

BIBLE STORY: THE MIRACULOUS CATCH OF FISH

Luke 5:1-11

Central Thoughts

- The boat from which Jesus taught symbolizes the Church and the nets symbolize the preaching of the Gospel and the Sacraments by which sinners are brought into the Church.
- The Word of God is the only power the Church and her ministers have in preaching the Gospel.
- Faith in Christ is a miracle of the Word of God.
- Christ calls men into the Office of the Ministry.
- Ministers are dependent upon Jesus' Word and forgiveness to be faithful in their work.

Discussion Questions

Why did the multitude crowd around Jesus?

To hear the word of God.

What other names is Lake Gennesaret called?

The Sea of Galilee or the Sea of Tiberias

Why were there two boats standing by the lake?

The fishermen had returned from fishing and were washing their nets.

Whose boat did Jesus sit down in and what did He ask him to do?

He sat down in the boat of Simon, whom He would later name Peter, and asked him to put out a little from the shore so that He could teach the large multitude.

After Jesus had taught the multitude God's Word, what did Jesus ask Simon to do?

"Launch out into the deep and let down your nets for a catch."

How did Simon answer Jesus?

"Master, we have toiled all night and caught nothing; nevertheless at Your word I will let down the net."

What does Simon Peter say that indicates he was a disciple of Jesus?

He calls Jesus "Master" and says that at Jesus word he would let down the net.

How many fish did they catch?

They caught so many fish that they filled both Simon's boat and that of their partners James and John, the sons of Zebedee, so that their nets broke and both boats began to sink.

How did Simon Peter respond to Jesus when he saw the miracle?

He fell down at Jesus' knees and said, "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord!"

What did Simon Peter believe correctly about himself, but misunderstand about Jesus?

Simon Peter believed correctly that he was a sinner, but he did not understand that Jesus came into the world to save sinners.

What do all the fish they caught represent?

All the souls of sinners who would be brought to faith in Jesus for salvation

What does the boat from which Jesus taught symbolize?

The Church of Christ into which people of all nations would be gathered

What does the net symbolize?

The preaching of the Gospel and the Sacraments of Christ which bring sinners to faith in Christ and gather them together into the Church

By whose power alone are sinners brought into the Church?

By the power of Christ's Word alone, as Simon said, "At Your word I will let down the net."

What is the only power the Church and her ministers have to bring people to faith in Christ?

The Word of God

How did everyone react to the miraculous catch of fish?

The multitude was astonished, and so also were James and John who were partners with Simon.

How did Jesus respond to Peter's confession that he was a sinful man and what does it mean?

"Do not be afraid. From now on you will catch men." Jesus forgave Simon Peter his sins and called him to be a minister of the Gospel who would preach the Word of God for the salvation of sinners.

Who else were called by Jesus to be His Apostles?

James and John who left their fishing business to follow Jesus and become His Apostles (Note: Matthew's Gospel also records that Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, was also with them and called by Jesus to be one of the Twelve.)

Is this the first time that these men met Jesus?

No, Simon Peter and Andrew were among those who were baptized by John the Baptist and met Jesus earlier at the Jordan River.

What does this encounter with Jesus teach us about the Office of the Ministry?

Jesus calls men into the Office of the Ministry, who leave other occupations to give their full service to the preaching of the Gospel and the administration of the Sacraments.

How do all the baptized faithful participate with their ministers in gathering people into the Church?

Every baptized Christian, each according to his station in life, is called to confess the name of Christ and to speak His Word to spouse, children, family, neighbors, friends, and coworkers.

Who brings about the miracle of faith in Christ?

The Holy Spirit works faith in the hearts of sinners through the Word of God that is heard.

