CORNERSTONECONNECTIONS
MAY08 2021

Scripture Story: Matthew 4:18-22; Mark 1:16-20; Luke 5:1-11.
Commentary: *The Desire of Ages,* chapter 25.

i am a follower



Photo by Luis Guerra, Jr.

keytext

"Simon Peter . . . fell at Jesus' knees and said, 'Go away from me, Lord; I am a sinful man!' . . . Then Jesus said to Simon, 'Don't be afraid; from now on you will fish for people.' So they pulled their boats up on shore, left everything and followed him."

(Luke 5:8-11, NIV)

flashlight

"They were humble and unlearned men, those fishers of Galilee; but Christ, the light of the world, was abundantly able to qualify them for the position for which He had chosen them. . . . He passed by the wise men of His time, because they were so self-confident that they could not sympathize with suffering humanity, and become colaborers with the Man of Nazareth. . . . The Lord Jesus seeks the cooperation of those who will become unobstructed channels for the communication of His grace. The first thing to be learned by all who would become workers together with God is the lesson of self-distrust; then they are prepared to have imparted to them the character of Christ" (*The Desire of Ages,* pp. 249, 250).

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what do you think?

If Jesus asked you to leave everything and follow Him, what would your response be?

____ "What exactly do You mean by *everything,* Lord?"
____ "I'll leave *some things*. . . . Can I still follow You?"
____ "You don't really mean that, do You?"
____ "Absolutely! No problem!"

_____

_____

_____

(Write your own response.)

did you know?

The Sea of Galilee has been a famous spot for fishermen since ancient times. Fishing methods used in Jesus' time probably included fishermen catching fish with their bare hands or in wicker baskets, trapping fish, fishing with hook and line, or spearing fish with arrows or harpoons. But fishing with nets was by far the most popular way to fish. Peter, Andrew, James, and John were probably fishing with circular cast nets, which were weighted to allow the net to encircle the fish. This required great skill and also great dedication on the part of the fishermen.

Jesus called Peter and his companions away from fishing to a task that would also require skill and total dedication—fishing for human beings to bring into the kingdom of God.

INTO THE STORY

"One day as Jesus was standing by the Lake of Gennesaret, the people were crowding around him and listening to the word of God. He saw at the water's edge two boats, left there by the fishermen, who were washing their nets. He got into one of the boats, the one belonging to Simon, and asked him to put out a little from shore. Then he sat down and taught the people from the boat.

"When he had finished speaking, he said to Simon, 'Put out into deep water, and let down the nets for a catch.'

"Simon answered, 'Master, we've worked hard all night and haven't caught anything. But because you say so, I will let down the nets.'

"When they had done so, they caught such a large number of fish that their nets began to break. So they signaled their partners in the other boat to come and help them, and they came and filled both boats so full that they began to sink.

"When Simon Peter saw this, he fell at Jesus' knees and said, 'Go away from me, Lord; I am a sinful man!' For he and all his companions were astonished at the catch of fish they had taken, and so were James and John, the sons of Zebedee, Simon's partners.

"Then Jesus said to Simon, 'Don't be afraid; from now on you will fish for people.' So they pulled their boats up on shore, left everything and followed him."

(Luke 5:1-11, NIV)



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OUT OF THE STORY

Did Simon Peter and the other fishermen already know Jesus before this event? How might that have made a difference in their response to Jesus?

Why do you think Jesus performed the miracle of the great catch of fish *before* He asked the fishermen to follow Him?

What impact did the miracle have on Simon Peter and the other fishermen?

Why was Simon Peter's response to the miracle "Go away from me, Lord; I am a sinful man"? What was he thinking? What would you have been thinking at that point?

Why do you think the fishermen followed Jesus without any questions? What do you think they expected from Jesus at that point?

punch lines

"Another disciple said to him, 'Lord, first let me go and bury my father.' But Jesus told him, 'Follow me, and let the dead bury their own dead'" **(Matthew 8:21, 22, NIV).**

"As Jesus went on from there, he saw a man named Matthew sitting at the tax collector's booth. 'Follow me,' he told him, and Matthew got up and followed him" **(Matthew 9:9, NIV).**

"Then Jesus said to his disciples, 'Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me'" **(Matthew 16:24, NIV).**

"Jesus answered, 'If you want to be perfect, go, sell your possessions and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me'" **(Matthew 19:21, NIV).**

further insight

"He who loves Christ the most will do the greatest amount of good."—Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages,* p. 250.

