

"Put Out into the Deep"

The Sea of Galilee

Sitting at an outdoor table next to the Sea of Galilee eating St Peter's fish, with a replica of the same type of boat that would have been used on this body of water 2,000 years ago just off shore leaves a feeling that is difficult to describe. I had been on several Mission trips to the island of Dominica in the West Indies, where our focus was in a small fishing village. The fishermen had their boats pulled up on the beach; most of them were very primitive & only one of them had a motor. And when I would began talking about Jesus and the Bible to one of the fishermen, they would all gather around to listen. I felt like I had gone back in time those 2,000 years to what it may have been like on the shore of Galilee with the fishermen.

I never did, but I could probably do a class series on those experiences also!

The Sea of Galilee was a focal point of much of Jesus' teachings and miracles. Of all the bodies of water, this has probably been the most read about thru the ages, but had Jesus not been involved here, it would have no recognition. Nor would the fish which are still caught & eaten today be called 'St. Peter's Fish'! This is really just a large lake, but to the people who lived around it's shores two decades ago, it probably seemed pretty large. It is also called the Sea of Tiberias (John 6:1; 21:1) and the Lake of Gennesaret (Lk 5:1). Today commonly called Lake Tiberias on most maps.

 Choosing a title for this lesson was a challenge! Several I had thought of was: "Who is This?" "Amazing Miracles!" "The Town of Jesus" referring to Capernaum, "The Fishermen" "Expanding our Faith" Peter walking on water, or "The Storm"

Near the beginning of His ministry, Jesus was teaching the people on the shore (Lk 5:1), and as the crowd grew, He moved onto a boat (belonging to Simon) to finish His teaching on that occasion. Notice Simon's (Peter) progression on that occasion: His introduction to Jesus (v.3), His hearing Jesus' sermon (v.3-4), Simon's response (v.5), His reverence of Jesus (v.8), and his obedience of faith (v.11).

Luke 5:1-11 (NIV) One day as Jesus was standing by the Sea of Galilee, with the people crowding around him and listening to the word of God, {2} he saw at the water's edge two boats, left there by the fishermen, who were washing their nets. {3} He got into one of the boats, the one belonging to Simon, and asked him to put out a little from shore. Then he sat down and taught the people from the boat. {4} When he had finished speaking, he said to Simon, "**Put out into deep** water, and let down the nets for a catch." {5} Simon answered, "Master, we've worked hard all night and haven't caught anything. But because you say so, I will let down the nets." {6} When they had done so, they caught such a large number of fish that their nets began to break. {7} So they signaled their partners in the other boat to come and help them, and they came and filled both boats so full that they began to sink. {8} When Simon Peter saw this, he fell at Jesus' knees and said, "Go away from me, Lord; I am a sinful man!" {9} For he and all his companions were astonished at the catch of fish they had taken, {10} and so were James and John, the sons of Zebedee, Simon's partners. Then Jesus said to Simon, "Don't be afraid; from now on you will catch men." {11} So they pulled their boats up on shore, left everything and followed him.

The main town near the sea is Tiberias¹, and from our hotel room, we had a tremendous view of golden sunrises over the seven-mile wide body of water.

Footnote from end of handout:

¹ **Tiberias** was built on the western shore of the Sea of Galilee by Herod Antipas between the years of 16-22 AD. It was named by him after the current Roman emperor, Tiberus Caesar. To this day, Tiberias is the capital of Galilee and remains the primary city in the area. The town of Tiberias is mentioned only in **John 6:23**. The Jewish historian, Josephus, was the governor of Galilee between 65-70 AD during the beginning of the Jewish rebellion against the Romans.

Normally, you could see the shore line all around the Sea of Galilee, but we experienced a storm that came up suddenly one night. With strong winds howling, and sea waves crashing against the shore, we were glad to be in the safety of the hotel. Only after the storm had ceased did I wish that I had gone down by the shore and taken some video to retain a more vivid memory of the severity of the storm. But I could hardly imagine the feeling it would have been like to be out in the middle of the Sea during a storm like that as we have recorded in **Mat 8:24** and **Mk 4:37**.

Mat 8:23-27 (NIV) Then he got into the boat and his disciples followed him. {24} Without warning, a furious storm came up on the lake, so that the waves swept over the boat. But Jesus was sleeping. {25} The disciples went and woke him, saying, "Lord, save us! We're going to drown!" {26} He replied, "You of little faith, why are you so afraid?" Then he got up and rebuked the winds and the waves, and it was completely calm. {27} The men were amazed and asked, "What kind of man is this? Even the winds and the waves obey him!"

