**Let the Lord Be Right**

Based on [Luke 5:1-11](https://biblia.com/books/esv/Lk5.1-11)

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Fifth Sunday after Trinity

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Today’s gospel is about how Jesus, though his teaching and miracles, is revealed to be the Messiah and the Son of God, and what that means to those who believe and called to be disciples.

Jesus was teaching a crowd of people from a boat. Peter was with him in the boat with other fishermen. When Jesus was done teaching, he turned to Peter and told Peter to put out his nets for a catch. Peter replied, “Master, we toiled all night and took nothing! But at your word I will let down the nets.”

Peter trusted Jesus, and his response here shores that up very nicely. Peter was a fisherman by trade, likely had been fishing his whole life. He was an expert fisherman, a professional. In this life, becoming an expert or professional comes through lots of hard work and experience. We used to fish at a place called West Bend, on Lake Sharp a reservoir on the Missouri River. We’d usually go there to camp and fish a couple of times a summer. Sometimes, the walleye were biting and we’d catch our limit in an easy morning. Other times, for whatever reason, they weren’t biting, and we’d spend hours and hours and hours every day dragging a line in the water sometimes without so much as a strike. But there was one man, who’d spend virtually every weekend on that lake. “Ole Pettis” was his name, and he’d come in with his limit even when no one else was catching anything. And if ole Pettis came in without his limit, you knew things were bad, and you might as well just pack in your gear for a while and give up.

The point is that he was an expert, he knew every honey hole and corner of that huge lake. He knew how the fish though, and where they were most likely to be given the time of the year, the time of day, the weather. He knew how efficiently to test lure and bait, what they were likely to hit, and what tackle isn’t worth bothering with. He was a guide, people would actually pay him to go out and fish with them. In a way, he lived on that lake and knew it better than anybody, what was likely to work in catching fish. If someone who’d never fished before, or was just an amateur were in the boat, and told ole Pettis how and where to fish, it would be inappropriate, to put it mildly. He knew that lake and how to fish it better than any man, and he would have the right to scoff at some fair-weather fisherman’s advice, or worse yet, someone who didn’t fish at all.

Back to the scripture, Peter was an expert fisherman and made his living off the lake of Gennesaret. Jesus was a carpenter, and lately a vagabond prophet. And it speaks volumes that, when Jesus tells Peter how to fish, Peter listens and obeys. Against all his knowledge and practical experience of fishing, which is telling him that it would be a waste of time to bother now, Jesus tells him to let down his nets. And Peter doesn’t scoff, he doesn’t roll his eyes and say “you’re a great teacher Jesus and carpenter, and if I ever need a table made I’ll come to you, but leave the fishing to the professionals.” No, he says though I know it’s not likely to succeed I will let down the nets, because you Jesus are my master.”

Many of you are simple Christians, who simply believe what Jesus says because he said it, and believe what the Bible says because it is the word of God. And it probably baffles you how anyone can call themselves Christian and yet do and say the things they do. I’m not simply speaking about flawed people who know the right thing, but in weakness have trouble doing it. I’m talking about those who openly teach a different doctrine than what the bible says. It’s not worth psychologizing the minds of people who claim to believe in Jesus but refuse to do what he says, but a lot of it comes down to men and women believing they know how the world works better than Jesus.

I think some examples will help. I had a friend once, whose Lutheran Christian mother told him that it’s just unrealistic to expect young people to wait until marriage to go to bed together…like it’s a foregone conclusion and parents might as well not waste their breath trying to prevent it. “It’s just the way things are these days.” Wouldn’t it be better to be like Peter and say, “I don’t think teaching my children abstinence will work, but at your word I will teach them.”

Or what happens even among more conservative minded Christians, who have no trouble blowing the horn against sins of sexual immorality, yet they hold a grudge within the church. Jesus says, “**If you brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault, so that you may win back your brother.**” Jesus says, go and be reconciled. And yet they will say, “I would go and tell them their sin, but they won’t listen anyway…I know how they are and I know how these things work. They won’t listen so I’m not going to bother.” Wouldn’t rather a faithful disciple say, “I don’t think brother Christian is going to listen to me or apologize, but at your word lord I will go to him and attempt to reconcile.”

There is a philosophical word for this mindset, that puts truth and morality aside for the sake of whatever “works”. It’s pragmatism, and it is in the bible. When the crowds begin to follow Jesus all the more because he had raised Lazarus from the dead, the Chief Priests and Pharisees were worried that there would be chaos—because they couldn’t control Jesus—and that the chaos would provoke the Romans to come in and strip them of their right to rule the Jews in Judea. So Caiaphas says, “You know nothing at all. Nor do you understand that it is better for you that one man should die for the people, not that the whole nation should perish.” Another translation says it is “expedient” for one man to die; pragmatic. He, the High Priest of God, ignores the 5th and 8th commandments and says if we just slander Jesus and murder him, that’ll work to solve our little problem and “the nation”, God’s own people, will be saved.

But God had a bigger plan in mind. Caiaphas meant his words for evil, but the Holy Spirit meant them for good. It was expedient for one man to die to save the nation, even the world, but that was by God’s providential plan to sacrifice his son for the sin of the world, so that the net of his gospel would gather men into His kingdom.

No worldly wise practical man could have seen that coming. But that’s the point, “For the word of the cross is folly to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.” When it comes to God’s Word, we need to throw all of what we think we know about the world aside, and let the Lord speak and Let him be right. Salvation history is full of evil men who think they know more than God taking matters into their own hands, not just Caiaphas, but king Saul who offered an unlawful sacrifice to win a battle. And not just evil men, but saints have done the same: Abraham who bedded Hagar to have a child when Sarai was barren. What a horrible way to live, to think that this world or even your life is going to succeed or fail based on what you know to be possible and likely. Salvation is impossible for man, but for God all things are possible.

The world wanted and still wants to put Jesus to death, to get him out of the way in the name of progress, expediency, and human development. He has too many unnecessary rules, male and female; sanctity of life; obedience to God. “Let us cast off our chains by casting off our creator and redeemer”, little do they know that by casting off their Lord, they cast away their savior.

And so you who have sinned have a savior in Jesus Christ. He says cast your nets you cast your nets, because he also says come to me and I will give you rest. Peter had a weak faith that apparently doubted that casting his net again would succeed, but a weak faith is still all that is necessary for salvation. For a weak faith still believes in Jesus Christ and comes to him, and believes him when he says, **“All that the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never cast out.”**