

## Luke 5:1-32

**Luke 5:10b, 30,31** And Jesus said to Simon, "Do not be afraid. From now on you will catch men."... And the scribes and Pharisees complained against His disciples, saying, "Why do you eat and drink with tax collectors and sinners? Jesus answered and said to them, "Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance."

Our passage is tied together by the calling of disciples, the fishermen in vv. 1-11 and the Levi in vv. 27-32. In between, we have two miracle stories and another notation of Jesus' habit of withdrawing into the solitude of the desert for prayer. The Call passages establish the priority of Jesus' ministry and the miracle stories serve as examples of these priorities.

This was not the first time that Jesus had encountered these fishermen. In Luke, Jesus had already healed Peter's mother-in-law at his home in Capernaum (4:38,39) So, Peter and the others had already been following Jesus and yet, here they are fishing again. (The call in Mark and Matthew was another and earlier call.) Why were they back to fishing? It may have been a combination of a number of reasons; they were fishing because they liked fishing, they were fishing because they needed the money, they were fishing because of pressure from their

families, they were fishing because they did not want to be dependent upon Jesus, they were fishing because they had stepped back from a total commitment to Jesus (They had not yet left everything to follow Jesus.) These possibilities make sense of Peter's response to the miraculous catch of fish. Peter had already left fishing behind in order to become a fisher of men (Mark 1:16-18). His return to fishing indicated a falling away from this commitment. The boat full of fish was a miracle of God's provision. If Jesus could do that, then any concern about future provision for the needs of the disciples was answered. Peter is also an example again of an obedient response to Jesus' call. He gladly lent Jesus his boat, he followed Jesus' direction to let down the nets when as a fisherman he knew better, and he repented of what he recognized as his own faithlessness in the face of Jesus' grace and loving kindness, and given another chance, he left everything behind and followed Jesus.

The leper had more confidence in Jesus' ability than he had in His good will. "Lord, if You are willing, You can make me clean." We cannot blame him on one level as he was, after all, a leper. Lepers were considered so contagious that they were cut off from all non lepers. When Jesus touched the leper He exposed Himself to the same fate. But, nothing would better express Jesus' compassion for the hopeless than the touching of a leper. The immediate healing

of the leper demonstrated that Jesus was in no danger of becoming leprous Himself.

The paralytic was brought to Jesus by friends who "knew" that he could be healed. They underwent an arduous task carrying their friend we don't know how far in order to get Him to Jesus. Then, upon arrival they could not get to Jesus because of the crowds. Undeterred, they broke a hole in the roof and lowered their friend down so that He lay at Jesus feet. Jesus looked up and saw their faith. He looked down and saw their friend's sin. Then Jesus forgave him to the consternation of the crowd. Jesus addressed the thinking of the religious leaders and then healed the man who immediately got up and returned to his house, glorifying God. His enthusiasm was contagious as "they were all amazed, and they glorified God and were filled with fear, saying we have seen strange things today!" The story contrasts the attitudes and outcomes experienced by the friends of the paralytic and the religious skeptics. It also gives dignity and value to a man who was certainly perceived by most as a non-person.

Jesus then called one of the tax collectors to be His disciple. Levi took Jesus' acceptance of his commitment to be an open invitation to others just like himself to come and to follow Jesus literally and threw a party for tax collectors and sinners. Jesus gladly attended offering hope and salvation to all who were there.