

## **Luke 5: 1-11**

**I GREW UP IN RAPID CITY. I SPENT MY SUMMER AFTERNOONS AT ROOSEVELT PUBLIC SWIMMING POOL. OCCASIONALLY MY FAMILY WOULD DRIVE TO ANGASTORA LAKE FOR A DAY OF PICNICING AND SPLASHING IN THE WATER ON OUR FLOATIES. BUT WE NEVER FISHED. MY DAD DIDN'T FISH; MY MOM DIDN'T FISH; MY GRANDPARENTS DIDN'T FISH, IN FACT I HAVE NEVER BEEN FISHING IN MY ENTIRE LIFE. I DON'T WATCH THE FISHING CHANNEL. ALL I KNOW ABOUT FISH IS I LIKE SALMON WITH RICE AND VEGETABLES ON THE SIDE.**

**I'VE HEARD THAT A FISHING STORY IS SUPPOSED TO BE FLATTERING TO THE PERSON WHO CAUGHT THE FISH. PEOPLE THAT FISH SUPPOSEDLY TALK ABOUT THE MONSTER FISH THEY HOOKED BUT THAT GOT AWAY, OR THEY TALK ABOUT THE BAIT THEY USE TO MAKE THE FISH JUMP ON YOUR HOOK.**

**THE BIBLE TELLS A DIFFERENT KIND OF FISHING STORY THOUGH. THIS STORY IS ABOUT FISHERMEN WHO COME UP EMPTY AFTER FISHING ALL NIGHT AND ABOUT A CARPENTER, WHO COMMANDEERS THE BOAT, PREACHES A SERMON, AND TELLS THE FISHERMEN WHERE THE FISH ARE.**

**AFTER HUNDREDS OF POUNDS OF FISH ARE FINALLY CAUGHT, A FISHERMAN, SIMON, IMMEDIATELY RESIGNS FROM FISHING AND STARTS FISHING FOR PEOPLE.**

**AS ONE AUTHOR PUT IT, 'IF THERE'S ANYTHING TO LEARN FROM THIS STORY, IT'S WHY SOME PEOPLE DON'T CATCH FISH.'" SOME PEOPLE DON'T CATCH FISH BECAUSE THEY REFUSE TO GO INTO THE DEEP WATER. JESUS TOLD SIMON, "LET'S LEAVE THE SHALLOW WATER AND GO TO THE DEEP."**

**WE COULD SUBSTITUTE FISH FOR ABUNDANCE OR WISDOM OR LOVE, HEALING OR PEACE. ALL THOSE THINGS WE WANT IN ABUNDANCE. SOME PEOPLE DON'T CATCH THESE THINGS BECAUSE THEY REFUSE TO GO DEEP.**

**DEEP WATER IS WHERE THE INCREASE IS. DEEP WATER TAKES FAITH. DEEP WATER IS A RISK. FOCUS OF MIND AND HEART ARE NEEDED.**

**THE VISIBILITY IN DEEP WATER IS NEXT TO NOTHING. YOU'VE GOT TO TRUST THE WORDS AND DIRECTIONS OF OTHERS WHO HAVE PASSED THROUGH THE DEEP WATER TO MAKE IT THERE. JESUS IS ALWAYS INVITING PEOPLE TO THE DEEPER END OF THINGS.**

**BUT SHALLOW WATER IS PLEASANT. IT REFRESHES OUR ANKLES WHEN WE WALK IN IT. YOU CAN SEE ALL THE WAY TO THE BOTTOM IN SHALLOW WATER...ROCKS, LITTLE MINNOWS, BROKEN GLASS. STAYING IN SHALLOW WATER IS SAFE. STAYING IN SHALLOW WATER DOESN'T REQUIRE A WHOLE LOT OF COURAGE. THE DEEP WATER OF FAITH IS WHERE THOSE**

**THINGS WE SAY WE WANT ARE SWIMMING AROUND. THE SHALLOW WATER IS WHERE WE BEGIN THE ADVENTURE OF OUR FAITH, NOT WHERE WE FINISH.**

**THERE IS A TIME FOR BIBLE STUDIES AND LISTENING AND A TIME TO LIVE WHAT WE'VE LEARNED, A TIME TO RECEIVE AND A TIME TO GIVE SACRIFICALLY, A TIME TO WORSHIP THE LORD HERE IN CHURCH, AND A TIME TO BE CHURCH AND LEAD THE WORLD IN THE WORSHIP OF THE LORD. DEEP WATER IS WHERE WE HAVE TO GO TO GET WHAT GOD HAS FOR US.**

**SOME PEOPLE DON'T CATCH FISH BECAUSE THEY DON'T EXPECT TO CATCH FISH. WHEN JESUS TELLS SIMON, "LET'S GO TO THE DEEP WATER," HE DOESN'T STOP THERE. HE SAYS, "PREPARE FOR A CATCH." WHAT ENCOURAGEMENT!**

**THIS IS A WORD FOR US THO ATTEND CHURCH REGULARLY. WEEK AFTER WEEK WE GO THE DEEP WATER OF WORSHIP, BUT DO WE GO PREPARING FOR A CATCH? DO WE GO BELIEVING THAT A BLESSING IS JUST WAITING FOR US? OR DO WE GO SIMPLY OUT OF A ROUTINE HABIT?**

