CONCLUSION

Gary Haugen, president and CEO of International Justice Mission, a Christian organization dedicated to fighting sex trafficking, writes,

“After we have poured into our children all the good food and shelter and clothing, after we have provided them with great education, discipline, structure and love, after we have worked so hard to provide

¹⁶ See 6:12-19 on the formation of the twelve.

¹⁷ (San Francisco, CA: HarperOne, 2001), 196-197.

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every good thing, they turn to us and ask, ‘Why have you given all of this to me.’

And the honest answer from me is, ‘So you'll be safe.’

My kid looks up at me and says, ‘Really? That's it? You want me to be safe? Your grand ambition for my life is that nothing bad happens?’

And I think something inside them dies. They either go away to perish in safety, or they go away looking for adventure in the wrong places. Jesus, on the other hand, affirms their sense of adventure and their yearning for larger glory."¹⁸

As Peter found out that morning: Jesus is good, but he’s not safe. So if you’ve been following a safe Jesus, a no-adventure, no-risk, no-exposure, low-cost, lifestyle-friendly Jesus, then sorry, you got the wrong one! I can’t find him in the book.

¹⁸ Gary Haugen, *Just Courage* (Downer’s Grove, ILL: IVP, 2008), 124-125

**Appendix C:
Contrasting Biblical Discipleship And Modern Church (Club) Membership (Thraikill, et. al.)**

Ancient Christian Discipleship	American Church (Club) Membership
Risky, High Cost	Safe, Low Cost
Contributor & Stakeholder	Consumer & Observer
<i>In The World As A Clear Alternative Community</i>	<i>Of The World With A Few Moral Variations</i>
Total Self Involvement	Segmented Self (Sunday Faith) “Come a little bit, do a little bit, give a little bit, and say a whole lot.”
Obey In Behavior	Assent In Beliefs/ Doctrine
Active, Involved	Passive, Observers
Always Serious, High Adventure	Mostly Casual, Low Demand, Minimal Adventure
High Supernatural Exposure: Miracles Expected	Rare Exposure To Supernatural: Skepticism Is The Norm
Always On The Move	Rarely On The Move
At The Vital Center Of Life	Around The Edge Of Life As A Possible Option
High Challenge	High Comfort
Group Orientation: <i>We First</i>	Individual Orientation: <i>Me First</i>
Allegiance: Tight Bond, Severance Required	Affiliation: Loose Bond, Easily Abandoned
Home As Hospitality, Place Of Teaching	Home As Refuge, Hiding Place, Entertainment
Offer Life And Substance	Pay Club Dues
High Expectation For Transformation	Low Expectation For Transformation
Intense Training, Change Expected	Observing/ Critique Expected
Largely Outdoors	Largely Indoors
Organic Bond: Shared Life	Institutional Bond: Shared Space In Buildings
Follow Jesus, Learn His Ways, Share His Ministry	Admire Jesus, Worship Him, Pay Others To Do Work
Jesus As Leader, Model And Mentor	Jesus As Savior From Sins Worst Consequences
Confrontive And Blunt: Being True!	Convivial And Affable: Being Nice!
High Accountability	Low Accountability
Intense Fellowship: 24/7 + Conflict	Occasional Fellowship: Coffee/Cookies + Avoidance
Disciples Often Look Bad, Goofy, Incompetent	Members Focus On Image-Management, Looking Good
Location: Front Lines	Location: Behind the Lines
Ministry By Amateurs (for the love of it)	Ministry By Professionals (career clergy)
All Are Spiritually Gifted Ministers	Pay The Professionals (Clergy + Staff) To Do It For Us
Jesus And His Kingdom Mission Draw Resources	Institutional Maintenance Draws Large Resources
Holy Spirit As Creative, Disruptive Presence	Low Tolerance For The Unexpected