Mark 4:35-41 (NIV) That day when evening came, he said to his disciples, "Let us go over to the other side." {36} Leaving the crowd behind, they took him along, just as he was, in the boat. There were also other boats with him. {37} A furious squall came up, and the waves broke over the boat, so that it was nearly swamped. {38} Jesus was in the stern, sleeping on a cushion. The disciples woke him and said to him, "Teacher, don't you care if we drown?" {39} He got up, rebuked the wind and said to the waves, "Quiet! Be still!" Then the wind died down and it was completely calm. {40} He said to his disciples, "Why are you so afraid? Do you still have no faith?" {41} They were terrified and asked each other, "Who is this? Even the wind and the waves obey him!"

Luke 8:22-25 (NIV) One day Jesus said to his disciples, "Let's go over to the other side of the lake." So they got into a boat and set out. {23} As they sailed, he fell asleep. A squall came down on the lake, so that the boat was being swamped, and they were in great danger. {24} The disciples went and woke him, saying, "Master, Master, we're going to drown!" He got up and rebuked the wind and the raging waters; the storm subsided, and all was calm. {25} "Where is your faith?" he asked his disciples. In fear and amazement they asked one another, "Who is this? He commands even the winds and the water, and they obey him."

We are all familiar with the occasion of Jesus walking on the sea, and Peter walking out to him. But when Peter took his eyes off of Jesus, his faith wavered and he began to sink. Too much aware of the elements around him and the dangers which they imposed, Peter forgot to continue trusting the Christ who had invited him to come. Peter's reaction is not uncommon in current times, just with different experiences in life. I think of the IMAX film "Everest" when they lay the ladder across a very deep crevasse to cross over on. You don't look anywhere except the ladder (where to step) and where you are going on the other side. "Don't look back!" –

Do you think that Lot's wife may have had a message for us? (Gen 19)

Mat 14:22-33 (NIV) Immediately Jesus made the disciples get into the boat and go on ahead of him to the other side, while he dismissed the crowd. {23} After he had dismissed them, he went up on a mountainside by himself to pray. When evening came, he was there alone, {24} but the boat was already a considerable distance from land, buffeted by the waves because the wind was against it. {25} During the fourth watch (3-6 am) of the night Jesus went out to them, walking on the lake. {26} When the disciples saw him walking on the lake, they were terrified. "It's a ghost," they said, and cried out in fear. {27} But Jesus immediately said to them: **"Take courage! It is I. Don't be afraid."** {28} "Lord, if it's you," Peter replied, "tell me to come to you on the water." (What prompted Peter to even say that to begin with!? {29} "Come," he said. Then Peter got down out of the boat, walked on the water and came toward Jesus. {30} But when he saw the wind, he was afraid and, beginning to sink, cried out, "Lord, save me!" {31} Immediately Jesus reached out his hand and caught him. "You of little faith," he said, "why did you doubt?" {32} And when they climbed into the boat, the wind died down. {33} Then those who were in the boat worshiped him, saying, **"Truly you are the Son of God."**

At the very beginning of His ministry Jesus had moved to Capernaum up on the northwest side of the sea. Another town that was not mentioned in the O.T.

Mat 4:12-13 (NIV) When Jesus heard that John had been put in prison, he returned to Galilee. {13} Leaving Nazareth, he went and lived in Capernaum, which was by the lake in the area of Zebulun and Naphtali-- ('Cafer' – village; 'nahome' – home of a prophet)

Capernaum is known as 'The town of Jesus'. The current day Capernaum is mostly a historical location with many excavations still in process. (There are many old carvings on stone remnants, some dating back as early as King Solomon as described in 1 Kings 6:29) The remains of a synagogue is there along with the lower walls and foundations of some ancient homes (uncovered in 1986), one, of which, may have been the home of Simon Peter where his mother-in-law was healed (**Matt 8:14-15; Lk 4:38-39**).

As is with many areas in Israel, excavation work continues as groups (financing & personnel) are available – often university students during the summer (& political climate!).

The existing synagogue is well preserved, but no roof, was built above the original foundation about 2-300 AD. This was the only known facility with provisions for both Jews and Christians to worship (in adjoining rooms) – Jewish & Christian symbols found carved in the stones.

