



# The Miraculous Draught of Fishes

## Story Elements

- **Text:** Luke 5:1-11 (also Mark 1:16-20 and Matt. 4:18-22)<sup>1</sup>
- **Setting:** circa AD 27 on the Lake of Gennesaret (Sea of Galilee)
- **Characters:** God, Jesus, Simon (Peter), James, John, and Andrew
- **Plot:** Jesus calls four Galilean fisherman into full-time discipleship.
- **Key word(s):** “catch \_\_\_\_\_” – an illustrative description of the gospel preacher’s task, and a wise way of calling men from an old vocation into a new one.
- **Climax:** **Luke 5:4** *Now when he had left speaking, he said unto Simon, Launch out into the deep, and let down your nets for a draught.* This moment brings the reader to the summit of wonder where a dozen questions come into view – questions like: Will the disciples listen to the Master’s command? Will Jesus work a miracle? What kind of miracle? Why are the disciples fishing instead of following Jesus?

## Launching Out

1. (vv 1-3) Though Jesus had met with violent resistance in his own hometown synagogue at \_\_\_\_\_, multitudes from all over Galilee desired to hear him preach.

APPLICATION → Christ’s love for the common person is seen in his preaching to crowd of common people. Matthew Henry notes, “Christ was a popular preacher; and though he was able, at *twelve*, to *dispute* with the doctors, yet he chose, at *thirty*, to preach to the capacity of the *vulgar*.”<sup>2</sup>

- (a) While preaching on the shore of Lake Gennesaret, he was thronged by the crowd and forced to use a \_\_\_\_\_ as a make-shift platform from which to address the crowd.

APPLICATION → Ryle finds a helpful lesson in Christ’s makeshift preaching platform: “If we cannot do all we want, let us do what we can. Let us work with such tools as we have. While we are lingering and delaying, souls are perishing...Where we are and as we are, in season of out of season, by one means or by another, by tongue or by pen, by speaking or by writing, **let us strive to be ever working for God**. But let us never stand still.”<sup>3</sup>

- (b) Incidentally, the fishing boat was owned by \_\_\_\_\_.
2. (vv 4-5) After finishing his sermon, Jesus told Simon to launch the boat into the deep part of the lake and cast his nets.
    - (a) Simon did as his Master commanded, though it must’ve bewildered him at first – for two reasons:
      - i. To do as Jesus said would be terribly inconvenient: they had just finished \_\_\_\_\_ their nets.
      - ii. It made no sense to the seasoned fisherman: fishing at night was best because the fish were easier to catch in the \_\_\_\_\_ water.<sup>4</sup>

→ May we, like Peter, be compliant to our Master’s bidding! May we never allow human reasoning to dissuade our minds or creature comfort to discourage our hearts from quick and decided obedience!

<sup>1</sup> There is disagreement about whether the parallel passages in Mark 1:16-20 and Matt. 4:18-22 are referencing the same event as Luke 5:1-11 or a different one. I am of the opinion that they are the same event, but Luke gives fuller detail.

<sup>2</sup> Matthew Henry, *Matthew Henry’s Commentary, VOL. V, Matthew to John* (Iowa Falls: Riverside Book and Bible House, n.d.), 630.

<sup>3</sup> J.C. Ryle, *Expository Thoughts on the Gospel, Vol. II* (Grand Rapids: Baker House, 2007) 131-132.

<sup>4</sup> John MacArthur, *The MacArthur Bible Commentary* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2005) 1285.

(b) (vv 6-7) Simon did as Jesus said, and the fishing net was filled with fish – so much so that the net began to break and even the two fishing boats began to take on water.

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## Leaving All

3. (vv 8-9) Peter, recognized the power of Christ, exclaimed, “Depart from me! For I am a \_\_\_\_\_ man, O Lord.”

APPLICATION → When sinful people realize they are in the immediate presence of divine power and holiness, they *exceedingly fear and quake* (Heb. 12:21; cf. Exo. 20:19; Job 42:5). Ryle notes that “a sense of God’s presence abases man and makes him feel his \_\_\_\_\_.”<sup>5</sup> Peter’s reaction in this moment (when his faith was yet new and weak) was to recoil from Christ’s presence, but as he grew in grace, “at a later period in his life he would, doubtless, have said, ‘Abide with me,’ and not, ‘depart.’”<sup>6</sup>

4. (v 10) Jesus calmed Peter's fear and called him to a new vocation: *from henceforth thou shalt catch men*. Up to this point, these men had been **voluntarily** following Jesus and receiving his instruction as they desired and when they desired. For reasons untold, they returned to their fishing business. **But now Jesus places a call upon them.**

Edersheim explains, “The disciples of the Rabbis, even those of John the Baptist, ‘followed,’ in order to learn; they, in order to do, and **to enter into fellowship with His Work**. ‘Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men.’ It was then quite a new call this, which at the same time indicated its real aim and its untold difficulties. Such a call could not have been addressed to them, if they had not already been disciples of Jesus, understood His Mission, and the character of the Kingdom of God.”<sup>7</sup>

5. (v 11) Simon, Andrews, James, and John *forsook \_\_\_\_\_, and followed him*. They left their profitable business – at the peak of its prosperity – to follow the Rabbi who had recently been thrown out of a synagogue. Though their faith is new, it is faith nevertheless.

APPLICATION → Spurgeon said, “It did not seem much of a prospect, to follow the houseless Jesus, but an inward attraction drew them and they followed on, charmed to obey the voice divine.”<sup>8</sup> May we be as willing to leave all and \_\_\_\_\_ him.

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**Answer Key:** Key word(s): “men” • 1. Nazareth; a) fishing boat; b) Simon • 2. a) i) washing; ii) shallow • 3. sinful → sinfulness • 5. all → follow

<sup>5</sup> Ryle, 133.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> Alfred Edersheim, *The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah*, <https://ccel.org/ccel/edersheim/lifetimes/lifetimes.viii.xiii.html>

<sup>8</sup> Charles Spurgeon, *An Exposition of Matthew, the Gospel of the Kingdom* (Springfield: Particular Baptist Press, 2015) 19.