Epiphany 5 Luke 5:1-11
February 6, 2022 577-561-560/569-562

It's All About God's Word!
I. Eagerly hearing God's Word.
II. Confidently trusting God's Word.
III. Boldly sharing God's Word.

Dear Christian friends,

**Today's readings** obviously have a MISSION FLAVOR – a call to share God's Word with others. Isaiah had that GLORIOUS VISION of **God Most Holy** and God's gracious forgiveness of all his sins. Energized by God's **grace** Isaiah responded to God's call, ***"Here I am. Send me!'***

Then there's Peter here. Peter already believed in Jesus as his DIVINE SAVIOR. Now **that truth** really hit home for him. Just like Isaiah Peter was OVERWHELMED by his sin and guilt. **Just like Isaiah** Peter received God's **forgiveness** and was energized by God's **grace**. Peter ***"left everything and followed Jesus."***

We just sang, "Lord, SPEAK TO US that **we may speak**." Mission work – sharing our Savior with others – IT'S ALL ABOUT GOD'S WORD! **In these verses** it's ALL ABOUT 1)eagerly hearing God's Word, 2)confidently trusting God's Word and 3)boldly sharing God's Word.

**I. Eagerly hearing God's Word.**

***"One time, while the crowd was pressing in on Jesus and LISTENING to the word of God." "One time"*** is rather VAGUE. We really don't know WHAT DAY of the week this way – except we **do know** that it wasn't a Saturday – the **Sabbath** day. Peter and **the others** had been out fishing **all night** and they were now busy cleaning up. That just wasn't allowed under OT Sabbath law.

This was a WORK DAY and the people ***"were pressing in on Jesus LISTENING to the word of God."*** God's Word isn't just FOR SUNDAYS. God never restricted hearing His Word to JUST ONE DAY a week OR to hearing it only at church. God's Word is for every day of the week. Every day we are to EAGERLY HEAR God's Word.

***"The crowd was pressing in on Jesus and LISTENING to the WORD OF GOD."*** We don't come to church to hear politics – PASTOR'S TAKE on things – to discuss **ideas** or talk **sports**. We come to ***"listen to the Word of God."*** That is WHAT THE BIBLE is – ***"God's Word"*** – God Himself speaking to us. Think how often the OT echoes, ***"This is what the LORD says."*** The better we understand that the Bible is GOD TALKING TO **ME/US** the more eager we will be to ***"listen"*** to it. Then going to church and having those devotions at home **won't be** a CHORE but a SPECIAL TREAT.

But now a problem arose. With the large crowd pressing around Jesus it WAS HARD for all to **see** and **hear** Him. Rather than letting that BECOME AN EXCUSE for **not hearing** God's Word Jesus got rid of the **distraction**. He climbed into Peter's boat – had Peter ***"put out a little from the shore"*** – and from the boat Jesus **continued to teach** the people God's Word.

The devil will TRY WHATEVER it takes to **distract** us from hearing God's Word. He has **all kinds** of READY-MADE EXCUSES for why we can't come to church or **have** those daily devotions – excuses we've probably used in the past. TOO HOT in the summer – too cold in the winter – TOO NICE a day – too yucky a day – too BUSY – too tired – too BORING, etc. Like Jesus here let's GET RID of the **distractions** and **excuses** so that we do eagerly listen to God's Word.

**See** IT IS ALL ABOUT God's Word – eagerly hearing it and then…

**II. Confidently trusting God's Word.**

Preaching from Peter's boat SOLVED the problem. ***"When He had finished speaking, (Jesus) said to Simon, 'Put out into the deep water, and let down your nets for a catch.'"*** If I would come out to your farms and TRY TO TELL you how to farm – or how to fix your machinery – I KNOW what **I'd hear** from you. "Pastor, stick to preaching! You don't know anything about **farming** or machinery. YOU do the **preaching** – we'll do the farming." And YOU'D be right!

Peter had made his living **fishing** this lake. **Over the years** he's had GOOD DAYS and bad says. The night before had **not been** a good night. They had ***"worked hard all through the night and caught nothing."*** Now when a fisherman **has had** a BAD NIGHT chances are he's **not** in a GOOD MOOD. He's not ready to listen to a NON-FISHERMAN **tell him how** to fish.

Peter had had a BAD NIGHT. He's evidently finished ***"washing"*** the nets, etc. No doubt he's TIRED. Now Jesus tells him, ***"Put out into the deep water, and let down your nets for a catch."*** I'm NOT A FARMER and I'm not a fisherman either. But even I know that the **middle of the day** is not the BEST TIME to go fishing. What Jesus was telling Peter to do MADE NO SENSE to Peter the fisherman.

Peter didn't tell Jesus to STICK TO PREACHING God's Word. It didn't make ANY SENSE to Peter to go fishing now – ***"But at Your word I will let down the nets."*** Jesus told Peter to do something that LOOKED STUPID but Peter confidently trusted God's Word. "JESUS TOLD ME to **do this** so I will do it."