**SOME PEOPLE DON'T CATCH FISH BECAUSE THEY DON'T WANT TO GO TO THE DEEP WATER, AND SOME PEOPLE DON'T CATCH FISH BECAUSE THEY DON'T EXPECT TO. BUT SOME PEOPLE DON'T CATCH FISH BECAUSE THEY KNOW MORE ABOUT FISH THAN GOD. SIMON ALMOST MAKES THAT MISTAKE. HE TELLS JESUS IN AN EXASPERATED TONE, "HEY, WE'VE BEEN FISHING ALL NIGHT. WE KNOW FISH. WHO ARE YOU TO TELL US ABOUT FISHING?" SOME PEOPLE THINK THEY KNOW MORE ABOUT FISH THAN GOD DOES. IT HAPPENS TO ALL OF US SOMETIMES. IT'S NOT THAT WE ACTUALLY THINK WE KNOW MORE THAN GOD; IT'S JUST THAT WE ACT LIKE WE DO. WE HEAR JESUS'S INSTRUCTIONS: FORGIVE A BUNCH OF TIMES. BLESS THOSE WHO CURSE YOU. GIVE ABUNDANTLY. VISIT THE PRISONERS. REMEMBER THE SABBATH AND IT KEEP IT HOLY. BUT WE IGNORE JESUS' INVITATION TO ABUNDANCE. WE SAY BY OUR ACTIONS: I KNOW MORE ABOUT MY RELATIONSHIPS, MORE ABOUT MY HEALING, MORE ABOUT FORGIVENESS, MORE ABOUT MY FAMILY, MORE ABOUT HOW MUCH I MAKE AND HOW MUCH I SHOULD GIVE THAN YOU DO, JESUS. OUR INFORMATION HIGHWAY...GOOGLE ANYTHING...AND WE HAVE THE INFORMATION AT OUR FINGER TIPS. WE KNOW EVERYTHING.**

**SIMON, FOR JUST A SPLIT SECOND, ALMOST FORGOT THAT JESUS IS LORD. BUT AT THAT CRUCIAL INTERSECTION WE ALL COME TO OVER AND OVER AGAIN IN LIFE, DECIDED THAT HE DIDN'T KNOW EVERYTHING, THAT HIS PRESENT EMPTINESS AND FRUSTRATION HAD MADE HIM READY TO LEARN.**

**PEOPLE SAY THAT THE NET FULL OF FISH IS THE MIRACLE OF THIS STORY, BUT COULD THE REAL MIRACLE OF THIS STORY BE THAT SIMON DECIDED THAT JESUS WAS LORD AND THAT HE WOULD LIVE THAT WAY BEGINNING IMMEDIATELY. JUST LOOK AT WHAT SIMON SAYS**

BEFORE THE MIRACLES BEGIN TO HAPPEN: “YET, IF YOU SAY SO.....” I LOVE THIS STORY BECAUSE IT GETS AT THE HEART OF OUR WALK WITH CHRIST AND OUR FAITH. “MASTER, WE HAVE WORKED ALL NIGHT LONG BUT HAVE CAUGHT NOTHING. YET IF YOU SAY SO, I WILL LET DOWN THE NETS.” EVER FEEL LIKE YOU’RE SUSPENDED IN THE GAP BETWEEN THOSE TWO SEARING SENTENCES. IS IT JUST ME, OR DO WE ALL LIVE IN THE GAP BETWEEN WEARINESS AND HOPE, DEFEAT AND FAITH, RESIGNATION AND OBEDIENCE? LIFE CAN BE A GRIND. THE SAME OLD SAME OLD MONOTONY AND SOMETIMES FAILURE. EVEN THE MOST POSITIVE AND HARDWORKING OF US CAN LAND UP ON SHORE SOME MORNINGS WITH EMPTY FISHING NETS WONDERING WHAT WE’RE DOING WRONG? WHY WE DON’T FEEL FULFILLED? CONTENT? WHY ARE MY BEST INTENTIONS NOT WORKING?

COULD IT BE IN THOSE MOMENTS WE NEED TO TRY WHAT SIMON DID AND SAY, “OK, LORD, IF YOU SAY SO. MY FRUSTRATION IS REAL. MY PAIN IS REAL. MY EMPTINESS IS REAL. MY DESPAIR IS REAL, ALL REAL. AND YET YOU ARE GOD, AND I AM NOT.

THE HARDEST THING TO DO AT THESE MOMENTS IS TO MAKE THE LEAP OF TRUST THAT SIMON MAKES. “*IF YOU SAY SO, I WILL.*” YET IF YOU SAY SO, LORD, I WILL TRY AGAIN. YET IF YOU SAY SO, I WILL BE FAITHFUL TO MY VOCATION. YET, IF YOU SAY SO, I WILL GO DEEP RATHER THAN REMAIN IN THE SHALLOW WATER. YET IF YOU SAY SO, I WILL TRUST THAT YOUR PRESENCE IN THE BOAT WITH ME IS MORE PRECIOUS THAN ANY GUARANTEE OF SUCCESS. YET IF YOU SAY SO, I WILL CAST MY EMPTY NET INTO THE WATER, AND I WILL LOOK WITH HOPE FOR THE WAYS YOU CONTINUE TO WORK IN MY LIFE.

THAT’S WHEN OUR MIRACLES WILL BEGING TO HAPPEN, WHEN WE DECIDE THAT JESUS IS LORD, WHEN OUR LIPS AND OUR LIVES. YET, IF YOU SAY SO, LORD. MAY IT BE SO.