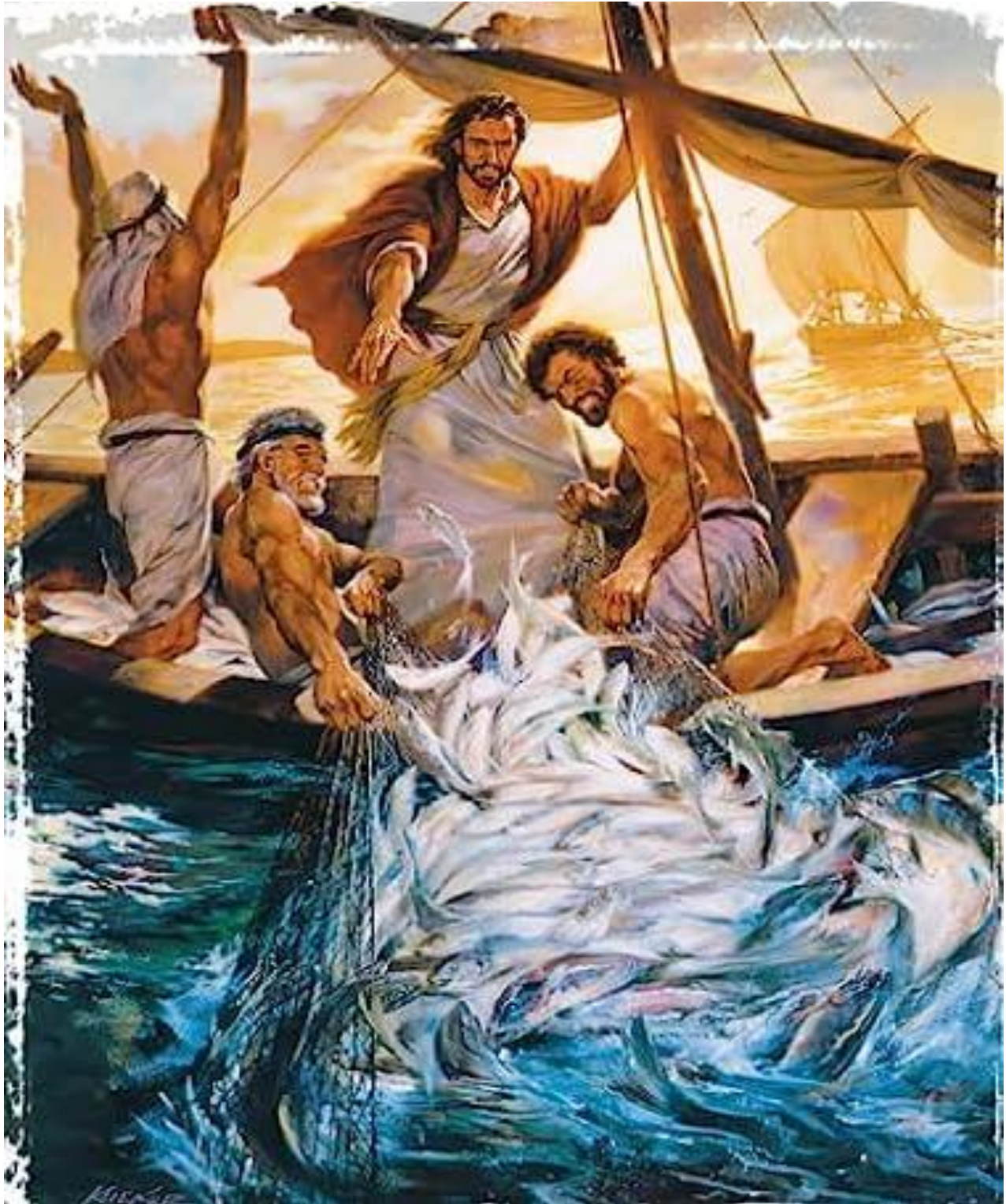
Meditation on the Bible Story

Like a fisherman who casts his net into the sea to catch fish, Jesus preaches His Gospel from the Church to create the miracle of faith and to gather sinners from all nations into the Church. Simon Peter and his partners were called from their occupation as fishermen to be Apostolic ministers of the Gospel, who would preach in Jesus' stead and by His command for the salvation of sinners. These men were themselves sinners, as Simon confessed, "I am a sinful man, O Lord!" But they needed to learn that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners. It was wrong for Simon Peter to tell Jesus to depart from him. It was as if Simon believed that he was too sinful for Jesus to save. There is no one that is too sinful for Jesus to save and there is no one for whom Jesus did not die upon the cross. Throughout their three years with Jesus, the disciples would learn that they were totally dependent upon Jesus' gift of forgiveness in order to be faithful ministers of the Gospel to others. This miracle taught them that the only power and authority they would have to be "fishers of men" is Christ's Word alone. Every minister in his office and every Christian who confesses the name of Jesus to others is completely dependent upon the Word of God in speaking about their faith in Christ.

The Office of the Keys is the Office of the Apostolic Ministry, which means that the authority of ministers and Christ's Church comes from the Apostolic Word of the New Testament Scriptures. The Apostles were called to witness everything that Jesus said and did, so that they could faithfully bear witness to Him in their preaching and in the New Testament Scriptures. The Church and her ministers are dependent upon the Apostolic and Prophetic Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments for the work of the Holy Ministry.

Prayer on the Bible Story

O Lord Jesus, as You called Simon Peter and his partners to be fishers of men, continue to provide ministers for Your Church today, that many may be brought into Your Church for the salvation of their souls. Give to every baptized Christian the voice to confess Your holy name, and to join with our pastors in proclaiming the Good News of salvation to family, friends, and neighbors alike; in Your holy name we pray. Amen.



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