God does tell us to DO and BELIEVE things that look stupid or just don't make any sense. **God tells** us that He created this world in **just six** normal days using His **almighty Word** to do it. "Come on, God! EVERYBODY KNOWS that this world has evolved over millions of years!" God says Mary was a virgin when she had Jesus. Anybody with **half a brain** knows that virgins don't have babies. Then take those miracles in the Bible – DEAD PEOPLE coming back to life! **Dead is dead!** Take Holy Communion – that as we eat and drink the **ordinary** bread and wine just is actually giving us the VERY SAME body and blood He gave into death on the cross ***"for the forgiveness"*** of all our sins. There are ALL KINDS of **logical reasons** why that just can't be true!

It didn't MAKE SENSE to Peter to **go fishing now** but Jesus sure knew what He was talking about! They caught so many fish ***"their nets were about to tear apart"*** and ***"filled both boats, so that they began to sink."*** Peter didn't argue with Jesus – try to correct Jesus – or just ignore Him. Peter took Jesus AT HIS WORD and JESUS KEPT His Word!

When God tells us to **do** or **believe** something there's NO NEED to second guess God. GOD KNOWS **what He's talking** about even if we don't understand. ***"Nothing is impossible with God."*** When like Peter **we have** God's CLEAR WORD and PROMISE we can confidently trust what God says.

IT IS ALL ABOUT God's Word – that includes…

**III. Boldly sharing God's Word.**

The magnitude of the miracle OVERWHELMED Peter. He was just like Isaiah crying out, ***"Woe to me! I am ruined! For I am a man of unclean lips, …and my eyes have seen the King, the LORD Almighty."*** Peter fell at Jesus' knees and said, ***"Go away from me, because I am a sinful man, Lord."***

Does that SURPRISE you? Both Isaiah and Peter had personally experienced in an EXTRAORDINARY WAY the **holiness** and **almighty power** of God. WHO AM I/YOU to stand in the VERY PRESENCE of the **Most High** God? HOW DARE I/we be here! ***"Woe to me"*** because God has every right to say to me, ***"You are ruined – for you are a man of unclean lips."*** God has every right to tell you and me, ***"Depart from Me – for you are guilty, unclean sinners."***

**By nature** we like to minimize our sins as **"no big deal"** or make excuses like **"nobody's perfect"** or "God will just have to understand this is who I am." We want to focus on God's **love** and ignore God's **holiness**. We may tell ourselves that GOD IS LUCKY we even want to have a relationship with him. It's VERY UNCOMFORTABLE to face up to the CLASH between God's **pure holiness** and our **utter sinfulness**. Just ask Isaiah. Go stand next to him! In Hebrews we're told, ***"It is a dreadful thing to fall into the hands of the living God"*** and ***"our God is a consuming fire."*** Hell is REAL and God really has **every right** to tell you and me and every other guilty sinner, "THE HELL with you!"

***"Jesus said to Simon, "Have no fear – don't be afraid."*** The good news of the gospel is that the very God who HAD EVERY RIGHT to **send us to hell** IN PURE GRACE sent His own Son to be our Savior! Because of Jesus we don't have to ***"be afraid"*** of God. Jesus has taken care of everything and made peace between God and us. We owed God a whole life of PERFECT LOVE – trust – obedience – that's exactly the life Jesus life FOR US and **in our place**. We deserved to be ***"forsaken – abandoned"*** by God to hell because of our sins. Jesus took the blame for the sins of the whole world and was punished in our place. Jesus personally paid for all our sins IN FULL **when He died** on the cross. So ***"have no fear - don't be afraid!"*** Trusting in Jesus we can BE ABSOLUTELY SURE that God has forgiven all our sins – **absolutely sure** that God really does love us – **absolutely sure** that we are going straight to heaven when we die. Because of the gospel we can CONFIDENTLY PRAY, "Stay with me, Lord, **because I am** a sinful man. I NEED YOU, Lord, to wash me clean – to guide me in **paths pleasing** to You – to help me overcome sin and temptations, doubts and fears. IN GRACE Jesus answers our prayer, ***"Have no fear - don't be afraid. Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you."***

***"From now on you will be catching people."*** Not all Christians are called to be pastors, teachers, missionaries. But Jesus does say EACH ONE of us is ***"His witness"*** telling others what **we know** about Him. That CAN BE parents teaching their children – neighbor talking to neighbor – **total** stranger to **another** stranger. We know how much the GOSPEL MEANS to us. We wouldn't want to think of living – **or dying!** – WITHOUT Jesus. Yet so many are living and dying WITHOUT Jesus and His promises.

***"Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, "Whom shall I send? And who will go for us?"*** Can you picture Isaiah answering, "DON'T LOOK at me! Get somebody else!" Is it really surprising that this ends, ***"After they brought their boats to the shore, they left everything and followed Him?"*** It IS ALL ABOUT God's Word – eagerly **hearing** it – confidently **trusting** it - boldly **sharing** it. Amen.

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