

16-22 January 2022 Luke 5: 1-11

Out of our depth?

[Read the passage from Luke. It is written below.](#)

Once while Jesus was standing beside the lake of Gennesaret, and the crowd was pressing in on him to hear the word of God, he saw two boats there at the shore of the lake; the fishermen had gone out of them and were washing their nets. He got into one of the boats, the one belonging to Simon, and asked him to put out a little way from the shore. Then he sat down and taught the crowds from the boat. When he had finished speaking, he said to Simon, "Put out into the deep water and let down your nets for a catch." Simon answered, "Master, we have worked all night long but have caught nothing. Yet if you say so, I will let down the nets." When they had done this, they caught so many fish that their nets were beginning to break. So they signalled their partners in the other boat to come and help them. And they came and filled both boats, so that they began to sink. But when Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, "Go away from me, Lord, for I am a sinful man!" For he and all who were with him were amazed at the catch of fish that they had taken; and so also were James and John, sons of Zebedee, who were partners with Simon. Then Jesus said to Simon, "Do not be afraid; from now on you will be catching people." When they had brought their boats to shore, they left everything and followed him.

Bible notes

If we had been asked to advise the Son of God on who he might wish to work with, would we have put fishermen at the top of the list? Fishing is a respectable trade, then and now, but it is probably not one from which we would expect great speakers or activists to emerge. It was a tough job that required patience and long hours out on the water.

But God's grace, as we have learned, is often extended to those whom we might not expect. Simon Peter is so overwhelmed by his encounter with God's grace in the deep water that he asks Jesus to leave him alone. Perhaps this is unsurprising. The catch of fish would have been colossal. Galilean boats were likely nearly 30 feet long, eight feet wide and five feet deep. However, it is something deeper that touches Simon Peter: when he tells Jesus to leave him alone because he is a sinful man, there is a foreshadowing of Peter's shame when he encounters his risen Lord and has to face his earlier denial of Jesus (John 21).

What is the deeper truth? Perhaps it is that Jesus has shown Peter and his friends that, just as they catch fish, he has caught them in God's grace. From this moment on in their lives, nothing can be the same. Unlike the fisherman's net, the net of God will set them free to be more than they could have dreamed. As their boats draw into the shallows at the side of the lake, they are about to enter the depths of discipleship.

Reflection

Spend a few moments thinking about what stands out for you from the Bible reading. This idea may help.

Looking at the history of the word 'miracle', it is clear that one of its meanings is 'astonishing' and 'wonderful'. Whatever we think of the miracle of the huge haul of fish in the Gospel story, we have surely all encountered things that are astonishing or wonderful. What for you counts as wonderful and/or astonishing? What made a particular experience or situation astonishing or wonderful? How might we discern God in such experiences or situations? What might this tell us about the nature of miracles, or the way in which we get caught up in God's story

Questions for reflection

You may wish to use these questions and the picture to help you think about or discuss issues of sharing.



- What makes you feel overwhelmed?
- What gives you confidence to overcome that feeling?
- When/how did you get 'caught up' in God's story?

Prayer

Adapt to your local context.

A prayer of praise

Father, we praise you for allowing your kingdom to break through into our lives;
for the things that to you are ordinary, but to us are extraordinary;
and we thank you that you have called us to be part of your story,
ordinary people caught up in the extraordinary tale of your plan for salvation,
the base metal of our tarnished natures turned to gold in your hands.

Amen.

A prayer to end the Bible study

Lord of the deep,
be with us when we feel out of our depth.
Lord of the waves,
send us where we are most needed.
Lord of the shore,
bring us safely home.
In Jesus' name.

Amen