The seat for the speaker is higher than the other seating in the synagogue.

All the synagogues were built to face Mt Moriah at Jerusalem (the location of the original Temple as recorded in 2 Chron 3:1, note also: 1 Chron 21:15 & Gen 22:2

Many other events took place at or near Capernaum, including the calling of the first apostles already mentioned (**Matt 4:12-22**), and later Matthew (**Matt 9:1-9**). At the synagogue in Capernaum, Jesus cast an unclean spirit out of a man (**Mk 1:21-28**). It was here that the paralytic was let down thru the roof to be healed (**Mk 2:1-12**). Jesus raised the daughter of Jairus from the dead and healed the woman with the issue of blood at Capernaum (**Mk 5:21-43 & Lk 8:40-56**). He gave His teaching on humility, using the example of a little child at Capernaum (**Mk 9:33-37**), and healed the son of a nobleman here (**John 4:46-54**). Jesus healed the paralyzed servant of

the Roman centurion at Capernaum (**Matt 8:5-13**). In spite of all of these miracles, Jesus issued a strong indictment against Capernaum, along with some other cities, because they had seen so many of His mighty works, yet had not repented and followed Him (**Matt 11:20-24**).

Mat 11:20-24 (NIV) Then Jesus began to denounce the cities in which most of his miracles had been performed, because they did not repent. {21} "Woe to you, Korazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! If the miracles that were performed in you had been performed in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes. {22} But I tell you, it will be more bearable for Tyre and Sidon on the day of judgment than for you. {23} And you, Capernaum, will you be lifted up to the skies? No, you will go down to the depths. If the miracles that were performed in you had been performed in Sodom, it would have remained to this day. {24} But I tell you that it will be more bearable for Sodom on the day of judgment than for you."

Have you ever said, 'If only I could have been there to witness some of Jesus' miracles, it would be so much easier to have a strong faith!?' It reminds me of what Abraham said to Lazarus (**Lk 16:30-31**) and what Jesus said to Thomas (**John 20:28-29**).

I have Lk 16:29-31 printed in the handout, but notice how the Living Bible puts Luke 16:30-31:

³⁰"The rich man replied, 'No, Father Abraham, they won't bother to read them. But if someone is sent to them from the dead, then they will turn from their sins.' ³¹"But Abraham said, 'If they won't listen to Moses and the prophets, they won't listen even though someone rises from the dead.'"^[a]

The Living Bible Footnote has this observation:

- a. Luke 16:31 "even though someone rises from the dead." - Even Christ's resurrection failed to convince the Pharisees, to whom he gave this illustration.

Luke 16:29-31 (NIV) 29 Abraham replied, 'They have Moses and the Prophets; let them listen to them.' 30 'No, father Abraham,' he said, 'but if someone from the dead goes to them, they will repent.' 31 He said to him, 'If they do not listen to Moses and the Prophets, they will not be convinced even if someone rises from the dead.'

John 20:28-29 (NIV) 28 Thomas said to him, "My Lord and my God!" 29 Then Jesus told him, "Because you have seen me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed."

Do we only 'see' what we want to see? The Jews in Capernaum 'worshiped' God in the synagogue, yet did not see God's salvation right in their very presence! Do we become content and complacent and fail to see God opening doors all around us? Many people around us are searching for God – evident by the growth of many new churches – Why didn't the Lord's church reach them with the Gospel? Are we still lights in a world of darkness, or has our light become too dim to be effective?

I have the Mount of Beatitudes on my “Additional lesson ideas” list, but have not put the lesson together yet, so I will just show you several views of that area now, since we probably won’t get back to it. There will be several guest speakers during this period – next Sunday, and then again June 26th – and if we do have more time, there are several lessons that I would like to prepare first.

Next week, the 12th, we will have a guest speaker with the Prison Ministry Workshop.

Additional lesson ideas:

‘Herod’s Coastal City’ (Caesarea) - Philip, Cornelius, Paul’s imprisonment & trial

‘Elijah, a Prophet for many Nations’ (Mt. Carmel)

‘Security?’ (Masada) or ‘On the Mountain Top’ ‘Safety?’

‘Trust, but Verify?’ (Gideon) or ‘Faith with Caution?’ ‘Questionable Faith?’

‘Man-made Religion’ (Dome of the Rock) or ‘False Hope’ ‘False Security’