"Obedience—the service and allegiance of love—is the true sign of discipleship."—Ellen G. White, *Steps to Christ*, p. 60.

"There is no limit to the usefulness of one who, by putting self aside, makes room for the working of the Holy Spirit upon his heart, and lives a life wholly consecrated to God."—Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages,* pp. 250, 251.

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connectingtolife

Sabbath

Read Matthew 16:24.

By His miracles He [Jesus] manifested God's power and was attested as God's promised Messiah" (Fundamental Belief 4, The Son). As you read the story of Jesus calling Peter and the other fishermen by the sea, imagine the scene vividly in your mind. Put yourself in Peter's place and try to imagine what you would be experiencing with your five senses as this scene unfolds. Write down some of your ideas below.

When Jesus told him to let down the nets, Peter might have thought _____. After the miraculous catch of fish, he might have felt _____ and thought _____. When Jesus called Peter to follow Him, I think Peter felt _____. How did you feel when you read today's Bible reading?

Sunday

Read Romans 12:6, 7.

Read the *Did You Know?* section of the lesson to learn more about fishing on the Sea of Galilee in Jesus' time. Jesus used the image of "fishing for men" because that was what His disciples were familiar with. For them, it would create a picture of gathering up a great number of people out of the world and into God's kingdom. If He'd been talking to farmers, He might have invited them to come and harvest human crops to bring into God's barn (in fact, He used this kind of image in several of His parables). What types of images might Jesus use today in inviting people to bring others into His kingdom? What images might He use if He were calling . . .

a teacher?
a bus driver?
a doctor?
a teenager?

What talents and abilities has God given you to help spread the gospel?

Monday

Read Luke 5:8-11.

Jesus helps Simon Peter and the other fishermen catch a miraculous amount of fish. Peter immediately falls to his knees and declares that he is a sinful man and not worthy to be in Jesus' presence. Why do you think this miracle might have given Peter a sense of his own sinfulness? Peter tells Jesus to go away—but Jesus doesn't. Have you ever asked God to go away and leave you alone? How did He respond?

Tuesday

Read Matthew 19:21.

The *Flashlight* section emphasizes the fact that Jesus called ordinary people, uneducated fishermen rather than the intellectuals and leaders of the day. If you read the whole quote in its full context from *The Desire of Ages*, Ellen White points out that God values education and it can help us to serve God—but sometimes an uneducated person is better able to follow Jesus because they are more humble and less likely to think they can do things on their own. What other attitudes might stand in a person's way and keep them from following Jesus? In today's reading, Jesus is speaking to a rich young ruler. What attitude might Jesus have seen in this man that led Jesus to say that?

_____

Wednesday

We see many examples in the Bible of Jesus calling people to leave their everyday lives and follow Him. Look at the following verses. For each one, write down what Jesus asked people to do if they were to follow Him:

Matthew 8:21, 22 _____
Matthew 9:9 _____
Matthew 16:24 _____
Matthew 19:21 _____

Does God still expect the same thing of people today? Do we need to give up our plans for a job, a family, a "normal" life? Whatever He asks, we can be sure that He asks for total commitment.

Thursday

Read 2 Corinthians 12:9.

Think about things in your life that might be standing in the way of following Jesus. What is one practical thing you can do today to move those things aside and focus more on Jesus? For example, if you feel the time you spend on social media gets in the way of Jesus, you could make a commitment not to engage for certain hours of the day (mornings work really well) and spend that time instead in prayer and Bible study. What encouragement can you find in today's Bible reading?

Friday

Read Matthew 6:31-33.

If Jesus were to come to you today and say, "Leave _____ behind, and follow Me," what do you think He would ask you to leave?

_____

What would your response be? Based on today's reading, what should it be?

_____

Following Jesus may involve leaving behind something or giving up something. But it could also mean dedicating the life you have now completely to God. God can help you to share His love with others through the life you now live.

this week's reading*

The Desire of Ages (or *Humble Hero*), chapter 25.

A special adaptation of *The Desire of Ages,* entitled *Humble Hero,* has been created just for you by the White Estate and the Pacific Press Publishing Association. Get more info about it at: www.cornerstoneconnections.net. By following this plan you will read at least one book of the Conflict of the Ages Series each year.

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